

Staleydene Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	357/6055
Unique Reference Number	133564
Inspection number	302950
Inspection dates	15-16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	John Coleman 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).

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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

Staleydene is a small school which was established on a different site in 2000 by the current proprietors. The move to the current accommodation took place in 2004. It is a non-selective independent day school for girls and boys aged 3-11 years. Class sizes are small with a ratio of 5.5 pupils to 1 adult. The school aims to provide a friendly, caring and family type environment. The ethos of the school includes aims such as, *'to educate to the highest possible standard...., to promote self discipline....., to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of secondary education and to promote Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical Development in each individual child regardless of race, creed and colour'*.

Evaluation of the school

Staleydene Preparatory School provides a good quality of education. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work and are right in their views. This is a good school. Teaching is good which ensures pupils make good progress in their learning. The curriculum is satisfactory and reflects a sound focus on the core subjects but with limitations in the provision for physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT). The level of day to day care is outstanding and pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils develop into confident and articulate young people. The school meets most of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is organised around the subjects of the National Curriculum and takes account of national guidance and published schemes of work. Most subjects have suitable policies and planning. However, although there are long term plans which describe what pupils will learn from week-to-week these are not detailed enough to explain how pupils of different ages and abilities, in the same class, will build on existing skills and knowledge. In the Foundation Stage pupils experience all areas of learning and there is a strong focus on developing pupils' social and communication skills. The school places appropriate emphasis in all classes on the teaching of English, mathematics and science and pupils are given opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 are taught Spanish. Pupils have access to a good range of resources in art

and design and in mathematics and English. However, learning is limited in some subjects by a lack of space or resources. For example, the school does not yet have internet access and there is only a small amount of outdoor space available for PE. Staff make good use of the local area around the school to enrich the curriculum. Pupils regularly visit the local library and perform a play in a nearby church at Christmas. Younger pupils go to the park to look at the changing seasons and they observe the variety of housing in the area. Older pupils enjoyed a visit to a local supermarket and could describe how this had made them more aware of healthy food choices. There is an annual trip to a place of interest further afield. There are no extra curricular activities.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. As a result, all pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils entering the school represent a full range of attainment and they achieve well so that standards are above average by the time they leave at the end of the Junior class. Some pupils are successful in selective secondary schools' examinations. The school has a good range of assessments which are regularly used and inform the annual reports to parents. However, insufficient use is made of this information to target the next steps in each pupil's learning, so that their skills and knowledge are progressively built on as they move through the school.

Teachers have a secure understanding of the subjects they teach and of how pupils learn. They respond quickly in support of each individual pupil so that pupils are guided well in their lessons and benefit from useful comments on their work. Pupils are developing a love of learning because teachers place a high value on their personal achievements and take every opportunity to celebrate and reward their efforts and successes. Classrooms display a wide variety of pupils' work depicting a range of curriculum studies which ensures that whatever talents a pupil has, these are able to be recognised. For example, in the Junior class, visitors are greeted by painted self portraits, papier mache masks, examples of writing, mathematical diagrams and a host of other good quality pieces of pupils' work. Teaching is characteristically formal in style with an emphasis on instruction and direction. However, teachers consistently use good questioning skills to consolidate, develop and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is a strength of the school. From an early age pupils are encouraged to explain their ideas. As a result many are very articulate and contribute confidently to discussion and conversation. Pupils behave outstandingly well and enjoy very good relationships with each other and their teachers. This helps ensure that all pupils concentrate well on their learning without distraction and they show interest and pride in their work. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers link subjects together well to help them make sense of new ideas and gain a thorough understanding.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school successfully develops pupils' self esteem and confidence through the consistent use of praise and encouragement by all staff. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are warm, friendly and respectful. Led by the excellent role model of the headteacher, staff are caring, supportive and attentive to pupils' needs. Pupils' moral development is strongly promoted through the high expectations which staff have of every pupil. In return, pupils' behaviour is outstanding; they are polite and co-operative with each other. Inspectors were greeted courteously by all pupils and it is clear that they have very positive attitudes to their work and school.

Pupils share a range of jobs and responsibilities such as locking the padlock on the school gate and helping at lunchtime. There are well structured opportunities for older pupils to help the younger ones; for example when the infant pupils share their snacks with the Nursery and Reception children. Social development for pupils is good and they learn to listen to each other and to value other ideas and opinions in assemblies and class discussions. Pupils are well prepared for later life by acquiring good numeracy and literacy skills. ICT skills are promoted less well.

