

Dudley House School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	925/6016
Unique Reference Number	120728
Inspection number	301513
Inspection dates	10-11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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).

This inspection of the funded nursery education was carried out under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and framework Act 1998.

This inspection of the day care was carried out under the Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where funded nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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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

Dudley House is a small independent co-educational day school providing Foundation Stage and primary education for 3 to 11 year olds. It is situated in the centre of Grantham town. It is a Christian school, sponsored by the British group of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with whom it shares its premises. It was established in 1966 and welcomes children of all faiths. There are currently 55 pupils on roll, none of whom has a statement of special educational need.

Children enter the Foundation Stage Class when they are three years old where they are taught alongside Reception age children. Many have had pre-school experiences elsewhere. The school provides government-funded nursery places for 13 children within this class. This provision was inspected by a child-care inspector at the same time as the school. The inspection findings can be found at the back of this report.

The school is non-selective. Many pupils take the eleven-plus examination and entrance examinations to other independent schools and some go on to the state sector. The school's main aim is *'to develop the best in every pupil through broad, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences, in a happy, caring and stimulating Christian environment'*.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education based on a well planned curriculum, effective teaching and good care taken to nurture each individual. It complies with a high proportion of the regulations relating to independent schools and achieves its stated aims. Pupils make good academic progress. Standards in English, mathematics and science are high and often above those expected nationally. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour in lessons and around school is generally very good. Most parents quite rightly highly value the work of the school. A relatively new and highly effective headteacher has ensured that, as one parent commented, *'over the last year the school has gone from to strength to strength'*.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum throughout the school is good. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Class where both Nursery and Reception children enjoy a curriculum which has been carefully planned to provide a range of

stimulating 'hands on' experiences which develop positive attitudes to learning. There is a good balance between child-chosen and adult-directed activities and, in this positive setting, children settle quickly into routines and make good progress. Flexibility is allowed for children to move early, or, after the usual time for their age, from the Foundation Stage curriculum to that of Year 1, depending upon individual need. The provision in Key Stages 1 and 2 builds effectively on these good foundations and includes all subjects appropriate to pupils' needs, ensuring progression in knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are given opportunities to use their skills in different contexts, for example during topics and themed days, which pupils say they love. Speaking skills are developed well within school. French is taught in Years 5 and 6 and there is a plan to extend this into Years 3 and 4.

The curriculum is extended and enriched with a good range of extra-curricular activities in sport, science and the arts. Pupils take part in competitive and friendly sports matches with other schools. Tuition in music is offered. A good range of visits out and visitors to school further support pupils' learning. Resources for teaching and learning are good overall. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) supports learning well and is soon to be enhanced by the addition of interactive white boards. An active parents' association adds considerably to resources, for example providing an adventure playground and a computer suite. Religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education are strengths of the curriculum. A bible-based scheme helps to raise pupils' awareness of other faiths, as does topic work, such as the study of Hinduism through a topic on India. There are plans to review elements of personal, social and health education provision in consultation with parents and in line with the school's Christian, family centred ethos.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage lessons well and develop a good rapport with pupils. Consequently, pupils are keen, interested and mostly produce neat and clear work. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of questions and of observations of pupils' practical and written work to reinforce and further develop knowledge and understanding. Assessment has been much improved. Good procedures are in place to monitor pupils' progress in writing and reading. The information is used effectively to identify those who need extra help and to plan work that will challenge all pupils to do well. It also provides a valuable overview of whole class and school performance. Recording systems for mathematics and science are not yet as strong. In the best lessons, teachers place an emphasis on practical experiences, set clear targets and use marking which tells pupils what to do to improve. In these brisk, highly organised and productive lessons, pupils make good progress. Not all teachers are yet as confident and skilled in the use of these methods. The school has not yet developed a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. However, the headteacher is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and takes swift action to promote improvement.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is in no small part because Dudley House School is a happy, caring school where individuality is highly valued and staff are dedicated to bringing out the best in every child. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that good manners, behaviour, sensitivity and confidence will be displayed by them at all times. Their behaviour is good. High self-esteem, motivation, discipline and self-reliance are successfully promoted. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and that they are keen to learn and attend well because everyone is so friendly and school is fun. They say they get on well with staff and each other and value each other's views and opinions. They look after one another and take on jobs such as monitors and school councillors. They reflect carefully on what they see and hear, celebrate the contribution of other cultures and give their support to charities. Trips out, opportunities to represent the school in the arts and at sporting events provide good opportunities for pupils to develop as rounded and interesting young people. Pupils successfully develop their understanding of local and national institutions and services through, for example, visits to the local courts.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school enables pupils to keep fit and healthy through a wide range of sporting activities. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there is always someone to turn to should they need to. They say that there is no bullying. Good procedures are in place to safeguard their safety and welfare. The pastoral care given to pupils is a real strength throughout the school. The small scale of the school means that staff know their pupils' individual needs and can supervise them effectively at all times. All staff have been trained in dealing with child protection issues and there are a good number with first aid training. Detailed risk assessments are completed for classroom activities and visits outside school. Fire risk assessments are carried out and there are regular fire drills. Attendance registers are kept in good order. The anti-bullying and Health and Safety Policies do not demonstrate regard to DfES guidance but the school has plans in place to rectify this. Though it has made a good start, the school has not yet completed its three-year action plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school is robust in undertaking the great majority of necessary checks on staff and other adults to ensure their suitability to work with children. Before recruiting staff, rigorous vetting procedures are carried out to confirm their identity, previous employment history, character references, and where necessary qualifications and professional references. Arrangements are now being made to ensure similar

