



Elliott Park School

Independent School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 886/6057
Unique Reference Number 119005
Inspection number 296805
Inspection dates 30-31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Ian Hartland HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 4-11	Published 23 February 2007	Reference no. 296805
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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 by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Elliott Park School is located on the Isle of Sheppey in North East Kent. It is a co-educational independent day school which provides for children from 4-11 years of age. There are 59 children on roll. The school was established in 1985 and moved to its current location in the following year. It aims to *'provide the very best infant and junior education for children of all levels of ability by means of: a well designed curriculum; high expectations; small classes; firm but kind discipline.'* More particularly it aims to ensure its pupils develop a good grasp of English, come to enjoy reading, acquire skill in mathematics, hold fast to the right moral values and share a belief in the importance of *'courtesy, good manners, honesty and consideration for others.'* The school was first registered in 2001.

Evaluation of the school

Elliott Park provides its pupils with a satisfactory education and exhibits a number of good features. It provides a very orderly and friendly atmosphere in which learning can take place. The parents and the pupils are very positive about the school. The pupils are very happy at the school and their behaviour is outstanding. The provision for their moral and social development is strong. They make good progress in English and mathematics. The school meets most of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and helps to support the school's ethos. In the reception class, the activities reflect the national guidance across all the required areas of learning, and daily emphasis is given to the teaching of early reading, writing and number skills. Strong emphasis is placed on encouraging children's personal and social development so they quickly settle and become happy, eager learners. Some good links are made between areas of learning, for example, when they use computers to support their work on 'Houses'. The curriculum is restricted by the lack of resources and a dedicated outside play area. In the rest of the school the curriculum reflects the National Curriculum. It generally meets the pupils' needs by continuing to emphasise the teaching of English and mathematics within a broad curriculum. Provision for information

and communication technology was a weaker feature of the provision but it has improved due to the purchase of 10 laptop computers. Although curriculum planning is satisfactory, staff do not always use the information they have on pupils' progress well enough to plan work which fully challenges all abilities, especially the most able.

Pupils' personal, social, health education (PSHE) and citizenship are satisfactorily promoted in specific PSHE lessons and subjects such as science. This helps to promote pupils' understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives and respect the needs of others. Pupils speak confidently about healthy food, the need to drink water regularly and the importance of exercise. For a school this size, a good range of clubs and activities are provided after school which help to develop new skills and encourage physical activity. The school is successful in the games and matches played with other schools.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Inspectors observed some good lessons. The teachers demonstrated a satisfactory level of subject knowledge. However, in lessons, the intended outcomes of the teaching were not always clear to the pupils. They knew what they were expected to do, but were not always clear what they were expected to have learnt by the end of the lesson. The teachers successfully establish a calm, purposeful and respectful atmosphere in the classrooms. As all classes contain small numbers of pupils, the teachers are able to provide good support for individuals and allow pupils to work at their own pace. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported both in the classes and when withdrawn for one-to-one tuition with a specialist teacher. The teachers' questioning is usually effective but does not always challenge the most able sufficiently. In the satisfactory lessons the blackboards and whiteboards were underused to record key information to reinforce learning and support the learning of less able pupils.

Most marking is regular but there are few comments on the quality of work and too little guidance on what the pupils need to do to improve. Although satisfactory overall, the quality of the current practice is too varied. The pupils have some understanding of how well they are doing in English and mathematics but report that they are not clear about their progress in other curriculum subjects. Pupils and staff report that there are too few resources. The pupils would like access to a wider range of text books.

The pupils make better progress in English and mathematics, where good use is made of national guidance and professional programmes of work. They make satisfactory progress overall. Some work in humanities subjects such as history, geography and religious education lacks sufficient challenge and provides too little opportunity for extended writing. It is not always appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils. The pupils' consistently excellent behaviour, strong sense of motivation and good concentration are significant factors in the progress that they make.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but stronger for their moral and social development. Aspects are mainly taught through assemblies, religious education lessons and through the everyday interactions between staff and pupils. Expectations are clear and result in outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning. The pupils enjoy school and are happy at work and play. This was reflected in a parent's comment, 'My son could not be happier'. A strong sense of community is developed well through pupils working and playing together and house assemblies where pupils of different ages meet regularly each week.

