

# Dame Catherine Harpur's School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	830/6020
Unique Reference Number	113023
Inspection number	322249
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Henry

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

Dame Catherine Harpur is an independent, non-selective primary school serving Ticknall and surrounding rural villages in Derbyshire. The school is run by a School Management Team, comprising teachers, elected parents and members of the local community. The school is registered as a limited company and has charitable trust status. There are currently 28 full time pupils on roll in two classes. One class caters for pupils aged four to seven years and the other for pupils aged seven to 11 years. The school also manages a nursery class situated in the same building. There are three classrooms, a library area, a pleasant garden at the rear of the school and a playground to the front. The school aims to provide an individual, child centred education in order to develop pupils' independence, sense of responsibility and prepare them to be responsible citizens.

## Evaluation of the school

Dame Catherine Harpur School provides a good quality of education. The school is successful in its aims of offering an individual, child centred education. Teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall and pupils make satisfactory progress. The provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development is good. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good, as are their relationships with staff and peers. Pupils are relaxed and happy and parents are pleased with the effort the school makes on their behalf. The provision for welfare, guidance and support given to pupils is good overall. The curriculum offers a wide range of activities that effectively involves parents in the school. The school has made improvements since the last inspection in meeting regulations regarding fire risk assessments, completing a single central record for vetting staff and improving the procedures for dealing with complaints. Although the school meets a majority of the regulations there remain a number which still need to be addressed.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good and pupils experience a wide range of activities during their time at school. The curriculum follows closely subjects of the National Curriculum. This is supplemented by French throughout the school and Latin for the older pupils. Emphasis is put on pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Since the last inspection teachers have improved the opportunities for pupils to undertake extended pieces of writing. A good feature of the educational provision is the

involvement of the local community and parents in sharing their skills and expertise. For example, pupils' art skills are developed using local artists and a parent organises football after school. There is also a wide range of educational visits, including residential trips. As part of their topic on 'The Romans', older pupils had a residential trip to Hadrian's Wall. Pupils also take part in the annual 'Rolls Royce Challenge' where set tasks develop their practical and thinking skills. These add immensely to pupils' enjoyment of their education and stimulate their learning.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall with some good teaching also taking place. Pupils are eager to learn and because of this they make satisfactory progress. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils have good vocabulary skills. They respond confidently when asking and answering questions and willingly take part in tasks and activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They know their pupils well and, as there are small numbers in each class, this enables teachers to give pupils individual attention. Pupils appreciate this, with one commenting, 'We get the attention we need if we want help'. Teachers plan effectively and provide work that meets the needs of different ages within classes. Teachers are successfully supported by teaching assistants. Work is marked conscientiously using appropriate praise; however, this does not always inform pupils how to improve further. Pupils do not take national tests at the age of 7 or 11 and as yet the school does not have a framework whereby pupils' performance can be measured. Also, while assessment takes place on a daily basis and mistakes are corrected, the school does not have a consistent system for assessment that tracks and monitors progress over time in order to ensure that pupils achieve their potential.

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school as shown by their positive attitude to learning and good attendance. They are welcoming and have the self-confidence to express their views about school and the activities they are involved in. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and, as a result, behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They co-operate well and form good relationships with adults and each other. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, one parent wrote about their children, 'They have developed their social skills with lots of time for play, interaction with other children and learn through play'. Bullying is not an issue pupils recognise and say they are confident to approach staff if they have any difficulties or concerns.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community through activities such as raising money for charities and performing plays for the local community. There is an active school council which raises money for the school through having a weekly 'potato day'. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through studying Judaism, Buddhism and the different ways people around the world celebrate Christmas. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of public services and institutions is effectively developed through a range of visitors, such as the police and local fire service. The school successfully prepares pupils for their future through developing their self-confidence and independence.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. Pupils are well cared for and their welfare is given high priority. Pupils are effectively supervised at all times and sound risk assessments are carried out for the premises and educational off-site visits. The school is vigilant about safety issues, has regular fire drills and fire-fighting and electrical equipment is serviced on a regular basis. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has effective safeguarding procedures and the school ensures that staff are trained to fulfil their responsibilities. There are effective policies to promote good behaviour and confront potential instances of bullying. However, the behaviour policy does not nominate sanctions in the event of serious misbehaviour. While the school does not provide lunches, pupils are aware of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise and they take advantage of the sporting opportunities offered by the school.

The school does not yet have a three year plan which shows how it will meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff have been subject to the Criminal Records Check to confirm their suitability to work with children. In addition, for new staff and parent volunteers, the school carries out appropriate checks on their suitability to work with children with regard to previous employment, identity and qualifications. Recently appointed staff who work in the school have also had appropriate medical checks. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school keeps a single central register of staff, as required.

## School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory in terms of classroom space and facilities. The school is in adequate decorative order and new carpets have added to the quality of the environment. Good use is made of the village hall for physical education and there are pleasant grounds at the back of the school for the pupils to use as an outdoor play area. There is a hard surface play area at the front of the school and pupils have the use of the local cricket ground for sports activities. The school does not have appropriate amenities for pupils who are ill and lacks sufficient washrooms and appropriate toilet facilities. However, the school has put in place plans and fund raising to rectify this issue. There is a general lack of storage space around the school.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The range of information provided by the school, to parents and others, has improved since the last inspection. The prospectus provides a good range of information for parents and the school website is updated to further keep them informed. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive and positive about the school. The pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that they are happy with the information they receive. This includes regular newsletters and a detailed annual report about their child's progress. However, the school does not make parents aware of the full range of information that they can request, such as the sanctions that may be applied in the case of serious misbehaviour and the names and qualifications of staff working in the school.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a comprehensive procedure for dealing with complaints that meets all the statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, parents are not informed if the school has received any formal complaints within the last school year.

## 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:

- establish a systematic procedure for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and use the information from such assessment to plan teaching in ways that ensure pupils can make further progress (paragraph 1(3)(g))
- provide a framework by which pupils' performance can be evaluated against either national norms or by reference to the school's aims (paragraph 1(4)).

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 promote good behaviour amongst pupils which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving paragraph 3(2)(d).

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

- improve the washroom facilities for staff and pupils taking account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- provide 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 the school's policy on discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide particulars of sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h)).

ensure that parents are aware that they can request particulars of;

- academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- the details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure 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)).

In order to fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 the school should prepare a three year action plan.





## School details

Name of school	Dame Catherine Harpur's School
DCSF number	830/6020
Unique reference number	113023
Type of school	Primary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1987
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 12      Girls: 16      Total: 28
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 2,850
Address of school	Rose Lane Ticknall Derby Derbyshire DE73 7JW
Telephone number	01332 862792
Fax number	01332 862729
Email address	damecatherines@hotmail.com
Headteacher	Ms M Whyte
Proprietor	Registered Charity under the Dame Harpur Trust and funded by parents
Reporting inspector	Jim Henry
Dates of inspection	20–21 May 2008