

**Inspection report**

**Cundall Manor School**

**Independent school**

**DfES ref no: 815/6022**

**Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002**

**Dates of inspection: 27 - 30 November 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 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**

Cundall Manor School is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory and pre-preparatory school for children and pupils aged between 2 and 16 years. It is a registered charity with a board of governors. It opened in 1959 as a school for pupils aged 5 to 13 years and in 1996 a nursery was added. Just over a year ago the school extended its provision to include pupils up to the age of 16 years. Most pupils live within a 20 mile radius of the school and attend daily. However, there are a small number of pupils who are either weekly or 'flexi-'boarders. At the time of the inspection there were 203 pupils on roll, of whom 59 were girls and 144 boys.

The school is situated within its own extensive grounds on the edge of the Vale of York. The accommodation includes a modern, purpose-built nursery and a pre-preparatory unit for children up to Year 2 and the main school, which is located in a former hunting lodge. Five temporary classrooms have been added recently because of the significant increase in numbers. The nursery was inspected by Ofsted in January 2005 and the boarding accommodation was inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in March 2006. The school's motto is 'Vincit Veritas' (*Truth Prevails*). It aims to assist each individual to achieve their full academic and personal potential so as to become active members of the school, the local community and the wider society. There are a variety of destinations for leavers. Most pupils go on to independent schools both locally and further afield, and each year a number of pupils are awarded scholarships to further their education.

### **Summary of main findings**

Cundall Manor School is a very successful and popular school with a number of outstanding features. It fully meets its aims and provides an excellent quality of education. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of learning and for the experiences and responsibilities of adult life. It is a strong and friendly community where pupils are respected and well cared for and where parents are welcome. The leadership of the school is outstanding and this has enabled it to develop and grow rapidly and successfully over the past three years. Its excellent curriculum is broad, and carefully matched to pupils' individual needs: enhanced by a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

The quality of teaching is very good and is often outstanding. This, combined with rigorous assessments, which include self-assessment, helps pupils enjoy their learning and as a result they make good or very good progress and reach high

standards in both academic and personal development. The pupils are very happy at the school. They make good friendships, care for one another, and feel safe and secure.

#### **What the school does well:**

- it has developed an extremely broad, enriched and well-planned curriculum;
- its excellent ethos promotes and celebrates pupils' progress and achievement;
- it provides very effective teaching and a comprehensive assessment of pupils' academic and personal development which is shared with them and used well to set targets for improvement;
- it makes excellent provision for pupils' care and very good provision for their welfare, health and safety;
- it provides very successfully for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them well for the next stage of learning and for life in an adult society; and
- it makes very good use of its highly skilled staff, its accommodation, and outstanding facilities, and it has excellent links with parents and the local community.

#### **What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:**

The school meets all the statutory requirements.

#### **Next Steps**

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

- identify more explicitly where design and technology is to be taught in the curriculum;
- focus more clearly on the opportunities within the curriculum for promoting pupils' awareness of other cultures; and
- continue to develop careers education for Key Stage 4 pupils.

# **COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

## **1. The quality of education provided by the school**

### **The quality of the curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The school meets its aims to assist each pupil to achieve their full academic and personal potential exceptionally well. Pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to learn a wide range of skills and develop their interests and talents through a broad range of interesting and challenging experiences. There is an extremely good balance between academic and sporting activities on a daily basis. This has a very positive impact on pupils' health and physical development and their social well-being. The curriculum for the reception classes is very good and is securely based on the early learning goals for children of this age. Throughout the rest of the school, schemes are based on national guidelines and the requirements of the many educational establishments to which the pupils transfer when they leave. Particular emphasis is given to the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and French, supplemented with lessons in Spanish, Latin, music, art, humanities, physical education and religious studies. Information and communication technology (ICT) is covered appropriately and its use is being extended effectively. Older pupils, for example, e-mail their French homework directly to their teacher. Although such activities are not explicitly timetabled as technology, pupils have good opportunities in various lessons and clubs to design and make things, using a range of materials. There are daily, timetabled sporting activities which encourage pupils to participate in team games such as rugby, football, hockey and netball. These add interest and vibrancy to the curriculum and provide opportunities for pupils to develop individual interests and talents. The school has recently extended its curriculum to meet the needs of the new intake of older pupils. Provision is being made for careers education and work experience and there are plans to extend this aspect further.

