

# Old Vicarage School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	831/6002
Unique Reference Number	113013
Inspection number	332443
Inspection dates	20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne 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 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 school was established 75 years ago in a former residential Victorian building set in extensive grounds on the outskirts of Derby City. It is a non-selective school and prepares pupils for their secondary education, many of whom choose to follow on in the independent sector. There are 93 pupils on roll, aged 3 to 11 years. None of the pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes receives nursery education funding. There are a small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but none who has a statement of special educational needs. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school had a change of proprietors in August 2007. Its aims are to provide a 'sure foundation from the start' and to foster and develop a caring community where everyone feels respected and valued. The school was last inspected in January 2005.

## Evaluation of the school

The quality of the school, incorporating the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is good overall, with some outstanding features. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about it. Under new ownership, with fresh insight and vision, the good quality of care and education for its pupils has not only been maintained, but previous strengths have been built upon and improvements made since the last inspection. The school now meets all of the independent school regulations. Pupils' welfare, health and safety are given the necessary priority and are of high quality. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They display exemplary attitudes towards their work and each other. Their behaviour is also exemplary. The school meets its aims and pupils are well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their education.

## Quality of education

The quality of education overall is consistently good. The current proprietors have ensured that the good reputation of the school has been upheld and that it continues to meet its aims. Pupils here have an enthusiasm for learning and are well motivated. They work well independently but are confident to ask for help when

needed. They receive targeted support appropriate to their needs, enabling them all to make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in their work in lessons and over time. They achieve exceptionally well against national norms at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, with a larger than is usual proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. Pupils consistently meet the entry requirements of their chosen destination schools. They successfully engage with the wider world as the school is forging strong links with another school in Uganda, serving to increase their understanding of other cultures and communities. Community cohesion has been strengthened with a variety of local links with other schools and pupils participating in city festivals. National and international links are successfully promoted and engage the pupils well. Pupils are happy, friendly and self-assured. They communicate their ideas effectively to others. Staff celebrate pupils' achievements in lessons and through celebration assemblies. Consequently, pupils have a belief that they will succeed. The school intends that pupils should want to take their place in society and it nurtures a desire for them to contribute to the common good. This is evident as pupils willingly elect to take on special responsibilities, such as playing an active role in the school council, or acting as recycling monitors and appropriately sorting recyclable materials. Older pupils help around the school and take a full role in helping the younger pupils to develop.

The curriculum is outstanding because it is uniquely tailored to develop pupils' individual emotional, physical and intellectual needs. The programme of study in Years 1 to 6 broadly follows the National Curriculum. The school places strong emphasis on the core skills of literacy and numeracy. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly. Although it is not currently taught as a discrete subject, pupils use the ICT facilities consistently to enhance other areas of the curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular subjects and specialist teaching, for example in music and French, where lessons are of a good quality. Pupils benefit from regular swimming lessons and participation in sporting events. The take up of peripatetic music lessons is very good.

Pupils of all abilities are supported effectively to make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress and all pupils achieve very well. Class teachers know pupils very well and, because of small class sizes, they are able to offer very good quality individual support where necessary. This has a particularly significant impact on pupils' progress in core skills. For example, pupils' reading ages are often well beyond their chronological ages. Teaching is of a consistently good standard and is outstanding when it is tailored specifically to pupils' individualised learning needs and when it is dynamic and engaging, which it frequently is. Staff are appropriately self-evaluative and due to their professional reflective practice, work to continual improvement in provision. The need to more commonly share best practice in and out of the school has been identified.

Good relationships between staff and pupils enhance the learning that takes place. Pupils from an early age are taught to become independent learners and they have a responsible attitude towards this expectation. Staff have high expectations for standards of work, including presentation. This is made clear when lesson objectives

are shared with pupils. They are continually being given targets to aim for which they can be measured against. These are revised frequently. The breadth of abilities within a class is provided for effectively, and more able pupils are continually challenged to think independently. Work in books is always thoroughly marked and pointers for development are consistently shared. Pupils who are struggling are identified early and are given appropriate support. A new co-ordinator has been appointed to monitor this. Teaching assistants are used well to support in class and to provide targeted support outside the classroom. This means that pupils make at least good progress in all areas of the curriculum. All pupils have positive attitudes to learning and participate fully in lessons. There are systems in place to assess pupils very regularly. The reporting of progress to parents is continually improving and now meets requirements. This was an aspect that was not fully complied with at the last inspection.

