



Deepdene School

Independent School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 846/6007
Unique Reference Number 114641
Inspection number 296797
Inspection dates 6-7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Steffi Penny HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 2-8	Published 1 March 2007	Reference no. 296797
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Deepdene School was founded in 1948. It is a co-educational pre-preparatory school providing for children aged from six months to eight years. The school is divided into three departments: the toddler unit for children aged up to two-and-a-half year olds, the nursery for two to four-year-olds and the reception and pre-prep classes for children over four years old. The day care and nursery provision, registered separately, was last inspected in 2006 and was not included as part of this inspection.

Deepdene is a non-selective and non-denominational school, whilst continuing to maintain its traditional link with the Christian church. Pupils attend the school from the local area and wider community. There are very few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Evaluation of the school

Deepdene is a good school that complies with nearly all of the relevant regulations. It caters well for individual needs so that all pupils make good progress and standards are high. The pupils are self-confident and articulate when leaving school. This is because Deepdene pupils receive good quality care and nurturing. All pupils are hungry for their learning. They are curious about the world around them. This curiosity is fostered by many creative opportunities. Pupils and their parents are rightly proud of their school. Since the last inspection the school continues to improve in all areas.

Quality of education

The school provides a good quality of education. The school's curriculum, which incorporates all aspects of the National Curriculum, is good. It is very broad and vibrant. It effectively balances academic study with an exciting programme of sport, music, language, information communication technology, art, craft, dance and drama. There are very good links made across subjects which increase the depth of understanding for pupils. Each child's uniqueness is fostered through a plethora of basic skills and creative learning opportunities. For instance, during the inspection an activity was seen where reception children were inspired by excellent resources. They made colourful fish collages showing their creativity and good cutting skills.

The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features. The staff work together effectively as a team, along with other visitors, providing high quality teaching and support, which enable the pupils to learn effectively and fulfil their potential. An outstanding feature is the way that most teachers challenge and support pupils through the use of targeted and probing questioning. In the very best lessons pupils are engaged and enthused through a range of interesting activities delivered in a lively manner.

Assessment is good overall. Pupils are tested and assessed regularly. The results are fed directly into teachers' lesson plans. These plans are of a good quality. As a consequence the class work stretches pupils and is a good match to pupils' needs. Teachers know the pupils well and know exactly where they are with their learning. The school does not have a concise central record to demonstrate how good the quality of education provided by the school is, particularly for prospective parents.

Marking identifies what pupils have done well, it does not always show pupils how they could improve their work or the next steps that they need to take with their learning. Pupils said 'they did not know what they were doing next and that it would help them if they did'. Inspectors agree.

Pupils' progress is good. This is because all staff have high expectations of the pupils, which are based on good knowledge of their needs and abilities. Pupils respond well to the quick pace and learning challenges set by staff. Also the firm, fair and friendly teaching approach used consistently by all staff is ensuring good progress for Deepdene pupils. Schemes of work help provide depth to the learning because prior learning and knowledge are effectively built on. These schemes follow the latest practice.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The development of pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding is good.

Pupils have good social skills, listening well to each other and sharing their thoughts. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and play well together. They demonstrate empathy, concern and compassion. There are very good relationships between the staff and pupils which are based on mutual respect such that the behaviour and the attitudes of pupils are good.

The pupils' multi-cultural knowledge and understanding is clearly demonstrated through the displays around the school. Assemblies encourage pupils to celebrate their festivals and share their beliefs and experiences with others at

school. Concerts and performances throughout the year allow the pupils to share their love of singing and music with their families.

Pupils are prepared well for their next stage in education. Many are awarded scholarships to local preparatory schools.

Pupils say that they really enjoy school and are here to learn. Their view is supported by the high attendance rate, their good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Many pupils stay in touch with the school after they have left.

Pupils make a positive contribution to their community, but there are missed opportunities for them to play a more significant role in the life of the school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of children is good. All the children are well known and well cared for. The school has a full range of policies and practices that minimise the health and safety risks to pupils. Pupils are carefully supervised at all times and are safeguarded around the school and on educational trips and visits. Child protection procedures are robust.

Pupils demonstrate through discussion, that they understand and know how to keep healthy and follow healthy lifestyles. The school provides very delicious, nutritional hot lunches from organic materials. They are carefully prepared and cooked on the premises by the school cook. Vegetarian alternatives are available as are meals that comply with religious needs. Pupils say they are great! Staff and inspectors agree.

The school meets its responsibilities to provide access to the school and the curriculum for pupils who have disabilities.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school undertakes the full range of checks to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in what was a large private dwelling, this has been much extended and incorporates an outdoor synthetic 'safe surface' all weather area and several small grass areas. The school also has access to a nearby field for outdoor games. The school has a continuous programme of refurbishment and investment to improve facilities. Despite this, some of the corridors are in need of redecoration. Classrooms are well organised and many have good displays of

pupils' work. There are also good quality displays around the school, for example colourful pictures created on computers, portraits, and careful close observation drawings. There is no appropriate accommodation for pupils who may become ill during the course of the day. The school is aware of this.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents, pupils, carers and others on request. Communication between home and school is highly valued by parents and the school. The information provided is accurate and up to date. It is not completely clear to parents how they can contact the proprietors at all times.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints procedure meets all the requirements for registration. The complaints procedures are clear and fair. A small minority of parents indicated through the questionnaire that they are unaware of the complaints procedure.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005 with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of how parents and others can contact the proprietors at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- have a more concise central record to demonstrate how good the quality of education provided by the school is

- provide more opportunities for pupils to have a greater say in what goes on in the school and to take on roles of greater responsibility
- share with pupils the next stages in their learning.

School details

Name of school	Deepdene School		
DfES number	846/6007		
Unique reference number	114641		
Type of school	Day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1943		
Age range of pupils	6 months-8 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 32	Girls: 36	Total: 68
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 82	Girls: 46	Total: 128
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4410		
Address of school	Deepdene School 195 New Church Road Hove East Sussex BN3 4ED		
Telephone number	01273 418984		
Fax Number	01273 415543		
Email address	info@deepdeneschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs L Clark-Darby		
Proprietor	Mrs Nicola Gane		
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI		
Dates of inspection	6-7 February 2007		