

# Cavendish School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	210/6391
Unique Reference Number	131237
Inspection number	301504
Inspection dates	27-28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland

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).

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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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

The Cavendish School is an independent special school for day students with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. It is located in Bermondsey in south London. The school draws its students from a range of local authorities in and around London. The school opened in 2000 and moved to its current premises in 2004. There are 39 students on roll, aged between 11 and 16, the vast majority of whom are boys. All of the students have a statement of special educational need. The school's motto is *'Every Day is a Fresh Start'*. It seeks to provide a broad and balanced education for children who have been excluded from mainstream schools and who have experienced considerable difficulties in their lives, which have had a damaging impact on their emotions and behaviour and their ability to learn effectively in school. The school aims *'to help them not only benefit from learning but to build up skills and social confidence for the many years of adult life which follows'*. This is the school's first published inspection report.

## Evaluation of the school

Cavendish School provides a satisfactory quality of education with some good features. The students receive good care and support because of the high level of concern and commitment of the headteacher and her staff. The overall quality of provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. The students make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching. The students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are satisfactory. As a consequence of the good leadership of the headteacher, the school is well placed to continue to improve. The school meets most of the regulations.

### Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school gives a high priority to the students' personal, social and emotional development and this aspect of the curriculum is good. The personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) is well developed and effective with sessions available to help the students address their difficulties, especially their anger and behaviour. The school is generally successful in providing a broad and balanced curriculum which takes account of the students' individual needs. It enables them to make satisfactory progress in their

learning of basic skills, although the promotion of literacy across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

The academic curriculum includes English, mathematics and science along with physical education, art, food technology and elements of history, geography and religious education (RE). The planning of the academic curriculum is of variable quality. Some subjects, especially English, mathematics and PSHE, are supported by thorough schemes of work which make good use of national guidance. However, the planning for other subjects is underdeveloped and lacks clear information on subject content, suitable activities and resources for succeeding year groups. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is less well developed as students have too few regular and planned opportunities to use computers. Opportunities for wider creative work and aesthetic appreciation are limited as students have no opportunities to listen to or compose music.

The school provides appropriate entry level, GCSE and vocational opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11. There are good links with schools and colleges where some pursue vocational courses. The links with the Connexions career service ensure students receive advice and support regarding options for the future. The students benefit from a satisfactory range of sport and leisure activities. This provision is further enhanced by a range of activities in school, including table tennis and board games, as well as trips and visits to places of interest such as museums and art galleries. The school successfully promotes an awareness of healthier lifestyles. The need for many students to be transported home at the end of the school day prevents after-school activities taking place.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory with some good features, leading to satisfactory rates of progress by the students. The staff know their students very well. Relationships within the school community are good and have a beneficial impact in meeting the students' academic and personal needs. Staff are appropriately flexible in adapting their approach to meet individual needs. The staff have a good understanding of the students' levels of ability. Good individual support is successful, much of the time, in enabling students to maintain their concentration and to develop their sense of being able to be a successful learner. The high staff-student ratio, very often with regular one-to-one support, usually ensures that at least satisfactory behaviour is the norm in lessons. Most students co-operate readily with staff, but some find it hard to maintain concentration on their work.

The strongest teaching is well planned and involves the patient use of encouragement and advice to engage students' interest and to entice them into joining in and responding to questions. In the best lessons, students are actively involved in their learning, as in an English lesson where they engaged in a role-play activity. It was clear that the students enjoyed this experience and, as the action was about a theft and return of the stolen item, it provided a good opportunity to develop their empathy and moral sensibilities. Praise is used well, along with an effective system of rewards. When the teaching is less strong some activities, such as copying

a piece of text, fail to develop the students thinking and writing skills. Teaching too rarely provides opportunities for learning to be reinforced and consolidated at the end of the lesson. Satisfactory systems are in place to assess the students' academic and personal development, with careful record keeping, especially in English mathematics and science. The students make satisfactory progress in their attitudes to learning and behaviour and often good progress in their emotional development and their acquisition of interpersonal skills.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. It is stronger for their moral and social development. The students' behaviour improves during their time at the school and is satisfactory overall. Staff work hard to support students, some of whom have had very negative experiences of formal education or are facing significant personal and emotional issues. Effective relationships with the staff are central to the students' progress and the school is adept at providing an environment where students can gradually build confidence and regain their self-esteem and a belief that they can succeed. The promotion of good personal and social skills is enabling the students to develop the interpersonal skills they will need to succeed in life. Over time, the students become more confident in expressing their opinions although they do not yet have a sufficient 'voice' in the running of the school. The school has plans to create a school council as a forum through which their views can be expressed.

