

Haddon Dene School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	886/6022
Unique Reference Number	118962
Inspection number	341967
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Richard Winter

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

Haddon Dene School was founded in 1929 and occupies two large, adjacent former houses near to the centre of Broadstairs, Kent. The school currently has 136 pupils aged three to 11 years. There are 16 pupils below the compulsory school age. It is non-selective and provides additional support for pupils with specific learning difficulties. Currently, the school has no pupils who have statements of special educational need. Class sizes are generally less than 16 pupils. In most year groups there is one class; the exception is in Year 6 where there are two classes, both of which are mixed ability. Almost all pupils take the 11-plus examination in their final year and go on to local grammar schools. The school offers childcare in the Early Birds and After School clubs for some pupils over the age of three. Registration for this is not required.

The school aims *'to value the individual nature of each child'* and that *'every child, including the slower learner, must be given a sense of self-worth'*.

The school was last inspected in March 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Haddon Dene is a good school which provides a good quality of education with particular strengths in spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils enjoy their schooling in a very positive atmosphere where staff and pupils pull together to produce a real family community. Provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school meets most of the regulations. The majority that are unmet relate to the provision of information to parents, carers and others. The school has addressed the regulations that were unmet at the time of the last inspection. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the quality of education is satisfactory.

Quality of education

Children's learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The quality of education in the main school is good overall.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced in both academic and non-academic areas and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum.

Programmes of study are mainly based on nationally recognised schemes. There are strengths in some areas of the curriculum especially in sporting, music and drama activities. A majority of pupils participate in a full programme of trips and engagements within and beyond the school day, which pupils enjoy and appreciate. Good links are sometimes made across subjects such as English and history for example, when writing about famous figures from the past.

Curriculum provision is satisfactory for pupils with learning difficulties. Additional resources are not routinely provided that challenge higher attaining pupils. Systems for assessment, reporting and tracking of pupil progress are satisfactory but records of attainment are not used consistently to plan subsequent lessons.

Pupils are given responsibilities through participation in community projects and posts within the school, such as head boy and head girl, house captains and the elected school council. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been successfully implemented since the time of the last inspection.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. The strength of teaching lies in the shared enjoyment of learning which allows most pupils to make good progress. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm has a significant impact on the positive attitudes of pupils. Teachers plan lessons to include a variety of activities, which involve pupils fully in their learning. This is particularly so in mathematics and science lessons. Lessons proceed at a good pace, pupils concentrate well and they respond positively to the frequent opportunities they get to work together. Pupils appreciate the individual help and attention they receive. Teachers' skilful questioning is effective in checking that pupils have understood the work.

As a result of assessment procedures both in lessons and through the tracking of attainment by marking and testing, teachers know how well pupils are doing. Work is marked thoroughly. Teachers sometimes write informative comments that indicate what pupils have to do to improve, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teachers give praise for good work. However, written comments do not often give pointers on how to improve work in Years 1 and 2. Targets are not identified in pupils' books so that they can be clear about the next steps to take in their learning. In some lessons, teachers make the most of assessment information to plan different tasks that will challenge all levels of ability. However, this is not consistent practice across all classes. This results in some higher attaining pupils not always making as much progress as they might. In the best lessons, the lower attaining pupils are given resources better suited to their needs and higher attaining pupils are given extension tasks that challenge rather than fill in time. The special needs co-ordinator is very effective in supporting a small number of pupils with learning difficulties. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons for individual support, work is well matched to their needs and based upon a thorough understanding of these. Individual education plans, where provided, are detailed and kept up to date with clear strategies and provision for review. Teachers do not always ensure that when classroom assistants are present, they are used effectively to support learning.

The progress that pupils make is good and a very high proportion passes the 11+ examination, (with some 90% being accepted in local grammar schools). Pupils also take National Curriculum tests which show that attainment in reading, mathematics and science is above expectations. Pupils consistently make good progress in these areas across the age range. However, test results show that their writing skills are not as strongly developed, despite teachers encouraging pupils to pay particular attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar and providing opportunities to write in a wide variety of styles.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, with particular strengths in social and moral development. The newly formed school council has been effective in helping to organise fund raising events and initiating ideas for improvements in the school environment. The school has worked closely with local homes for the elderly; pupils visit these at Christmas and distribute produce collected at the harvest festival. They raise funds for medical research, for example by running a teddy bears' picnic, and for 'Children in Need' through running cake and toy stalls and sponsored runs and skips.

The behaviour of all pupils is good. Their sense of moral development is fostered effectively by staff so that pupils support each other well and often take the initiative in doing so. Pupils particularly appreciate the friendly and supportive atmosphere engendered by the staff and their fellow pupils. Some remark that the school is like a big family, so that no one feels lost. New pupils settle in very quickly for this reason, even when joining established friendship groups.

Attendance levels are good and many pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including drama, art, orchestra and choir. The school is very successful in sporting competitions against larger schools.

There is a wide variety of visits to local museums, for example to Chatham Dockyard and Hever Castle. The school recently organised, for the first time, a well attended trip to Holland for all Year 6 pupils; this linked in well with pupils' study of Anne Frank. Pupils gain an understanding of public institutions and services in England through for example, learning about the work of the local lifeboat service, which is of great importance in the local community.

Pupils, throughout the school, learn about a variety of other cultures and festivals. For example, the school recently invited parents to demonstrate Indian cooking. There have been mini workshops to experience music from Africa, India and Indonesia. Pupils are prepared well for life beyond the school; for example, they have set up a school tuck shop which is run as a business.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school has an anti-bullying policy but it lacks sufficient detail, such as a clear definition of all types of bullying and in what circumstances sanctions will apply. Systems to ensure the effective monitoring and review of the policy's implementation are not clearly laid out. However, in practice, there are few incidents of bullying and when they do occur they are dealt with effectively. While the vast majority of pupils feel safe, secure and happy, a small minority of pupils say that there is some unkindness and that they only sometimes feel that they have someone they can talk to.

