

Cundall Manor Preparatory School

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI
Social care inspector	Leonard Hird

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, 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 boarding provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000³ having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.

Information about the school

Cundall Manor School is a non-selective co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of three and 16 years. The school opened in January 1959 for pupils aged five to 13 years and a nursery was added in 1996. In 2004 the upper age range was increased to 16. The school is a registered charity with a board of governors. The school is registered for 500 pupils and there are currently 381 pupils on roll; of these, 51 are boarders. There are 45 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, some of whom receive nursery funding. The school caters for the full range of academic ability. A very small proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school is situated within its own extensive grounds on the edge of the Vale of York. The school was last inspected in November 2006. The last inspection of boarding was in May 2009 and the last inspection of the Early Years Foundation Stage was in July 2008.

The school's motto is 'Vincit Veritas' (Truth Prevails). The school aims to: 'assist each individual to achieve their full academic and personal potential so as to become active members of the school, the local community and wider society.'

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education is outstanding. The school meets its aims very successfully. The curriculum and teaching and assessment are outstanding. The provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding and the provision made for their welfare, health and safety is good. The overall effectiveness of boarding is good. The provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also good; staff have sustained the strengths noted in previous inspections. The school suitably safeguards the welfare of all its pupils and

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 www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000014_en_1

it has produced all the relevant policies and guidelines. The school meets all of the regulations necessary for its continued registration as an independent school.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding. In the Early Years Foundation Stage it is based on the six areas of learning. The curriculum in other year groups is based on the National Curriculum and on the requirements of nationally accredited courses and qualifications. In Years 1 to 6, teachers focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and this ensures that pupils have a very good grounding in the basic skills. An additional modern foreign language, Latin, drama and games are added to the curriculum in the main school and the curriculum expands further in upper school. In Years 7 and 8, pupils study for the Common Entrance Examination and in Years 10 and 11 pupils follow GCSE courses. Some pupils follow vocational pathways and the school plans to introduce more vocational subjects in the future.

The curriculum is increasingly well adapted to the needs of individual pupils. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those that need a little extra support, is outstanding. The learning support department supports individual pupils in a variety of ways. Some pupils benefit from short, intensive courses while others are supported over the longer term in their classes or through one-to-one support in the department. Teachers have been provided with helpful guidance that helps them adapt their teaching to pupils' individual needs.

Younger pupils have at least one hour of games or physical activity each day. In Years 9 to 11 this decreases to three hours each week, because of the demands of other subjects, but this is supplemented by the opportunities available after school and at break and lunchtimes. Pupils learn to play musical instruments and their, often stunning, artwork is displayed around the school. Older pupils design, make and race vehicles. This allows them to develop practical and design skills and to test their creations in real-life situations.

The taught curriculum is complemented by the exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are available. All pupils, including the Nursery children, participate in day and residential visits and activities. From their first days in school, children become 'Adventurers'. Pupils participate in a range of activities that include camping out in teepees in the school grounds, well supervised by staff. They belong to a 'tribe' and learn to work cooperatively with their peers and to develop self confidence and independence. The challenges increase as pupils mature and they participate in 'wilderness' trips and climb mountains in Scotland. The oldest pupils complete their personal challenges by raising money to travel to India during the summer break. During this trip, they participate in charitable activities and climb mountains at high altitude. The school also provides optional Saturday morning activities and the majority of pupils attend these sessions.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they enjoy teaching. They deliver interesting, well-planned lessons that motivate pupils and, as a result, even the youngest children are curious and confident individuals, eager to take the next steps in their learning. Pupils gain great satisfaction from solving problems, completing an investigation or explaining an answer. Teachers explain new ideas or concepts well and pupils are given enough time to complete their tasks. Pupils often work on tasks with a partner or as part of a small group. They frequently evaluate their own work, or that of others, and the school has introduced good strategies that help pupils to decide when they need a little more support from the teacher. In most lessons, teachers provide pupils with tasks that meet their individual needs. In a small number of lessons, the work is not always well-enough matched to the needs of the most able pupils, so, although they make progress, the tasks do not challenge them enough. Teachers provide pupils with very helpful feedback. They praise what has been achieved and identify and correct any misconceptions. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and pupils are provided with time to reflect on the comments made. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is consistently good and specialist teaching and coaching enhances the provision made for children. However, the provision made for children in the outdoor areas is not as good as that within the classrooms and children have too few opportunities to develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The school has reviewed the quality of teaching and the curriculum offered in the main school. Most lessons are now taught by a form teacher and there is an emphasis on developing the links between subjects. This is very effective. Pupils' individual targets are promoted more effectively in lessons and opportunities for pupils to apply and consolidate their knowledge and understanding are increased. Pupils are assessed regularly and the school tracks their progress carefully. Classes are small and pupils receive a great deal of support. As a result, they make outstanding progress in all aspects of their development. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as their peers. Their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive effective and well-targeted support. School data and pupils' work show that many pupils are working at levels above, and often well above, those expected for their age. In 2009, all pupils gained five or more A* to C passes at GCSE and a very high proportion achieved the highest grades. Nearly all pupils who leave the school at age 13 go onto their first-choice school. Pupils are well prepared for life after school. They are given good careers advice and the school works very effectively with families during transition periods.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is outstanding in all areas of the school including the Early Years Foundation Stage. The very rich curriculum helps pupils to become self aware, well rounded and responsible individuals. They have opportunities to develop leadership skills and to identify their individual strengths. All pupils represent the school in at least one sport during their time at school and all are encouraged to perform at concerts or other events. Pupils have an

