

The Drive Preparatory School

Independent school progress report

DCSF registration number	846/6020
Unique reference number	131127
Inspection number	345624
Inspection dates	23 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

Age group: 7-16

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Purpose and scope of the visit

This inspection visit was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

The visit was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

The Drive Preparatory School is a co-educational school for children aged six to 16 years. It is non selective, and is located on two sites on a main residential road in Hove. The sites, comprising the preparatory department and the upper school, occupy large houses and are within a 10 minute walk of each other. The school opened in 1996 as a preparatory school for children aged three to 14, extending its age range to 16 years in 2002. It now takes pupils from the age of six. It supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and there are three pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. There are currently 64 pupils on roll. The first inspection of the main school leading to a published report was in October 2007.

Context of the visit

The Drive Preparatory School was inspected in October 2007, when a number of regulations were not met. The school submitted several action plans after this inspection and evaluations were carried out. The school was then judged to still fail to meet a number of regulations. In July 2009 an education and social care inspector visited the school on an unannounced visit as a result of a complaint concerning aspects of the welfare, health and safety of the pupils and the condition of the school's premises and accommodation. The inspectors concluded from the evidence based on actions taken by the school since the last inspection and during the visit, that the school was failing some standards relating to child protection, welfare, health and safety, premises and accommodation. The school submitted a further action plan which was evaluated in August 2009 and they were requested to submit additional evidence, which they did in October 2009. This progress monitoring visit is to evaluate the progress the school has made in implementing the action plan.

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

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

There were a number of regulations that the school did not meet at the time of the inspection in 2007. To improve the quality of education the school were asked to increase resources, especially for science. The school increased their range of resources, including those for science. They were required to establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, so that the information could be used in planning a range of activities to sufficiently challenge all pupils. The school assessment framework is detailed and thorough and the information gained is now used effectively by staff in planning their lessons. These lessons are suitably planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including both the more and less able.

There were a number of regulations that the school did not meet to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. The safeguarding policy met the current guidance and the member of staff responsible for safeguarding was trained but not at the appropriate level. The staff member has attended training to Level 3 in Safeguarding Children in October 2009 and the rest of the staff received updated training in November 2009. The policy for visits outside school did not meet the current guidelines. This policy has been reviewed and now meets requirements. All visits made outside school are carefully risk assessed. The sanctions to be used to promote good behaviour were not clearly defined in the behaviour policy. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and now meets the regulations. The school fire safety procedures were not sufficiently rigorous as the school were unable to show evidence of a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by a risk assessment. This has been rectified. A new fire safety system was installed in August 2009 and a detailed fire risk assessment has been carried out. Regular, documented fire drills are carried out and all appliances are maintained annually. The pupils were not adequately supervised at the beginning and end of the school day. The school staff now rigorously monitor and record the arrival and departure of pupils. The school did not fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act but has now devised a three-year plan, which meets requirements.

The school checks the suitability of all staff to work with children and holds the information on a single central register.

There were a number of issues related to the premises and accommodation, which the school has now successfully addressed. There is now sufficient access for all pupils including those who may have special needs; the classrooms are suitable and do not constitute a health and safety hazard; separate, labelled toilets are available for boys and girls; there are appropriate facilities for pupils who may be ill; the school no longer prepares food for pupils but the serving areas are clean and hygienic; the classrooms and corridors are clean and tidy; the lighting, heating and ventilation in all areas of the school is satisfactory; there is a satisfactory standard of decoration and maintenance throughout the school with an annual planned programme of redecoration and the flooring is in good condition.

Parents and carers are now provided with all the information required; these include the policy on arrangements for admissions and exclusions and the provision of an annual account of the income received and expenditure incurred to be submitted to the local authority if there is a pupil on roll with a statement of special educational need. The complaints procedure meets the regulations and now includes the inclusion of a person independent of the management of the school on the panel hearing at the formal stage and the requirement to keep written records of all complaints. The school has made good progress in implementing its action plan.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements.

School details

Name of school	The Drive Preparatory School		
DCSF number	846/6020		
Unique reference number	131127		
Type of school	Preparatory and Senior School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1996		
Age range of pupils	6–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 39	Girls: 25	Total: 64
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 3,000 - £ 5,850		
Address of school	101 The Drive Hove East Sussex BN3 3SE		
Telephone number	01273 738444		
Fax number	01273 738444		
Email address	enquiries@driveprep.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs S Parkinson		
Proprietor	Mr N Faulkner		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton		
Dates of inspection	23 November 2009		