In all subjects, care is taken to match work exceptionally well to the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those who find the work hard or who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Thoughtful planning throughout the school enables links between subjects to be developed so that the curriculum is meaningful and pupils see the relevant links. In history, for example, pupils learn about the economic importance of trade between different countries. In science, geography and art, pupils use their mathematical skills well and their writing skills are promoted effectively across a range of subjects. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities. Pupils receive lessons from a visiting silversmith and staff organise a wide variety of day and residential trips, including challenging outdoor pursuits such as camping, rock climbing, canoeing and sailing. Visits to places of historical, geographical and political interest include the Roman baths in York and the House of Commons. These experiences contribute very strongly to pupils' intellectual, personal and social development.

The excellent provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is threaded effectively throughout the school day. There is a strong emphasis, in lessons in clubs and at break-times, on PSHE and the development of social

interaction and communication skills. This is reflected in the fact that over 90 per cent of pupils attend an activity club, 80 per cent learn a musical instrument and more than half of the school population sing in the school choir.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching is very good and there is a high proportion of teaching that is outstanding. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage where pupils make very good progress. Meticulous planning throughout the school demonstrates that teachers know their pupils well and have a clear understanding of what they want them to achieve. They use a good range of teaching strategies to ensure that individuals achieve what is expected of them. The knowledge that all staff have of each pupil's abilities, needs and potential underpins the good and often outstanding teaching seen. This knowledge is used effectively to set academic and personal targets which are shared with pupils. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to the teaching, often bringing expertise of their own to the role. For example, the librarian taught a Year 3 class that there are different ways to learn spelling by showing them that a word can be written in a shape to show its meaning. The outstanding lessons seen had good pace, build on prior learning and engaged pupils in tasks which were interactive, interesting and motivating. Pupils were given challenging tasks which required them to think and to engage in investigative and problem-solving tasks. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils had to plan an activity to demonstrate to their peers the permeability of two soil types. This activity generated a good range of discussion and it had a very positive impact on their learning. There is a wide range of subject knowledge and expertise among the staff and teachers demonstrate very good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Throughout the school there is rigorous and detailed marking which helps pupils to improve their work. The school uses a range of mechanisms to assess pupils' achievements, both through informal and standardised tests. The results of these are recorded assiduously and show a profile of individuals' good progress. In spite of the unhappy experiences of some pupils at their previous schools, they quickly settle in and show a strong impetus to learn. Pupils of all abilities enjoy their lessons and are proud of their achievements. The outcomes are that, by the time they transfer many are working in at a level well above that expected for their age. In 2004, for example, five Year 8 pupils took their General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in French and Spanish early and achieved grades from A to C. This represents very good progress when compared with their attainment on entry to the school.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school makes excellent provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision is enhanced by an outstanding system of pastoral care. Pupils' social development is promoted outstandingly well within the school day and through the variety of after-school clubs and off-site activities. Many of the classroom and extra-curricular activities encourage pupils to work cooperatively in groups as well as in pairs or on their own. For example, pupils are

encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, but also to support each other, as when they complete a range of electrical circuits in science or when they play different instruments together in music. Throughout the school, pupils are helped to develop stable, positive relationships. Pupils' spiritual awareness is promoted extremely well. They have many opportunities in lessons for reflection on ideas, experiences and moral issues. Lessons are conducted in a happy and purposeful atmosphere. The reflective times during assemblies and saying grace before meals enables them to give thanks and to consider the needs of others. Tutor periods are used well to help pupils complete self-assessments or reflect on their development and achievements and their place in school and the wider community. The high standards of the display of pupils' work in all classrooms demonstrate to pupils the value that staff place upon their work. Extra-curricular clubs and activities provide excellent opportunities for pupils learn to be comfortable in a range of settings, from performing music in front of an audience to correct and safe handling of a gun on the shooting range.

The provision for pupils' moral development is supported very effectively by the school's behaviour policy. This is known to all and is woven through all aspects of the school day. It helps pupils to make appropriate choices and distinguish between right and wrong. Staff provide very good role models, both by example, as when they dine with pupils at lunchtime, and also by encouraging pupils to respect others and take care of themselves and the environment. As a consequence, pupils increase in self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence while they are at the school. Parents of pupils who have transferred into the school are outspoken in their enthusiasm about their children's visible growth in confidence, skills and happiness and the way they are enabled to contribute to community life. Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are very well integrated within the subjects of the curriculum. Lessons in art, music, French, Spanish, Latin, humanities and religious studies, for example, provide opportunities for pupils to develop a good awareness of British and European culture and also to learn about the customs, beliefs and festivals of other cultures. Other activities which enhance cultural awareness include whole-school topics where pupils learn about festivals and celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Hanakah and Diwali. However, these are not all noted in curriculum planning.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### **3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