exceptionally good understanding of their own and other cultures and, through their charitable activities, they make a very positive contribution to the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. There are a number of 'themed days' throughout the year. The 'India Day' that took place during the inspection increased pupils' understanding of the country and provided them with very useful insights into the challenges faced by some of the population. Pupils participate in church services and learn about other religions during lessons. The school promotes their spiritual development very well and it encourages them to make a very positive contribution to their own and the wider community. Pupils have a very good understanding of British history and traditions. All pupils, including the Nursery children, benefit from a very wide range of day and residential visits including whole school trips to the beach. During these events, pupils of all ages gain a very good understanding of the wider world and learn to get along with each other. This has a very positive impact on the development of the youngest children. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attendance is very good. One pupil commented that the school's greatest strength is the way that everyone gets on with each other. He said that when new pupils join the school they make friends within days. One young boy summed up the feelings of many pupils when he commented that the school is 'amazing'. When asked why, he said that it is 'just everything about it'. Parents agree with this view. They are, rightly, overwhelmingly positive about all that the school provides.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision made for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the provision made for children's welfare in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. The extensive school grounds support pupils' health and physical development exceptionally well. Class sizes are small and all pupils are known to staff. This ensures that they receive very good support. Pupils get on well together and the 'worry boxes', together with the very good relationships between staff and pupils, ensure that if pupils do have any concerns they are dealt with promptly and to their satisfaction. School policies are robust and thorough risk assessments are carried out for all activities. The school takes its responsibility for pupils' health and safety very seriously. Staff understand their responsibilities and all training, including that for child protection, is regularly updated. As a result, pupils know how to stay safe but are not inhibited. Pupils' medical needs are supported very well and all staff are made aware of any medical problems including allergies. The school's induction procedures are very good. The school has implemented the latest guidance on safeguarding pupils; procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are regularly reviewed and updated. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has carried out the necessary safeguarding checks for all staff. As required, it maintains a single central register of such checks.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's extensive grounds enrich the provision made for pupils and add significant value to their education. Specialist teaching rooms are well equipped and resources for games and physical and outdoor activities are very good. The new building is finished to a high standard and provides very pleasant teaching rooms. The provision made in the outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes is not as effective as that made within classrooms.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents and carers receive a good range of written information. The exceptionally strong partnerships between home and school, and the variety of formal and informal opportunities for staff and parents to meet together, ensure that parents feel well informed about their children's progress and about school events. The school provides all of the necessary written information for parents but this is presented in a number of different formats and, as a result, key information is not always readily available, particularly for parents that are new to the school.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has clear, fair and well-written complaints procedures for parents and carers and for pupils. There has not been a formal complaint in the last year.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children are provided for well. Children are taught French and swimming, and tennis coaching is introduced during the Reception year. The outcomes for children are good. Teachers link subjects together effectively and this helps children to enjoy learning and make good progress. Assessment is good and teachers' planning is based on their day-to-day observations of children and on longer term assessments. Parents say that their children 'love school' and that they develop 'a love of learning'. By the end of their time in the Reception class, most children achieve more than would usually be expected of children of their age in all areas of learning. However, the provision made for children's learning in the outdoor areas is not as good as that made in classrooms. There is only limited provision for information and communication technology (ICT) so ICT skills do not develop as well as skills in other areas. There are strong links between staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage and teachers in Pre-prep 1 and 2. Staff plan learning together and their expectations and ways of working are consistent across all classes. The buildings are co-located and this increases children's confidence as they move from one class to the next because the area is familiar to them and they know all of the staff. Good leadership and management ensure there are effective induction and transition procedures and this enhances the effective provision made for all aspects of children's welfare, health and safety. Teachers provide a calm and nurturing environment with a focus on ensuring that children develop an awareness of how to stay safe. Children understand how to stay healthy and they learn to work and play together and develop good social skills and enquiring minds. Supervision levels are high and children are well supported by their teachers and other adults. Children make a positive contribution to the school and wider society. They are involved in supporting good causes and they have very good opportunities to participate in all that the school provides. Relationships with parents are very good and enhance all aspects of children's education.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The quality of boarding at Cundall Manor School is good. The school's dynamic management structure is linked to the strong sense of friendship and community spirit. This effectively contributes to the protection and promotion of boarding pupils' welfare. The school has addressed all of the recommendations made at the last inspection with the exception of staff training in the safe handling and administration of medication.

