

Deepdene School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	846/6007
Unique reference number	114641
URN for registered childcare and social care	EY308513
Inspection number	341948
Inspection dates	18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey

Age group: 0-8

Published:

Reference no: 090071

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090071

© Crown copyright 2009



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², 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.

The inspection of registered provision³ was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.⁴

This was a light touch inspection 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 is located in Hove, East Sussex. It was registered to provide day care from 2005 and is divided into three departments: the toddler unit, the nursery and the pre-preparatory unit. The school receives children from the age of six months to eight years. It is non-denominational and non-selective and draws its pupils from the local community having been founded in 1948. The school is open from 8.00am until 6.00pm during term time for childcare, and for education in term time from 8.30am until 3.20pm. The school offers a holiday play scheme and children can attend full day-care sessions within the day. The aims of the school are to enable children to become self-motivated learners with enquiring minds and through their work to become confident, competent, considerate and compassionate.

The school occupies two floors of a large house in a residential area. There are 200 children on roll: 68 of these receive funded nursery education and 14 children are identified as having English as an additional language. Six children are on the register for special educational needs and/or disabilities and these needs range from speech and language or communication difficulties to specific learning difficulties. The school has declined to complete its ethnic classification of pupils at the school.

Evaluation of the school

This a good school where children are very happy and very well cared for in a safe and stimulating environment. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The school meets all of the regulations except one. The procedures for

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49

safeguarding are mostly in place except for the medical checks on staff. At the time of the last inspection in February 2007, the school was judged to be good and complied with nearly all of the regulations. It was asked to improve facilities for sick children and to give details to parents about how they can contact the proprietor at all times. These regulations are now met.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. There are good policies in place to cover National Curriculum subjects and two modern foreign languages. These good elements of choice within a richly resourced curriculum, together with age-appropriate subject matter, are enabling children to learn basic skills well and to make good progress from a very young age.

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make equally good progress as they are all well integrated and supported by all staff. Learning is made fun, practical and meaningful, which is what leads to children achieving high standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they are seven years old. Many gain scholarships to other schools at the age of eight. The school prepares them well for their future life. A wide range of after-school clubs, including speech and drama, football, computer, tennis, knitting and singing, and additional childcare is offered before and after school. The quality of the curriculum is good.

Good teaching and good planning with high levels of high quality resources, which are very well used, are the particular strengths of the school. There is a high ratio of adults to children, with a high level of specialist teaching in many subjects, including science, physical education, music, information and communication technology (ICT) and French and Spanish. Teaching is consistently good across the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, because teachers' planning is thorough and monitored on a regular basis by the headteachers. The children's work is assessed thoroughly and each teacher knows each child individually and how well s/he is doing at school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to ask good and pertinent questions that test children's knowledge, such as in science and mathematics. Children relate well to all adults, including teaching assistants, and feel they are well look after. There are good records of assessment on each child and national tests are administered at the end of Key Stage 1 to compare children's attainment with national averages. The oldest children work well in class and can write in full sentences and use the correct punctuation when writing long prose, including speech marks. Children develop a good understanding of mathematics and the oldest ones were working confidently with equivalent fractions. There were some lovely displays of art work around the school in both 2D and 3D illustrating the range of work undertaken by the children.

Children have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and are confident in their literacy and numeracy. The school is currently without its own library and does not take children regularly to a local one or use the computer room to access the internet for research purposes. This is limiting the opportunities for the older children to undertake independent research when studying a topic, even though teachers do supply topic books for use in the class and there is a wide range of reading material throughout the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Children enjoy their time at school; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Wherever observed, all children, even the youngest were happy to do what was asked of them. Children are enthusiastic learners and get on well socially with each other and with the wide range of age groups in the school. They air their views through a school council and support each other through a buddy system designed to help new children settle at the school. Attendance is below the national average because the school has some children who are absent for medical reasons. In addition, there are families who take extended holidays during term time and some who have extended visits to families abroad.

Children raise money through charities both locally and abroad. They have a good moral awareness of what is right, and a clear understanding of those less fortunate than themselves. They are active in the local community, regularly singing to the elderly at Christmas. Behaviour is excellent. Although children study different faiths through their religious studies lessons and also visit churches, they have a more limited understanding of what it is like to live in a multicultural society. For example, the oldest children in the school had difficulty naming some key faiths of the world. Children often go off-site to visit the local area such as the Brighton Pavilion and local museums, and they make use of the local sports facilities. Visitors come to the school and there are many opportunities for playing and working together.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Children are very well cared for and this area of provision is good. There are written policies in place to promote the welfare of children and they say they feel safe at school and that there are always adults around to ask for help. They say there is no bullying: 'Not at all,' said one child. Parents confirm that the environment of the school and grounds is safe and comment favourably on the very good adult-to-pupil ratios. They state that the school is excellent in every way and that their children are happy because of the staff efforts. Comments such as, 'My child loves being at school and has really grown in confidence and is excited about learning new things,' are typical of the remarks made by parents.