vigilance in making the required checks for medical fitness which have not always been undertaken to date.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are suitable for purpose. The school shares the premises with the Seventh-day Adventist church which meets after school hours and has its own separate access. There are four suitably sized classrooms, a library and an ICT suite which radiate from a central hall used as a gym and dining hall. There is a bright foyer, reception area, storage and cloak rooms and freshly decorated toilets. The outside area comprises a large hard surface for games and a grassed area, an adventure playground with fitness equipment and a role-play house. The 1960's building has been well maintained. The facilities for those who are ill do not fully meet regulations but the school has developed a plan to rectify this. The school provides a colourful and attractive learning environment enhanced by stimulating displays of pupils' work. Staff do not have a designated room for their use.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school works hard to promote its positive partnership with parents and ensures that the quality of information for parents and prospective parents is good. A secure website provides a good overview of the school's aims and its broader provision. There are regular newsletters and informative notice boards. The prospectus gives a good flavour of life at the school. Written reports, three times a year, provide a clear picture of what each pupil has achieved and give good guidance for further improvement. The great majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their children's education. Acting on responses to its own questionnaires, the school has put into practice some useful suggestions for improvement. The information supplied to parents meets most, but not all, of the regulations. Arrangements have been made to make explicit the policies on sanctions and exclusions.

Procedures for handling complaints

The great majority of parents say they are comfortable about approaching the school with any problems. A very few do state that they are unaware of the school's complaints procedures and arrangements have been made to remedy this. However, the procedures comply fully with the regulations and specify clear time scales for the informal and formal stages of the resolution of any complaint.

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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- amend the anti-bullying policy so that it has regard to the DfES guidance *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare a Health and Safety Policy which has regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (paragraph 3(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm medical fitness and that the information is taken into account in determining whether an appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

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

- provide appropriate facilities for the care of 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 parents and prospective parents with particulars of the school's policies for discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- make it clear that parents may request particulars relating to sanctions adopted in the case of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

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:

- extend the effective assessment and tracking system found in English to mathematics and science
- Ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the school

- further improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all teaching is as good as the best
- provide a staff room.

Inspection of funded nursery education

Effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff promote children's learning well and provide a broad and balanced range of interesting and challenging activities for them. They plan children's learning effectively in line with the Foundation Stage guidance. The assessment system has improved since the last inspection. It takes account of children's starting points so staff plan the next step in children's learning successfully. Therefore children make good progress based on individual targets.

Children learn mathematical and language skills successfully through methods appropriate for their age and stage of development. They enjoy an exciting variety of practical activities like baking apple pies, writing shopping lists and experimenting with keeping tea warm. This ensures the children's interest is held and they are well motivated to learn. Children are developing confidence and independence because staff provide sensitive guidance. Children with learning difficulties are well supported by staff and outside agencies, in line with parents' wishes.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Behaviour is good and the spiritual aspect of children's learning is particularly strong. This results in a calm atmosphere which impacts positively on children's learning.

The leadership and management of nursery education are good. All staff work hard to achieve successful outcomes for the children. In order to improve the overall effectiveness of nursery education and build on the current developments new systems for monitoring teaching are in the process of being implemented. However, they have yet to be fully integrated into the school processes. The partnership with parents and carers is good. A useful exchange of information is undertaken through reports, meetings and daily contacts. Parents are actively encouraged to help children at home and strong communication between home and school helps to benefit children's development well.

Recommendations or actions to improve the funded nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of the nursery education the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure the system for monitoring and evaluating teaching are used effectively to improve the provision of early education.

School details

Name of school	Dudley House School		
DfES number	925/6016		
Unique reference number	120728		
Unique reference number (funded nursery education)	EY241066		
Type of school	Co-educational nursery and primary school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1966		
Age range of pupils	3-11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 35	Girls: 15	Total: 50
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 3	Total: 5
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 8	Girls: 5	Total: 13
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 3,360		
Address of school	1 Dudley Road Grantham Lincolnshire NG31 9AA		
Telephone number	01476 400184		
Fax number	01476 400184		
Email address	headteacher@dudleyhouseschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Ms Jenny Johnson		
Proprietor	North England Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church		
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey		
Dates of inspection	10-11 May 2007		