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are given time to discuss their feelings and opinions in their frequent class assemblies, which also provide time for reflection. Moral issues are covered substantially in whole school assemblies, as well as through the curriculum. From an early age, pupils show a keenness to learn and are highly motivated. Pupils respect the adults in school and each other. They work together harmoniously and this is evident when they pair up to work on challenges that stem from similar targets which they have been set. Pupils are encouraged to support each other and this works very effectively. The school is welcoming to families from all backgrounds and actively seeks to promote inclusion in every aspect of school life. For example, it endeavours to nurture both boys and girls to take advantage of all of the extra-curricular activities on offer.

Through regular assessment, staff have a good insight into each child's strengths and weaknesses and plan their targets and any necessary support accordingly. Expectations, including those for pupils' behaviour, are made clear and pupils understand these. Behaviour is well managed throughout the school, including in the EYFS, and is outstanding. Pupils consistently show kindness and consideration to each other. This is particularly evident as the older pupils support the younger ones. The school offers a well organised environment where the resources are respected by pupils. They feel that they have a big role to play in promoting the ethos of the school and contribute well to developing a sense of responsibility towards themselves and others. Their self-esteem is high. With a small percentage of authorised absences, attendance is in line with the national picture. The virtually zero unauthorised absence rate reflects the pupils' pleasure in being at school.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The proprietors and staff are very conscientious in making sure that this is as good as it can be and their efforts are reflected in the way the pupils describe how they feel happy, safe and secure in a school that strives to get the most out of every individual. Staff are

deployed to ensure the proper supervision of pupils and the school maintains appropriate admission and attendance registers. Furthermore, the school ensures it fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. All appropriate policies are regularly updated and implemented, with all staff actively involved in following them. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and the school makes considerable efforts to involve the pupils. For example, health and safety advice is shared with pupils in assembly and pupils are given a reminder session at the beginning of each term. They are also informed about health and safety issues in relation to off-site visits and trips. The premises are now approved by the fire authority, following the installation of a new fire alarm system.

The current dedicated and hardworking staff have ensured that the points for development from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. More recently, pupils' welfare, health and safety at the school has received significant investment, bringing this up to a high standard. There is a newly appointed sick room which now meets requirements. Appropriate child protection arrangements are in operation with a named person responsible. The school's checks for suitability of staff are robust.

The school provides a good quality meal each day and pupils are reminded to drink water regularly. They understand the importance of looking after their bodies and the contribution that physical exercise makes to this. The pupils have many opportunities to be physically active in a wide range of ways. Games and swimming are very popular with the pupils and they leave the school as confident participants of sports tournaments.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS is developing well and is good overall, with some outstanding features. The warm welcome and family atmosphere ensure that children settle easily, quickly forming strong relationships with staff and peers. They soon learn the class routines, responding positively to praise and encouragement. Expectations are clear, consequently their behaviour is outstanding. The early learning goals for the EYFS form the basis of the curriculum, with an appropriate balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities. There have been recent improvements to assessment arrangements and longer-term planning. Good quality short-term planning directly relates to children's individual needs and their next steps in learning, identified through staff's regular observations of children. The environment is attractive and enhanced by displays of children's work. There is a suitable range of resources for most areas of the curriculum except for outdoor play and children's physical development, which is part of the school's current development plan. Currently staff compensate for this by taking the children outside for recreation and learning daily and by using upper school facilities for physical development sessions. By the end of the EYFS, children achieve the levels expected for that age in all areas of learning and they are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education because they are confident, enthusiastic and eager to learn. The children's good achievement in the EYFS is, in part, due to the favourable staffing ratios and high quality individual support which is given to each child. Leadership and management of the EYFS is

good overall. The EYFS co-ordinator works closely with parents and other agencies to ensure children's individual needs are met. There is a very positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from differing backgrounds. The provision for children's welfare is outstanding because all policies for the children's welfare and safety are implemented most effectively, including thorough risk assessments.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the school must:

- further develop an appropriate outdoor curriculum and resources.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- implement the school's recently developed procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching across the school to ensure all of the teaching is consistently as of the best.

# 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	Old Vicarage School		
DCSF number	831/6002		
Unique reference number	113013		
Type of school	Preparatory day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1933		
Age range of pupils	3–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 65	Girls: 28	Total: 93
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	Up to £5,466		
Address of school	11 Church Lane Darley Abbey Derby Derbyshire DE22 1EW		
Telephone number	01332 557130		
Email address	office@oldvicarageschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr M Adshead		
Proprietor	Mr M and Mrs J Adshead		
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI		
Dates of inspection	20 January 2009		