

Saddleworth Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	3536015
Unique Reference Number	105748
Inspection number	331357
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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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, the purpose of which is 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

Saddleworth Preparatory School was founded in 1988. It is a co-educational independent school for boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 11 years. It currently has 16 pupils on roll, all of whom are aged between 3 and 9. The few pupils with special educational needs receive additional support. The school is based on the top floor of a Victorian building, the ground floor of which is occupied by a separate nursery school, at Scouthead to the east of Oldham. The school has a large field for outdoor activities. The headteacher is one of the two joint proprietors.

The school aims to provide a broad and balanced education. It aims to promote the individual progress of pupils and provide opportunities for them to excel in whichever field they are talented. The school was previously inspected by Ofsted in June 2006.

Evaluation of the school

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils make good progress and academic standards are high. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary, as is pupils' personal development. The school is well led and managed, staff are dedicated and effective, and the quality of care is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and parents are content with the provision made for their children. The school meets nearly all of the requirements for registration and has made good progress since the previous inspection. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. A wide range of subjects is taught, including a modern foreign language. Subject coverage is carefully sequenced and well planned. This supports the good progress made by pupils and enables them readily to make connections between what they are currently studying and what they have previously learned. The resulting degree of continuity contributes well to the high standards they attain.

Provision for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 gives good coverage of the National Curriculum together with religious education and personal, social and health education. Pupils receive a well rounded education which equips them to understand the wider world; know how to live healthily, to take care of themselves and stay safe; to respect and co-operate with other pupils and adults; and to engage

in creative activities in art, design and technology, and music. Considerable emphasis is laid on enabling them to listen to the viewpoints of others and to engage in reasoned discussion. This is well supported by teaching to help pupils to become articulate and to express their ideas clearly. These attributes are strongly supported by the school's very effective coverage of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy throughout the school.

The curriculum is enriched by a range of external visits and internal activities, for example in drama. These, together with the lengths staff go to in order to capture the imagination and develop the specific interests and talents of individuals, promote a great deal of enjoyment of lessons and learning in general. This is also successful for the small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) who receive excellent and well planned, individualised guidance with effective support from specialists external to the school. The school adheres to the national Code of Practice for pupils with LDD.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers and teaching assistants are very effective in making use of the small class sizes to give individual attention to pupils, help them to develop their ideas and to explain subject matter in detail. They forge excellent relationships with the pupils, whose behaviour is exemplary. The staff have good knowledge of what they teach and the capacity to convey an enthusiasm for learning to all pupils. Pupils throughout the school learn in depth and at a good pace, making good progress. This also applies to the few who have learning difficulties who make very good progress as a result of patient and carefully planned teaching. Staff are well assisted in this by advice received from external specialists.

Pupils enjoy lessons and play, responding particularly well to the wide variety of activities provided. They clearly value attending school, cooperate willingly and are good at concentrating and applying themselves to tasks in a sustained and interested way.

Effective use is made of a good and up-to-date range of resources for learning. This supports the pupils' development of effective independent learning. Planning, both over the long term and for individual lessons, is thorough and responsive to the interests and progress made by particular pupils. Lessons are well led and managed, with teaching assistants making productive contributions and working well in tandem with teachers.

Pupils' work is marked frequently and carefully. Staff have a clear understanding of the progress being made by each pupil, and they use this effectively to plan lessons and activities.

Pupils throughout the school reach the high standards of which they are capable. In the small classes, and through dedicated teaching, they thrive and make good progress. This is particularly notable in the core subjects of English and mathematics

but it also applies in subjects throughout the curriculum and in the encouragement they receive to develop personally as individuals. Where necessary, pupils are given intensive tuition to reach the standards which teachers expect of them.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding throughout the school. Pupils thrive in the small and very well managed classes and enjoy their time here a great deal. Attendance is high, reflecting the pupils' motivation to learn and the strong parental support given to the school. The school's Christian ethos, the curriculum and other activities combine to promote pupils' spiritual development and to give them ample opportunity to reflect on moral and spiritual issues and their beliefs. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong, to consider the views of others and to understand how morals help us to live considerately and side-by-side with other children and adults. Staff set good examples and are effective in helping pupils to develop an insight into the feelings of others. This is well reinforced by the school's high expectations for pupils' behaviour and cooperation with each other in work and play. Social development is reinforced as pupils learn to share, listen, speak and take part in a range of cooperative activities. They quickly learn to get on well with each other and staff are vigilant in dealing with the occasional minor exception to this. Pupils readily accept responsibilities in class and carry them out diligently. Good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy contribute effectively to pupils' preparation for future economic well-being. Cultural development is strongly supported by a wide range of activities both in and out of school. These serve to broaden pupils' awareness of people and groups who have different characteristics to themselves, and in doing so help to promote cultural harmony well. They are also effective in helping the pupils understand our public institutions and services.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and enables them to feel happy and safe. The school has prepared all of the required documents and has effective procedures to ensure that the pupils are kept safe at all times. Risk assessments are in place for activities both inside the school and in the grounds. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken before out-of-school education visits. Anti-bullying procedures follow national guidelines closely and the behaviour policy details rewards and sanctions. The upper floor windows have safety glass, an improvement since the last inspection. Other recommendations in the last report relating to documentation have been attended to suitably. However, there is evidence of alterations and the use of correcting fluid in one of the attendance registers.

