

# Canterbury Steiner School Ltd

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	886/6052
Unique Reference Number	119000
Inspection number	329691
Inspection dates	26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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 document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## 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.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

The Canterbury Steiner School is situated in pleasant rural surroundings in Kent. The mixed school buildings comprise a house, an oasthouse, and purpose built accommodation. The school's search for more appropriate and larger buildings nearby is at an advanced stage. It was founded in 1976 and offers educational provision for pupils aged from 3 to 17 years. There are 211 pupils on roll. The school is a member of the Steiner Waldorf Fellowship and closely follows the philosophy and principles of this movement. The emphasis throughout the curriculum reflects a holistic approach. It is run by a College of Teachers assisted by a non-teaching administrator. The school is divided into a kindergarten for children aged 3 to 6, a lower school for pupils aged 6 to 14, and an upper school for pupils aged 15 to 17. In their final year pupils take subjects leading to the GCSE as well as continuing with the Steiner curriculum. The school was last inspected in June 2005.

The school has applied for exemption from the reading, writing and assessment aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Hence these aspects were not inspected and no judgements are made. The school must teach all elements of the learning and development requirements unless exemption is granted by the Secretary of State.

## Evaluation of the school

The Canterbury Steiner School provides a good quality of education with a curriculum that has some outstanding aspects. Pupils are well cared for. In addition, the positive ethos created by following the Steiner philosophy is supporting outstanding personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The kindergarten provides children with an outstanding start to their education. The school has acted well on the recommendations of the last report and now meets all the regulations relating to independent schools.

## Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. The curriculum is good overall with some outstanding features. There are clear and coherent aims that are closely based on the Steiner international curriculum and on the theory of child development which underpins this. Therefore, in the kindergarten there is an emphasis on the development of creative, social and emotional skills. A more formal approach to the teaching of reading and writing is not introduced until children are seven years old. Pupils are not taught to use information and communication technology (ICT) until they are around 15 years of age. The school has an ICT suite but currently, access to computers is insufficient to support the older pupils' learning. The first two hours of each day provide the main lesson where one subject is taught for several weeks. This is followed by a range of subject based lessons which cover all the required areas of learning experience.

The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. It provides opportunities for pupils to acquire a very wide knowledge and range of skills through a balance of academic, physical, aesthetic and creative work. There is a broad range of subjects and good enrichment of the basic curriculum, especially in the lower school. Pupils talk keenly about activities such as an overnight camp in shelters they build themselves, and of a whole day walk in the surrounding countryside. Even so, the school does not provide many after school activities and pupils would like to see more.

The lower school curriculum is outstanding. This is the result of careful planning ensuring that effective links are made between subjects and that the creative nature of much of the work reinforces the pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, some very deep thinking about an ancient Irish myth was well supported through the high quality drawings made by pupils illustrating the legendary characters.

The upper school curriculum is good in most respects but has been through a period of some change. Since the last inspection the lack of availability of specialist staff resulted in disruption to the timetable and the availability of some courses. Pupils recognise this and say that they are keen for a period of stability. The school has a flexible and responsive approach to curriculum development that is based on rigorous self-evaluation and teachers co-operating and collaborating. The school has good links with other schools and colleges and transition arrangements are good. There is appropriate repetition and a rhythm to the teaching of topics with clear steps of development and progression. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and results in them making good progress especially for those who receive extra support. They have very clear individual education plans, precise targets and are well supported by the special needs teacher.

The quality of the teaching and the assessment of pupils' progress is good. The quality of the teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding but most is good. There is more inconsistency in the teaching and learning in the upper school following staffing changes. Teaching in the kindergarten is outstanding and has a major impact on the pace of children's development. Most of the planning identifies

objectives well and the teachers are very good at evaluating the impact of their teaching. Many plans are altered and changed as a result of reflection on the outcomes of an earlier lesson. Teachers know their pupils really well, helped by the fact they stay with a group throughout their time in the lower school. Small class sizes mean pupils benefit from one to one attention. Teachers interact with all of their pupils in every lesson and the ethos of encouragement and support is noticeable throughout lessons. Because of this, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive.

