

Denby Grange School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	384/6120
Unique Reference Number	131136
Inspection number	331361
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI

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

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



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

Denby Grange is a small day school established in 2000 for pupils aged 11 to 16 who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some have additional mental health needs. There are 32 pupils aged 10 to 17 currently attending the school, with permission for the age range extension given for a fixed period by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. There are more boys than girls. The school is run by the Keys Care Group. It is situated in a semi-rural setting.

Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities. They have normally been excluded from a previous school or have persistently not attended. Nearly all pupils have a statement specifying the additional support that must be provided for them. A number of pupils are looked after in care placements, either in residential homes run by Keys or elsewhere, and attend school on a daily basis.

The school aims to provide a 'quality education for even the most challenging pupils'. Pupils are taught in groups of two to six pupils, each with one teacher and an assistant.

Evaluation of the school

Denby Grange provides good quality education. It meets virtually all the regulations. There are a few details missing from the information the school must provide for parents. The school has improved significantly since its previous inspection in 2006. It now provides a welcoming environment for learning. The school offers a structured placement which caters well for pupils' individual needs. The staff are highly skilled at managing challenging behaviour. As a result of this and the good teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning improve. They say that they are happy at the school and most pupils are making good progress.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good. The curriculum is good, based closely on the National Curriculum, with suitable emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills to make up the gaps in pupils' prior learning. The curriculum includes lessons in science, physical education, food, art, information and communication technology (ICT) and child care. A life skills programme develops skills required for independent living and a link with the Connexions service provides advice to pupils on the options

available to them when they leave school. A programme of personal, social and health education includes sex and relationships education, drug education and the importance of healthy lifestyles.

The schemes of work that underpin each subject are much more thorough than at the time of the previous inspection. They make clear how each subject will be delivered, the resources required and teaching methods to support this. They helpfully identify the opportunities for assessing pupils' progress.

The curriculum is enhanced by regular trips out of school, for example to the mining museum, a barge trip and visits to a working farm and to Tropical World. These add to pupils' knowledge about particular school subjects and foster the development of their social skills. Outdoor education, including an annual residential trip, is an important part of the curriculum. Through weekly physical education sessions pupils learn rock-climbing and try out water sports in the local area. There are regular sessions on football, rugby and netball skills. These all help to promote pupils' health.

Subjects are linked very effectively around a particular theme. For example, the Tropical World visit led to work on insects in science, imaginative literacy work in English and creative work making models in art. Such links were evident also in a good food lesson observed, where pupils read short biographies about famous chefs, researched their recipes on the internet and made one of their dishes.

There are increasing opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation for their learning, such as Entry Level qualifications in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and a certificate in food hygiene. The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation (ASDAN) provides further accreditation at bronze level. From September 2009 a few of the more able pupils will progress on to a full GCSE course in mathematics.

Every opportunity is taken across the range of subjects to reinforce the basic skills of numeracy and literacy by relating learning to everyday life, for example the mathematics of shopping and budgeting; and to use ICT to extend learning. The relevance of the curriculum to their lives and the good balance between practical and academic work are strong factors in pupils' improved attitudes to learning.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and resources are plentiful. Fun, independent work and lots of short well-planned activities help to engage and hold pupils' interest. Teachers use ICT very well to promote learning and to allow pupils to demonstrate their understanding. Class sizes are very small and one-to-one support is given to pupils as appropriate. Teachers' planning for lessons is thorough. They match work to pupils' needs very effectively to suit each pupil. Whole-class teaching allows pupils to develop concentration, listening skills and social skills of cooperation and interaction.

Teachers check carefully what each pupil has learnt and how well they have met their personal targets at the end of every lesson. Targets are changed weekly, following discussion with pupils. This keeps them motivated. Most make good progress, although progress is slower for a few pupils. This is because their attitude to learning and their concentration are improving more slowly than their peers.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils are good. Their social and moral development are emphasised throughout the school's curriculum. Most pupils learn to control their behaviour and so are able to make progress in lessons and in building positive relationships with others. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and are a major contributor to pupils' sense of well-being. 'They are our friends even though they are also our teachers' said one pupil. The trust between pupils and adults promotes pupils' self-confidence and self esteem. Pupils learn how to succeed. Teachers make it clear that their ideas are valued.