All other policies comply with the regulations including child protection, behaviour and sanctions and health and safety procedures for educational visits. The school child protection officer is not yet qualified but will attend an appropriate course in July of this year. All other safeguarding procedures to protect children are in place. Pupils are closely supervised. Risk assessments are carried out thoroughly and a number of staff are qualified in first aid. Medicines are stored safely and accidents are properly recorded. The first aid policy however, lacks detailed guidance for staff on certain hygiene procedures.

Pupils are encouraged to be healthy, as many get involved in sports. The school has enjoyed particular success, for example, by winning the local cross country shield for the second year against many larger schools and in national swimming competitions as well as in events against other Kent schools. Hot lunches are provided; there is a healthy choice which includes salads and fruit. However, pupils feel that the menu could be more varied.

The school has admitted pupils with disabilities and provided sufficient access for them. The school has drawn up a suitable audit of accessibility to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

The school has carried out a fire risk assessment which identifies potential hazards and there are weekly checks to ensure that all safety equipment and measures are in place. All fire safety equipment is checked regularly by an external contractor. However, not all fire drills are properly recorded in the book provided for the purpose. Admission and attendance registers are kept correctly.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

There are appropriate safeguards to ensure that pupils do not encounter unsuitable adults by ensuring that all staff are thoroughly checked before their appointment is confirmed. The school has correctly completed a single central register of staff.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are adequate overall and enable pupils to work effectively. A number of classrooms are just adequate in size for the numbers of pupils they contain.

However, the Year 1 classroom is too small. The buildings are well maintained, with good attention to cleanliness and health and safety. The school environment is attractive, with good displays of pupils' work. A school library has been established. There is now a specialist information and communication technology room and rooms suitably equipped for individual learning support. There are now a number of electronic whiteboards in classrooms and there is a planned programme to install one of these in each classroom. The school has a hall and audio-visual room with an adjacent, newly constructed outdoor classroom. The school uses a local pavilion for performances and prize-giving and local playing fields and swimming facilities for physical education.

The school has sufficient washrooms and now has a room for pupils who are ill but this does not contain a washbasin. The infants' toilets do not have a hot water supply. The classrooms on the second floor, while not in regular use have no alternative means of exit in the event of an emergency evacuation other than one narrow staircase.

The main playground is adequate in size. There is a separate area for the youngest children that has a good safety surface and is adequate for the number of pupils in this age group; however, the area does not have sufficient equipment.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

A number of the regulations concerning information in the prospectus are not met. Although much of this information is provided in the school handbook for parents, it is not available to prospective parents. There is no reference to various policies that are available on request, such as welfare, health and safety policies, the curriculum, particulars of academic performance and details of staff.

The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school but a small minority say that they are not kept well informed about their child's progress. Annual reports do not contain data that the school has, such as National Curriculum levels, which show details of attainment.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written and fair complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy coming to school and achieve the expected early learning goals for their age. They make satisfactory progress within a caring and supportive environment. The staff in the Nursery and Reception classes make sure that the children are cared for and they help them to adjust to school life quickly and confidently. Consequently, personal, social and emotional development is good.

Children quickly learn the school's routines and boys and girls mix together willingly. Adults are calm and quietly spoken with the children. They ensure their welfare, health and safety, and all children are valued equally as individuals. Satisfactory teaching helps the children to learn and develop through a variety of activities that are designed to help them increase their skills in communication, language, literacy and numeracy.

Children improve their creative skills and knowledge and understanding of the world around them, through practical activities when engaging in painting, construction play, rolling out dough and using computers. Children in the Reception class, particularly, enjoy talking about their newly hatched chicks and following the course of a little stream of water in a sand tray. However, the curriculum is not fully implemented in the Nursery because children do not have a sufficient balance of opportunities that include adult-led and free-choice activities. This is because there is too much emphasis on formal learning and not enough focus on learning through structured play and independent choice. The outdoor area is not used sufficiently to allow children to move freely indoors and outside during daily sessions and there are no large wheeled toys or tricycles for them to play with and no climbing frame. Nevertheless, children handle small equipment confidently. The school provides clean accommodation which has attractive displays of children's work to stimulate learning. The provision is led and managed suitably by the head teacher who has a clear vision for the future development of this phase of education.

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:

- prepare a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DCSF guidance 'Bullying: don't suffer in silence' (DCSF 0064/2000) (paragraph 3(2)(a)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide an alternative means of evacuation from second floor classrooms (paragraph 5(g))
- provide hot water in the infants' toilets (paragraph 5(k))

- provide water and a means of washing in the first aid room (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide the full name of the proprietor along with an address for correspondence during term time and holidays and also a telephone number on which he can be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)).

In addition the school should make the following information available and ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are aware they can request it:

- information on the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6(2)(g))
- details of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions which the school may adopt (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

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

- ensure that the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage children meets statutory requirements and is appropriate to their needs (paragraph 1(2)(h)(ii)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the use of marking and assessment to help pupils know what to do next to improve their work and set clear targets for them particularly to improve their writing skills

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	Haddon Dene School		
DCSF number	886/6022		
Unique reference number	118962		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1929		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 63	Girls: 68	Total: 131
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 3	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,950 - £6,135		
Address of school	57 Gladstone Road Broadstairs Kent CT10 2HY		
Telephone number	01843 861176		
Email address	secretary@haddondene.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr D Alexander		
Proprietor	Mr Ali Khan		
Reporting inspector	Richard Winter		
Dates of inspection	9–10 June 2009		