

Demeter House

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	813/6005
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135247
Inspection number	361440
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI

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 assesses 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.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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. 090070

© Crown copyright 2009



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.

Information about the school

Demeter House School is an independent day special school which is registered for up to 40 boys aged from five to 16 years of age with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. It opened in Scunthorpe in September 2006 and in November 2009 relocated to its current site in Brigg. There are currently 20 full-time pupils on the roll; the youngest is aged eight and the oldest is 15. Almost all have an autistic spectrum disorder associated with their emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and many have experienced disrupted education and poor attendance at other schools. All of the current pupils have been placed at the school and are funded by North Lincolnshire local authority.

Demeter House aims to equip its pupils with the skills they need to experience success in all areas of their lives. They focus on helping their pupils to develop their self-esteem through activities that promote self-confidence and the development of their basic skills. The school was previously inspected in February 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Demeter House School meets its aims and provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Since the previous inspection the school has continued to expand and the move to its current site has improved some of its provision. However, some aspects of its work are further developed than others which is in part related to the school's increase in size and changes associated with its relocation. The satisfactory curriculum and teaching meet pupils' needs by providing a clear focus on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics and have strengths in the way that pupils' personal development is promoted. Arrangements to safeguard pupils at the school are appropriate. The parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire, or met with the inspector, particularly value the school's caring and nurturing approach. The school meets almost all of the regulations for independent schools.

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

Quality of education

The satisfactory curriculum focuses on the basic skills of English and mathematics which is helping pupils to develop their confidence, and experience success in reading, writing and mathematics. Although satisfactory overall, the progress pupils make in mathematics is stronger than in English. The progress of those pupils who have been at the school for more than a year tends to be better than for those who have joined more recently, reflecting the longer-term success of the school's work in helping pupils to settle and re-engage with learning. The curriculum has been improved since the previous inspection, specifically by providing better access to specialist science resources and teaching through a partnership with a maintained secondary school. There are also more and better opportunities for all pupils to take part in physical education. However, the planning of the curriculum, although adequate, has some shortcomings because long- and medium-term plans do not yet provide a fully detailed pathway for what work is to be covered in each key stage. Although the school has been approved to become an examinations centre it is at a very early stage of developing accredited courses. The oldest pupils do not yet study any courses leading to formal qualifications and there are no arrangements for those pupils who are able to, to undertake any form of work experience. The school does not offer a modern foreign language and design and technology is limited. The most successful aspects of the school's work have been in helping to re-introduce some of its pupils to education and their attendance has greatly improved. There are successes in the way that staff actively develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall and some good teaching and learning were seen during the inspection. Key elements of the school's success are the small class sizes and the high level of staffing. These features ensure that pupils receive much individual support and guidance; pupils themselves value the fact that they can ask for help and it is readily and promptly provided. However, although some planned work was well matched to the differing needs of pupils within a class, this was not always the case. More common is the practice of providing all pupils within a class with the same task. While this generally works because of very small class sizes, there are times when some work does not challenge all pupils within a class sufficiently or some pupils find the tasks too difficult. Strengths in all of the observed lessons included good relationships between staff and pupils. Staff are caring and patient with pupils and know pupils' pastoral needs well. Teaching in mathematics tends to be stronger than in English. In the best lessons activities are matched to pupils' interests and provide pupils with practical worthwhile activities. For example, in one lesson older pupils were researching courses and career options on the internet to make a presentation to their peers. In another lesson, younger pupils were using clocks to play a game to help them learn to tell the time. While the teaching of English is at least satisfactory pupils state that they do not enjoy writing and some activities are not sufficiently interesting and engaging for them. Pupils are presented with grammar and punctuation activities rather than with opportunities to write for a purpose. The use of speaking, listening and drama to motivate pupils to write is underdeveloped.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with particular strengths in the social and moral development of pupils. However, pupils' cultural development is less well embedded. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and kindness to one another, which is a testament to the effective work of the school given the pupils' starting points. Social development is good with pupils usually mixing well regardless of any age differences. Older pupils describe the school as being like one big family. There is clear evidence that pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of right and wrong and that their actions can affect the feelings and well-being of others. Behaviour is good. The clear expectations of all staff and the good relationships that prevail ensure that pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions that are in use and state that the rules are fair. Pupils' attendance and attitudes to school and learning have improved and parents talk emphatically about how their children's lives have been dramatically changed after starting at the school. Pupils benefit from a good range of visits that help to develop their social skills. For example, pupils and parents talk of the success of a recent residential visit to the coast because it allowed pupils to practise their social skills and it was the first time some of the pupils had ever spent the night away from home. Pupils are developing an understanding of the local community from visits to churches and visits from members of the clergy. While the school understands the need for pupils to acquire an awareness and understanding of the diverse nature of modern British society, this area remains underdeveloped. The school has provided its pupils with some well-thought-out and interesting ways to give them a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England. Of particular note are visits from the town's mayor and the local Member of Parliament which, in a meaningful way, have contributed to their understanding of elections and democracy. Additionally pupils visit museums, libraries and art galleries.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare health and safety of the pupils are satisfactory. The high staff-to-pupil ratio, clear routines and good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils are safe. All of the required policies are in place for child protection and health and safety. Staff are fully aware of child protection procedures. There is a clear first aid policy which ensures that there are always adults with current first aid training on the premises. Although the site is generally safe and actions to minimise risks are secure, there are variable amounts of detail provided in the school's documented risk assessments. They do not always identify all of the possible risks and do not always reflect all of the controls that the school has in place. Fire risk assessments are in place and there are an appropriate number of fire drills each year. Accidents and incidents are properly recorded. Pupils report that they feel safe and free from bullying or harassment and parents consider their children to be safe in the school. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Rules, rewards and well-understood sanctions help pupils to know what is expected of them. Pupils talk positively about earning their reward for good behaviour of 'fun Friday activities'. Many look forward to and enjoy the choice of sporting, computer or board-game activities. Pupils are taught about the benefits of a balanced diet and exercise in developing a healthy lifestyle. However, not all pupils act on this advice. Since moving to its new site the school has been able to offer meals each day. While this is clearly an improvement, some parents and pupils indicate that they would welcome more choice particularly of fruit and vegetables. The fact that the school is now able to use the grounds to offer more frequent access to physical activities is helping pupils to take more exercise.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Effective safeguards ensure that pupils do not encounter unsuitable adults. All checks are completed prior to the appointment of staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. This information is held on a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school consists mainly of a large detached building where there is a range of classrooms, an information and communication technology (ICT) suite, a music room, offices, a dining room and a kitchen. To the rear there is a building which currently houses three further classrooms, a library, a recreation room and a large multi-purpose hall. The buildings contain the required number of toilets and washrooms together with facilities for first aid. Outside there are extensive grounds that offer playing spaces, a tennis court and a sports field along with small areas for gardening. The building is generally in a good state of repair and there are ongoing plans for maintenance and redecoration. There are some areas where the paths are becoming affected by weeds and there are benches which, although safe, are not in a good state of repair.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents, carers and others with almost all of the required information through its prospectus. There is a clear statement of the aims and curriculum of the school and the arrangements for discipline. Parents are made aware that they can request copies of school policies, such as health and safety, anti-bullying and the complaints procedures. The school provides parents with an annual written report on the progress of their child. However, a copy of the school's safeguarding policy has not been provided to all parents. Additionally, where pupils are wholly or partly funded by a local authority, an annual account of income