Opportunities to contribute to the wider community are limited but include participation in an annual Christmas play which raises money for charity. Plans are in place to include a harvest festival this year. Pupils learn about other faiths through the curriculum for religious education (RE) and visiting parents have spoken to the pupils about Islam and Buddha. Links with a Nigerian school are in place and pupils learned about aspects of African culture when the headteacher of this school came to visit.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good and day-to-day care is excellent. Pupils are well supported. The needs of pupils who may need extra help or support are tactfully and carefully managed so all are able to contribute to school life and make progress. Pupils are clear that there is no bullying and that they all get on well together.

The school promotes healthy lifestyles well and even the youngest children can name the foods which are good for them. Pupils use resources safely and with great care. They move around corridors carefully, paying attention to the safety of smaller children. There are first aid kits in every classroom and hygienic hand wash in toilets. The staff have received first aid training.

Although there are policies in place which cover all the main areas of school life, some need updating in the light of current DfES guidance. For example, although risk assessments are carried out in a variety of areas, these are not sufficiently well

recorded. Procedures for child protection and safeguarding pupils are securely in place. The headteacher is the designated member of staff for child protection. Fire drills are regular and are carried out whenever a new child starts school to ensure that all pupils are familiar with the procedures. The school has acted on the most recent recommendations made by the fire officer. Attendance registers are accurate and admission records contain all necessary details. The school is aware of the need to put a plan in place in order to fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Most of the required checks are in place but some such as those for medical fitness records, need updating to bring records in line with current requirements.

School's premises and accommodation

The school comprises a main building providing three classrooms and a small reception hall. Outside, an outdoor hard surfaced playground is flanked by a wooden structured hall which is currently out of use due to roofing problems caused by vandalism. Alongside this is a demountable classroom which houses library resources. The proprietors have recently purchased a small adjoining area of grassed land which is planned to provide increased outdoor play space.

Good use is made of the limited space both indoors and outdoors. The playground surface is well maintained and provides adequate room for pupils to run around. It is used for PE activities which are suitably adapted, though for the older pupils the lack of space restricts opportunities for ball games. Classrooms are of adequate size, they are bright and well resourced. In some areas ventilation is unsatisfactory since the openings to windows are inhibited by internal security bars. The flooring is about to be replaced in parts of the school which is very necessary as parts of the laminate wood surface are loose and create a tripping hazard. At present the school does not have a separate area in which an ill pupil can be accommodated.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus provides a suitable overview of the school; it gives some information and guidance but requires updating to reflect staffing in the school and statutory requirements such as academic performance. Letters to parents provide additional information such as the contact details of the proprietors. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about school events and there is an annual social gathering for parents, pupils and staff. Regular daily contact between parents and staff allows matters of immediate concern

to be discussed. There are two formal meetings a year to discuss pupil progress. Parents receive an annual report with detailed information about the standards pupils reach in tests and about the progress they have made.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a suitable complaints policy which satisfies the current regulations.

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:

- maintain written policies relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school in compliance with DfES guidance (paragraph 3(2)(c)).

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 confirm their medical fitness and maintain references from previous employment. (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 pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l))
- improve ventilation (paragraph 5(p)).
- improve the flooring (paragraph 5(s))

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

- ensure that parents are aware they can request information on the number of staff employed at the school and their qualifications (paragraph 6(2) (k)).
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of academic performance (paragraph 6(2) (i)).

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:

- Improve the analysis of pupils' formal assessments in order to measure their progress more effectively.
- Ensure planning builds on pupils' existing knowledge and skills.
- Improve the curriculum provision for PE and ICT.

School details

Name of school	Staleydene Preparatory School
DfES number	357/6055
Unique reference number	133564
Type of school	Day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	Nov 2000
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 11 Girls: 11 Total: 22
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3000
Address of school	1a Pickford Lane/Town Lane Dukinfield Cheshire SK16 4TG
Telephone number	0161 3013434
Email address	staleydeneprep@yahoo.co.uk
Headteacher	Mrs M Ogbogu
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs E Ogbogu
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI
Dates of inspection	15-16 May 2007