Many students attend regularly and are responsive to the support and encouragement they receive, so improving their attitudes to learning. However, attendance overall is unsatisfactory as too many students fail to come to school on a regular basis. Students develop some awareness of their wider responsibilities and of the needs of others through raising money, for example, for victims of the Tsunami. Students' cultural development is fostered satisfactorily in subjects such as English, art and in textiles where, for example, they created wall hangings based on patterns used by Native Americans. They learn about different world faiths. They also gain a satisfactory understanding of public institutions and services.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is good. The very small numbers in each class, and the high regard shown for each individual, means that they receive good levels of attention and supervision from staff. Students are very well supervised at all other times. The school routinely provides nutritious meals including breakfast, at the start of the day and at morning break, as well as lunch. Students have good opportunities for regular exercise to enable them to remain fit and healthy through access to a local park and other local sports facilities. The school has effective working relationships with external agencies to ensure that the students' additional needs are well-served.

The school has, in most respects, produced an appropriate range of policies to secure and promote the students' welfare, health and safety on site and whilst on visits to the community. However, the policy to tackle instances of bullying is underdeveloped and the first aid policy provides too little practical guidance for staff. Routine attention to health and safety is good. The school has an appropriate three-year plan to fully meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has robust procedures for the appointment of staff. All the required checks are carried out prior to appointment to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. The school maintains a central record indicating that all required checks have been carried out.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation satisfactorily enable students to learn in safety. The school is housed in a four storey, nineteenth century building which has been well adapted and decorated to operate as a school. The accommodation is clean and welcoming with suitable furniture. Classrooms vary in size but they are of a sufficient number and size for the numbers of students on roll. The school has no grounds but makes good and regular use of the park which adjoins the building. In addition, the school has a number of specialist facilities for art and textiles along with a small fitness suite, a library and a dining area. The school caters satisfactorily for students who are ill during the school day.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides an attractive prospectus with a range of information for prospective parents and carers. The aims of the school are set out clearly and there is some of the required information. However, it does not include all the information that the school is required to provide for parents and prospective parents. Similarly, it is not made clear to parents and prospective parents that other information is available on request relating to school policies and staffing. The school provides regular information to parents and carers and annual progress reports. It makes available the necessary information to support the annual reviews of the statements of students with special educational needs. The school does not, as a matter of course, send information on income and expenditure to the local authorities that fund the placements at the school. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are generally happy with the school and with what it provides for their children.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a policy for complaints but it does not contain all the necessary information to fully meet requirements. There have been no recent complaints.

## 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 curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- set out a curriculum policy, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for each subject and each year group, and implement it effectively (paragraph 1(2)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DCSF guidance *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (DCSF 0064/2000) (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- produce and implement a satisfactory written policy on first aid (paragraph 3(6)).

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

- provide parents and prospective parents with particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide parents and prospective parents with the particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational need and pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))
- ensure that parents and prospective parents are aware they can request particulars of policies relating to:
  - bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and rewards and sanctions (paragraph 6(2)(h))
  - academic performance during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(i))
  - the complaints procedures and the number of complaints during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))

- the number of staff employed at the school including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k))
- ensure, for pupils who are wholly or partly funded by a local authority, that an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is submitted to the local authority (paragraph 6(7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing and if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- ensure the procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations which stipulate that the complainant, proprietors and headteacher and where relevant, the person complained about, are given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))
- ensure the procedure provides for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- ensure the procedure provides for correspondence, statements and records of complaints to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).



## School details

Name of school	Cavendish School		
DCSF number	210/6391		
Unique reference number	131237		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2000		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 38	Girls: 1	Total: 39
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 38	Girls: 1	Total: 39
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 0	Total: 4
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,023		
Address of school	Lady Gomm House 58 Hawkstone Road London SE16 2PA		
Telephone number	020 7394 0088		
Fax number	020 7394 1015		
Email address	info@cavendish-school.net		
Headteacher	Mrs Sara Craggs		
Proprietor	Cheryl Stepton		
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland		
Dates of inspection	27-28 February 2008		