All children eat a school lunch. A few parents commented that the menu was not healthy. However, it is well cooked and delicious, although the menu offers no

healthy options, such as a salad choice on a daily basis. When asked, children know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The menu is not available to be taken home for children to discuss with their parents, although parents can request to see one and it is displayed on the notice boards. Parents raised the issue of the limited choice for lunches and would like to know more about what their children are eating.

All staff have undertaken first aid and child protection training and these qualifications are regularly updated. The school has established suitable procedures for ensuring that, prior to taking up their responsibilities, all teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers and the proprietorial body are checked for their suitability to work with children. The required checks have been completed and recorded in a single central register as prescribed. At the time of the inspection, the school had not carried out checks on all staff, appointed from 1 September 2003, to assess their medical fitness. Fire checks are carried out and the school tests the fire escape procedures regularly. The school fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with broadly expected levels of expertise for their age in literacy and calculation. They make good progress in all areas of learning, attain independence and are ready to start more structured work by the end of Reception. Stimulating displays of children's work and a welcoming environment help children to develop confidence and feel safe. The strength of the provision is the resources that are available for children to choose and the curriculum that provides a wide range of exciting activities and experiences which promote learning effectively. Visits to local areas such the Sea-life Centre extend the curriculum well. The outdoor area is used effectively but because there is no direct exit from classrooms, there is a restriction in enriching children's experiences by allowing them to make choices about if they want to learn outdoors or inside.

Teaching is consistently good. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support children's learning. A good balance of teacher-led and children's own chosen activities provide valuable opportunities to develop independent learning skills. Children are able to start making choices for themselves from the activities on offer. Staff are dedicated and look after the baby groups very well. Children enjoy eating their snacks and drinks independently. When finished, they choose from a wide range of toys and construction materials to make towers and work alongside others. They push, pull and rotate toys and enjoy the sounds they make. Other children listened to songs in French, joining in with actions of marching, dancing and jumping. When some children had had enough of French singing they independently chose books to read and enjoyed looking at the pictures. Health and safety is of paramount importance. The medicine-giving policy is adhered to rigorously and good hygiene principles are followed when changing nappies.

Older children in the nursery classes learn to recognise and say letter sounds and use their knowledge effectively when they read and write. Children were making jellies and models of 'Jack in the Box' to link with the letter 'j' and its sound that they were practising. However, in this class some opportunities were missed for children to become independent learners as jelly was mixed and poured by an adult and the 'Jack in the box' was cut by staff. Many opportunities for counting are offered, such as the number of bricks used to make towers and, as a result, children make good progress.

Health and safety is of paramount importance. The medicine-giving policy is adhered to rigorously and good hygiene principles are followed when changing nappies. A good record is kept of any food or other allergies. Risk assessments of the environment are rigorous to keep all children safe and free of infections. Good school lunches cooked on site promote healthy lifestyles.

A very strong partnership with parents allows all children to settle quickly. Parents are skilfully involved in their children's learning through receiving regular information about the curriculum and their children's progress through meetings with staff and

six-monthly reports. Children's personal development and behaviour are outstanding. This is because all adults ensure that the welfare and well-being of each child is well supported. All staff have completed training in first aid for children in the early years provision. Risk assessments are completed carefully when children go out on trips, such as visiting the local park. They happily share equipment, concentrate and work cooperatively because of the thoughtful way that staff have organised the resources.

The leadership of this stage of education is good. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively; staff training needs are highlighted and provision is made to improve expertise. Children's progress is monitored through staff assessments which highlight what children can do. However, the tracking of progress is not yet used effectively to ensure that all staff are certain that children are making the highest levels of progress of which they are capable.

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 suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure checks are carried out on all staff, appointed from 1 September 2003, to assess their medical fitness (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

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:

- enable children to develop a better understanding of life in multicultural Great Britain by further enhancing their understanding of different beliefs and cultures
- develop children's research and enquiry skills through more frequent personal use of the school internet and the local library.

Early Years Foundation Stage

- encourage children to be more independent by giving them more opportunities to learn through making their own mistakes when doing practical activities
- develop assessment procedures so that information is used consistently to set individual targets at key points so that the school is clear about how much progress children are making.

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 and effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

What are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		√		
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		√		
How effective is the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage?		√		
How good is the overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		√		

School details

Name of school	Deepdene School		
DCSF number	846/6007		
Unique reference number	114641		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY308513		
Type of school	Pre-preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1948		
Age range of pupils	0–8		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 31	Girls: 34	Total: 65
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 72	Girls: 63	Total: 135
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 46	Girls: 39	Total: 85
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 4	Girls: 2	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5250		
Annual fees (childcare)	£50 per day		
Address of school	195 New Church Road Hove East Sussex BN3 4ED		
Telephone number	01273 4189984		
Fax number	01273 415543		
Email address	info@deepdeneschool.com		
Headteachers	Nicola Gane and Liza Clark-Darby		
Proprietor	Nicola Gane and Liza Clark-Darby		
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI		
Dates of inspection	18 November 2009		