received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is not routinely submitted to the local authority.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints policy and set of procedures, which meet all of the regulations. The school has taken steps to ensure that parents are aware of these.

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.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- improve provision to better assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph 2(e)).

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

- publish on its website or, where no such websites exists, the school should send to parents of pupils (and of prospective parents on request) a copy of their safeguarding children policy (paragraph 6(4))
- ensure that where a pupil is wholly or partly funded by a local authority an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred in respect of that pupil is submitted to the local authority (paragraph 6(8)).

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 teaching of English by making English lessons more appealing to pupils so they have more opportunities to engage with a wide range of

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

texts and to talk about texts; and increase the use of drama before pupils begin to write creative pieces of work.

- Review the curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 to offer both vocational and academic courses that lead to appropriate qualifications and investigate opportunities for pupils to gain work experience, when appropriate, to meet their different needs and abilities.

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			✓	
--------------------------------------------------	--	--	---	--

School details

Name of school	Demeter House		
DCSF number	813/6005		
Unique reference number (URN)	135247		
Type of school	Special School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2006		
Age range of pupils	5-16		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 20	Girls: 0	Total: 20
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 20	Girls: 0	Total: 20
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,000		
Address of school	Bigby Street Brigg North Lincolnshire DN20 8EF		
Telephone number	01652 654251		
Email address	demeterhouse@hotmail.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Wardlaw		
Proprietor	Dr Rodney Wardlaw		
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI		
Dates of inspection	8–9 July 2010		