Pupils learn the importance of appropriate behaviour when out and about, on school activities locally and further afield. Pupils say how much they enjoy the annual residential visit, such as to Wales in 2008. This introduces new, challenging outdoor activities, fosters teamwork and individual organisational skills. In fundraising to support these activities pupils increasingly make a positive contribution to their school community. They also raise money for charity.

Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. Each term a 'Foods from around the world' theme provides a good opportunity to discuss different cultures and to think about attitudes to others. Pupils have produced a video on transport through a link to the local council. As their behaviour becomes more socially acceptable, the school is poised to seek further opportunities for pupils' personal development. For example, through the school council and in the local area; this is with a view to further developing pupils' confidence and awareness of the world around them.

The behaviour of a few pupils remains volatile, despite the best efforts of staff. This includes continued involvement in law-breaking.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

All the required policies and procedures are in place to help ensure pupils' safety, including in relation to fire prevention, first aid and risk assessments for school activities. One or two, such as the anti-bullying policy, require updating to meet recent guidelines. The proprietors organise a rolling programme of staff training.

The school supervises pupils closely. Teachers and assistants manage behaviour very effectively and follow a policy that rewards positive behaviour. The school pays very close attention to pupils' emotional health and well-being and quickly spots when individuals are having problems. Prompt, regular contact with parents and carers and

with external agencies and professionals supports the pupils and their families well. The outdoor activities programme plays an important part in encouraging a healthy lifestyle.

The PSHE programme provides warnings about the health risks of smoking and cessation programmes are offered. However, some pupils smoke outside on the school premises.

One parent's comment summed up the very positive views from parents, local authorities and professionals: 'Denby Grange School is the best thing that's happened for my son', noting an improvement in behaviour at home and praising the close relationship between home and school.

The school complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all the regulations. The required checks on staff have been completed.

School's premises and accommodation

The buildings are suitable. They comprise former office premises on one level that have been extended. There are several classrooms, each dedicated to a particular subject. The premises are clean and tidy, warm, light and bright, with plenty of space. The school provides a welcoming environment, with lots of pupils' work on prominent display.

There are a number of specialist rooms, including a small science laboratory, an art room, a small music room, an ICT room, a food technology room, a medical room, a room for careers/ Connexions and two common rooms for pupils. The outside playground area is adequate and allows for pupils to play ball games. Pupils go regularly to local sports centres for physical education lessons.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good, detailed annual report to parents, timed to coincide with pupils' annual reviews, which are usually held in April or May. These reports give the levels pupils have reached in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, together with details of their progress in other curriculum areas. In addition, parents receive information as to how well pupils are meeting their personal targets, which includes pupils' own views on their progress. A few pupils whose attitude to school has improved particularly well and who are now making good progress in core subjects also have specific academic targets.

The school prospectus provides nearly all the information required. However the school does not let parents know that they can ask for details about teachers'

qualifications, pupils' results in public examinations and the number of complaints the school may have received in the previous year.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the regulations. There has been only one complaint in the last year and this was resolved in discussion with the parents.

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 the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must ensure that parents are aware they can request:

- particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- particulars of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- a summary of staff qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- promote attainment further though building up skills, especially in core subjects, and consider extending the use of academic targets for individual pupils
- identify opportunities to promote personal development further, especially for those pupils who are successfully engaging with learning
- collate personal, social and health education, citizenship and religious education programmes to determine how these contribute to pupils' personal development and how well they meet pupils' needs.

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		√		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

Name of school	Denby Grange School		
DCSF number	3846120		
Unique reference number	131136		
Type of school	Day school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2000		
Age range of pupils	11-16, with current extension for age range 10-17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 22	Girls:10	Total: 32
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 21	Girls:8	Total: 29
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys:7	Girls:6	Total: 13
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,760		
Address of school	Off Stocksmoor Road Midgley Wakefield WF4 4JQ		
Telephone number	01924 830096		
Fax number	01924 830824		
Email address	denbygrangeschool@keyschildcare.co.uk		
Headteacher	Ms Jennie Littleboy		
Proprietor	KEYS care (Mrs Heather Laffin CEO)		
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI		
Dates of inspection	6–7 May 2009		