Very good relationships exist between the staff and pupils and between the pupils, and examples of pupils caring for each other were seen at playtime and in class. The confidence, self-esteem and skills that pupils develop, together with their skills in literacy and numeracy make a positive contribution to their future economic well-being. They all exhibit the courtesy and good manners which the school seeks to instil in them. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community by, for example, singing to local people and raising funds for charities. They gain a satisfactory understanding of basic democratic principles through, for example, voting for head boy and girl and knowledge of what others do from visitors to the school. However, they have too few opportunities to express their views about the school. There is no policy and planning to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school. Attendance is satisfactory.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision for the pupil's welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. A safe, healthy and nurturing environment has been created for the pupils and the school cares well for them. There is a series of detailed policy documents which meet most, but not all, of the requirements of current legislation and guidance. There is an appropriate behaviour policy with a suitable system of sanctions to deal with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. The pupils report that there is no bullying. The small scale of the school ensures that the staff can supervise them effectively at all times.

There is appropriate provision for First Aid with staff qualified to administer it. First Aid boxes are appropriately stocked. Accidents are carefully recorded. As there has been no recent training for staff, the regulation relating to child protection is not met. The school has made the necessary provision for fire safety. The health and safety policy is appropriate in most respects and but the school does not produce risk assessments for school outings. The admission register is kept in accordance with the regulations but the attendance registers

are not fully maintained as required. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Whilst checks have been made to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children, the way in which this is recorded does not reflect current requirements. There are also omissions in the checks made prior to the confirmation of employment of new staff although the school is beginning to address this matter.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in the middle of a residential housing estate. It consists of a detached house, previously also used as the residence for a former headteacher, but now used solely by the school. It contains a classroom, staffroom, kitchen and an office. A large single-story purpose-built extension which contains most of the classrooms is attached to the house. There are two further buildings at the back of the school: one a brick construction contains two classrooms and washrooms for younger pupils; and one mobile classroom. The school buildings and school environment are well maintained. The main school building is bright, well lit, well insulated, with classrooms that are adequate for the small number of pupils in each class.

There is a small playground at the back of the school which is in a generally satisfactory condition but the surface requires some further maintenance where it is beginning to break up. It is a potential hazard. There is a small grassed area. The school has a limited range of indoor and outdoor facilities and uses local council land for games when the weather permits. There is a library which doubles as a music room. The school meets almost all the regulations relating to premises and accommodation and knows it does not have appropriate facilities for pupils who are unwell.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Much useful information, which includes an expression of the school's aims and ethos, is contained in the school's prospectus and accompanying set of notes and policies. It is made clear to parents and prospective parents that further policies are available on request. Although the parents report that they are generally happy with the quality of the information they receive and with the progress that their children make, the annual reports they receive are not consistent in the information that they convey. Some reports contain limited information about a child's attainment and progress across a range of different curriculum subjects and on what the child needs to do to improve.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a detailed written complaints policy which sets out the procedures it will follow in the management of any complaint. It contains information on all of the specific elements required by the regulations. There have been no complaints from parents.

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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure all staff receive refresher training on safeguarding children in compliance with DfES Guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2) (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- maintain a single central record of all checks made on staff in accordance with current requirements (paragraph 4(b))
- ensure all necessary checks are carried out to confirm the identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references of staff (paragraph 4(c)).

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

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

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:

- provide opportunities for staff to update their professional skills in lesson planning and in developing assessment for learning
- improve the consistency of the marking
- provide more learning resources and improve the facilities for play and recreation
- provide further opportunities for the pupils to express their views about the school.

School details

Name of school	Elliott Park School
DfES number	886/6057
Unique reference number	119005
Type of school	Primary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1985
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 29 Girls: 30 Total: 59
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,450
Address of school	18-20 Marina Drive Minster Sheppey Kent ME12 2DP
Telephone number	01795 873372
Fax number	01795 873372
Email address	elliottpark@tiscali.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr Richard Barson
Proprietor	Dr F Nouri
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland HMI
Dates of inspection	30-31 January 2007