The headteacher is the designated person for child protection. Other members of staff are due to attend training from the local authority shortly. There are an appropriate number of qualified first-aiders on the premises while the pupils are

present. The school promotes healthy eating and lifestyles. Parents co-operate by sending healthy lunches and the school provides milk and water. Physical exercise is encouraged at break-times making good use of the extensive grounds. Pupils are taught about the beneficial effects of exercise in personal, social and health education, and in science.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school complies fully with requirements to check staff on their appointment and to maintain a record of safeguarding checks.

School's premises and accommodation

Accommodation is good. The school occupies the upper floor of a solid and well-refurbished Victorian building. The building is well maintained and staff go to considerable lengths to ensure that pupils use it safely and sensibly. Classrooms are roomy and provide bright, comfortable and well-ordered spaces for learning. They are well equipped with resources for learning, including those for information and communication technology. These resources are well organised by the staff for effective teaching and learning. Toilet and washing facilities are sufficient and hygienic. The school has access to extensive grounds which are well developed for outside play and for the pupils to grow plants.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Information of good quality is provided for parents on the school's attractive web site. The school canvasses parental opinions well. It has an effectively implemented policy for forging close working relationships with parents. Good levels of information are provided throughout the year on the progress of pupils. Messages about events are regularly circulated on-line. Parents are highly satisfied with the information which the school provides.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's policy and procedures for handling complaints meet all requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for meeting the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The well-planned curriculum promotes learning through interesting activities. The daily timetable is carefully planned to ensure that the children receive ample opportunity to engage in the full range of areas for learning and development.

The children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points. Activities are planned to meet the needs of individuals whether they work in small groups or independently. Excellent relationships abound in the classrooms and these

form a secure basis for the children's learning and willingness to cooperate. However, adults sometimes miss opportunities to respond to and develop children's contributions to lessons.

The children's personal development is outstanding. They grow in self-confidence and self-esteem which enable them to take responsibility in the day-to-day running of the setting, such as signing in at the start of the day. They understand how to stay safe and are sensible when using the stairs. Personal hygiene is emphasised effectively throughout the day and the children respond well. Their behaviour is exemplary and they work and play together amicably.

The children are helped to learn and develop effectively by staff who are committed to doing their best for young people. The good staffing provision enables children to enjoy individual and caring attention. The curriculum is planned thoroughly and the rooms are organised efficiently. Good quality assessments of the children's progress enable the teacher to plan work to meet each child's developing needs.

The welfare of the children is promoted successfully through policies relating to all aspects of the children's welfare, health and safety. All appropriate risk assessments and fire drills are undertaken and well thought out procedures for illness, first aid and medicines are followed. Staff have all had the required checks for their suitability to work with children.

The setting is led and managed efficiently. The headteacher and class teacher work together well and liaise on matters relating to the children. They are both clear about how to develop the setting in the future. The headteacher carries out lesson observations and reviews all planning and assessments. There are good links with parents who are kept fully informed about their child's progress. Resources are reviewed regularly to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are provided for well.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), 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 attendance registers in line with requirements
- ensure, as planned, that in the absence of the headteacher, the school has staff on site who have had appropriate training in safeguarding procedures.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- ensure that all opportunities are taken to note the children's contributions in lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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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		√		
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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	Saddleworth Preparatory School		
DCSF number	3536015		
Unique reference number	105748		
Type of school	Preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1988		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 9	Total: 14
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3900		
Address of school	1195 Huddersfield Road Scouthead Oldham Lancashire OL4 4AG		
Telephone number	01457 877442		
Email address	info@saddleworthpreparatory.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs N Garbutt		
Proprietor	Mr R and Mrs N Garbutt		
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI		
Dates of inspection	28–29 April 2009		