The system to promote the health and well-being of boarding pupils is outstanding. Boarding pupils have a healthy and nutritious diet which helps in the promotion of their health and physical well-being. There is always a vegetarian option alongside dishes that reflect different cultures. Special dietary needs are fully catered for and information on boarders' allergies is kept in the kitchen. Menus are well planned in conjunction with the boarding pupils and they speak positively about the quality and quantity of food served. Pupils take part in a wide range of physical activities. The school's outstanding personal, health, citizenship and social education curriculum provides age appropriate advice on matters such as health and substance misuse.

Clear procedures are followed for the management, secure storage and administration of medication. All members of boarding staff have received training in first aid but not in the safe handling and administration of medication. When unwell, boarding pupils are cared for by the school's matron until their parents collect them.

Boarding pupils feel safe at the school and support each other. The experienced boarding staff team work in conjunction with parents and academic staff to ensure that boarding pupils receive high levels of support. Great care is given to supporting boarders when they first arrive, through an established induction programme. Boarding staff ensure there is a friendly welcome and a watchful eye is kept upon new boarders so that homesickness does not become an issue. Boarders confirm they get on well together, are treated fairly and are confident that staff would be supportive should they have a worry or problem. Boarders confirm they are kept well informed by the staff and they say that they are consulted about boarding matters. Telephones are available in the boarding house, allowing for contact with family, external independent support services and friends. Boarders can also use their personal email addresses if necessary.

Effective complaints and anti-bullying procedures and guidance are provided for parents and boarding pupils. These detail how potential concerns will be tackled. There are three designated persons with responsibility for safeguarding matters and who provide guidance to staff. Members of staff receive appropriate levels of safeguarding training and are aware of the relevant policies and reporting procedures. Recruitment of all staff is in full accordance with the relevant regulations.

Comprehensive systems are in place to record, monitor and prevent risks to health and safety. Fire and safety equipment is checked regularly, with fire drills held at different times. Boarding pupils confirm they understand the evacuation procedures.

Boarding pupils have access to their own locked facility for storing small personal items and the staff can provide a lockable facility for other valuables. The accommodation provided for the boarding pupils is clean and satisfactorily maintained. However, there is a need to ensure that glazing in the dormitories meets

current safety standards. The separate dormitories, visited by invitation during the inspection, were found to be pleasantly decorated, warm and personalised. There are appropriate levels of privacy for washing, toileting, and bathing. Dormitories are due to be renovated during the coming months.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is underpinned by inclusive policies and procedures that are supported fully by the senior management team and governors. Boarding pupils are encouraged to be helpful towards each other and many commented on this fact.

The school's statement of boarding principles and practices is easy to understand and readily available for parents, boarders and staff. The overall organisation and management of the boarding house is outstanding, with a very safe, non discriminatory and supportive atmosphere created for boarders.

Recommendations

- Ensure opportunities are provided for training and updating boarding house staff in the safe handling and administration of medication (NMS BS 34).
- Ensure windows, where there is significant risk of impact are either made of safety glass (of a type satisfying the relevant British standard), or are otherwise suitably protected (NMS BS 47).
- Ensure that the renovation and refurbishment of the boarding area is completed as per the timescales as detailed in the current development plan for the school (NMS BS 40).

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Organise the information provided for parents so that all the required information is readily available.
- Ensure that the provision made in the outdoor areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage is as good as that made in the classrooms.

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 good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		√		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?		√		
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?		√		
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?		√		

The quality of boarding provision *(leave blank if not applicable)*

Evaluation of boarding provision		√		
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School details

Name of school	Cundall Manor Preparatory School		
DCSF number	815/6022		
Unique reference number (URN)	121752		
Type of school	Co-educational pre-preparatory and preparatory school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 1959		
Age range of pupils	3-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 256	Girls: 125	Total: 381
Number of boarders	Boys: 36	Girls: 15	Total: 51
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls:	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,661		
Annual fees (boarders)	£15,330		
Address of school	Helperby York North Yorkshire YO61 2RW		
Telephone number	01423 360200		
Fax number	01423 360754		
Email address	headmaster@cundallmanor.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Peter Phillips		
Proprietor	Cundall Manor Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI		
Dates of inspection	30 June -1 July 2010		