The school ensures that the interests and welfare of learners are safeguarded and supported extremely effectively. The very good policies that are in place are carefully implemented and monitored rigorously. Staff ensure that pupils are supervised extremely well at all times, whilst still giving opportunities for them to develop initiative and learn to take responsibility. Consequently, pupils' personal and social skills are developed outstandingly well, while at the same time any potential risks are eliminated effectively. Staff all have suitably high levels of awareness of health and safety issues and work effectively as a team. The behaviour policy is

implemented consistently and pupils respond well to it. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure in school. When there are incidents of disagreement these are resolved swiftly and with minimum fuss. There have been no major behavioural incidents in the past and so the school has not felt the need to set up a record of sanctions taken. Staff have had recent and relevant child protection and First Aid training, which ensures that the interests of pupils are safeguarded and protected at all times. There is a very good First Aid policy and 16 fully-trained First Aiders are on site during the day and four at night. Procedures for ensuring fire safety are excellent. There are detailed records of fire risk assessments and fire drills. Healthy eating is promoted very well at mealtimes and snack times. Admission and attendance registers are kept according to requirements and the school has produced a plan to further improve access to the building for disabled people.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school has effective administrative systems in place to ensure the suitability of newly appointed staff. Appropriate checks including Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau and List 99 checks are made prior to the appointment of all adults employed by the school who are in contact with pupils. Other checks carried out, before appointments are confirmed, include authenticity of references, medical fitness and qualifications.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### **5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The school is located in a very picturesque setting within the grounds of an old, two-storey country dwelling. The extensive grounds include pitches for rugby, football, hockey, cricket and a tennis court. The premises are suitable for their purpose. The main house, which provides residential accommodation for a maximum of 34 pupils, houses the main office and reception area, a dining room a music room and several tutorial rooms. The teaching accommodation includes a purpose-built nursery and a pre-preparatory unit which have their own entrance and play facilities. There are four other teaching blocks; one is specifically for Key Stage 4 pupils and another is used as an art room. The third is the main teaching block which has a range of specialist rooms including a gymnasium, an ICT suite, two science laboratories and two language rooms. A swimming pool is located in a separate building. Five mobile classrooms were erected recently to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers. There are plans to replace them in the longer term within a building extension programme. The accommodation is well maintained and internally it is enhanced by very attractive displays of pupils' work. There are very good outdoor play facilities, with a mixture of hard play surfaces, grassy areas, and wooded areas, all of which enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**

Cundall Manor regards the education of each pupil very much as a partnership between home and school. Thus the school enjoys very good relationships with its parents, who are its loyal and active supporters. A high proportion of parents responded to the questionnaire sent by the inspectors, and their views revealed an extremely high level of satisfaction with the school. Communication with parents is very strong on both a formal and informal basis, and the vast majority of parents say that they feel comfortable in discussing their concerns with teachers, and are confident that issues will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents are offered a good range of information about the school. There is an attractive prospectus for parents, whilst new parents receive a range of booklets containing information about policies, routines and advice about how to help their children. A particularly strong feature of information to parents is the clear and readable information on the curriculum and weekly news letters which inform parents about events at school and activities that involve their children. Detailed reports are issued each term and at the end of the school year. They are clear and detailed, and contain information about pupils' achievement and progress in the subjects taught and in their personal development. Self- evaluation statements are included with the end of term reports. Reports about pupils in the reception class are particularly informative and document the detailed development of the pupil, so that definite progress can be seen through the year. There are formal consultation sessions where parents may discuss their children's progress, but in practice teachers are often available to talk informally at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents are very happy with these arrangements, and feel that they are always welcome in the school. They speak highly of the many opportunities they have to support teams in matches, attend plays, concerts and school assemblies, and the active encouragement they receive to contribute to the life of the school.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school has a written complaints policy which sets out appropriate procedures, responsibilities and time-scales for dealing with complaints. A simplified version is available for pupils. It fully meets the regulations.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.



## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Cundall Manor School
DfES Number:	815/6022
Type of school:	Co-educational pre-preparatory and preparatory school
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	4 - 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 144    Girls: 59    Total: 203
Number of boarders:	Boys: 17    Girls: 2    Total: 19
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys: 1    Girls: 0    Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils):	Reception and Year 1: £6,090 Year 2: £6,384 Years 3 – 11: £10,080
Annual fees (boarders):	£11,760
Address of school:	Helperby York YO61 2RW
Telephone number:	01423 360200
Fax number:	01423 360754
Email address:	headteacher@cundallmanor.co.uk
Headteacher:	Mr Peter Philips
Proprietor:	Cundall Manor Ltd
Reporting Inspector:	Sheila Boyle
Date of inspection:	27 - 30 November 2006

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