The school does not use external tests or assessments until the GCSE exam year. However, pupils' progress is monitored closely throughout the school. The special needs coordinator checks pupils at regular intervals to highlight any who may need extra support. The marking of pupils' work was raised as a weakness at the last inspection and, although some work has been done to improve this, it remains inconsistent across the school and does not always clearly give pupils sufficient guidance on how they can improve.

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, especially in their creative, social, physical and emotional skills. Most start school with broadly typical attainment for their ages, although a number choose the school because they have struggled with learning or had emotional issues in other schools. Excellent progress in writing and numeracy, and especially problem solving, is evident in the lower school. Throughout, the school is particularly successful in developing pupils' writing and creative skills. There is high quality art work evident in all years. The latest GCSE results indicate good performance overall. The expressive arts course is being replaced with one in the creative arts.

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

The quality of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is correctly judged by the school to be outstanding. One pupil said 'Teachers do not just teach us for exams, they teach us for life.' Another of the older pupils said 'We are allowed to learn from our mistakes and develop independence and our own individuality.' The pupils clearly enjoy school and talk enthusiastically about their work and play. Their positive attitudes are also evident in the good attendance levels and the way they take a full and active part in lessons and other activities. Behaviour is good and pupils say there is no bullying in the school.

There is a good emphasis on developing moral and spiritual strength, for example by studying people who have changed the world. Similarly, pupils remember learning about cultures and religions in geography and 'religion' lessons. A large majority of the parents say that they are very satisfied with the school and all it provides. Recent issues relating to staffing have resulted in a small number of parents feeling communication between school and home could be improved. Even so, the difficulties were dealt with appropriately and ideas for some school improvements recommended by a task group are being considered by the board of trustees. Older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to show responsibility by, for example, spending time helping younger ones.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision to establish the overall welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school makes healthy living a high priority and encourages good eating and exercise habits. Guidance in relation to sex and drug education is provided and the school's policy strictly adhered to. Suitable risk assessments are in place to safeguard pupils, especially regarding out of school activities. Child protection measures are appropriate and up-to-date training is in place. First aid training is also in place. Recruitment procedures meet requirements, including the appropriate criminal record checks.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and results in excellent progress in the children's learning. This is because of the excellent learning opportunities provided in the kindergarten. The excellent accommodation and resources, both indoors and outside, are used to great effect giving the children many opportunities to play and work together and to develop their creative, social and emotional skills, preparing them extremely well for their future learning. Planning is detailed and based on observation and evaluation of earlier work. The welfare, health and safety of the children are given a high priority in the organisation of activities. The staff know their children exceptionally well and provide very effective role models throughout the day. There is a clear balance between teacher-led and pupil-initiated activities, in line with the Steiner philosophy of daily rhythm and the creative curriculum. Especially good use is made of the outdoors, both close to the class and further afield. In one excellent session, children collaborated for an extended length of time building a castle in the sand pit. This illustrated well the high quality skills in speaking, listening, negotiating, sharing and co-operating evident amongst the children. Particularly noticeable was the way the older ones helped and involved the youngest. Children are confident and polite and very keen to share what they are doing with others. The teaching is excellent and cleverly balances intervention with allowing children the freedom to explore and learn. The kindergarten is outstandingly well led and managed and the staff make a very effective team.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

## 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 provision in the upper school to stabilise the curriculum and staffing through more cohesive management, and adequate access to ICT.
- Seek further ways to give the older pupils more responsibility.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of marking of pupils' work so that it supports their learning more effectively.

# Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

## The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

## Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

## Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

## The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	✓			
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?	✓			
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	✓			
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?	✓			



## School details

Name of school	Canterbury Steiner School Ltd		
DCSF number	886/6052		
Unique reference number	119000		
Type of school	Steiner primary and secondary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1976		
Age range of pupils	3-17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 109	Girls: 89	Total: 198
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 7	Girls: 6	Total: 13
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 7152		
Address of school	Garlinge Green Chartham Canterbury Kent CT4 5RU		
Telephone number	01227 738285		
Fax number	01227 731158		
Email address	info@canterburysteiner.co.uk		
Headteacher	College of Teachers		
Proprietor	Canterbury Steiner School Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms		
Dates of inspection	26 February 2009		