

The Danesfield Manor School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	936/6091
Unique Reference Number	125360
Inspection number	320393
Inspection dates	6-7 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Elizabeth Coley

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).

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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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Danesfield Manor is a non-selective, co-educational primary school. It opened in 1943 on its present site as Danesfield School and altered its name in 1999 when it was taken over by new proprietors. In 2005, ownership changed again and since 2006, is now one of a group of schools managed by CfBT Education Trust, a registered charity. It is situated in and around a recently refurbished Victorian house in a residential area of Walton-on-Thames. It has 136 pupils between the ages of 3 and 11. The school's motto – *'Non progredi est regredi'* ('Not to go forward is to go backward') – embodies its aim of providing an excellent all-round education for every pupil, with a strong focus on personal development and based on Christian principles. The school's Early Year's department was last inspected by Ofsted Children's Services in June 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Danesfield Manor provides a good quality of education. Pupils are happy and enjoy their learning, making good progress as a result of good teaching. Their personal development and behaviour are outstanding, and these are underpinned by the commitment and drive of the principal and her staff, who create a purposeful learning environment. The attention given to pupils' welfare, health and safety is good, as is the quality of the curriculum. Good progress has been made in the areas identified for improvement in the last Ofsted Children's Services inspection report. The school meets most of the statutory requirements.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. The programme for children in the Foundation Stage covers all the required areas of learning and gives emphasis to encouraging independence. Pupils across the rest of the school are taught a wide range of subjects, including French. Pupils in Year 6 also learn Spanish. Drama, music and sport feature strongly within the curriculum, developing pupils' self-confidence and physical skills. Personal, social and health education is offered through a good 'life skills' course.

Very effective planning ensures that pupils develop basic skills. In all subjects, planning takes account of individual needs and clearly indicates how pupils will be assessed. Some class teachers teach other year groups according to their expertise.

A wide range of visits, including residential trips for all, makes an effective contribution to pupils' personal development. A variety of clubs and activities are offered before, and after, the school day at extra cost and are well supported. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education, contrary to the views of a very few parents in the pre-inspection questionnaires.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and pupils clearly enjoy their learning. They say that teaching helps them to learn, and the work seen was evidence of this. Teachers plan lessons well and incorporate a range of teaching methods which respond effectively to pupils' different learning styles. This is particularly so when good use is made of resources. Staff make very good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and continually build on their previous knowledge. Pupils are frequently set tasks which are well matched to their learning needs. Generally, teachers have high expectations, but when the challenge diminishes and the pace slows, then pupils begin to lose focus. Learning objectives are not always focused enough. Teaching assistants are deployed well and offer good support to pupils.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and this is reflected in the presentation of their work. Strong relationships are clearly evident when pupils collaborate, working well in groups or pairs. A few parents raised concerns about homework not building on the work done at school. No evidence could be found to validate these concerns. Pupils with learning needs have individual education plans, but the targets set within these are not sufficiently focused on the needs of the pupil. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and regularly work in extension groups in English and mathematics.

Teachers know pupils well and use information gathered in lessons to plan future learning, regularly evaluating their lesson plans. Marking is thorough, informative and motivating, and pupils say they find it very helpful. Targets are set in English, mathematics and science. A system of checking pupils' progress as they move across the school has recently been developed, using previous performance data, and this is beginning to be used to predict levels of future attainment.

As a result of the good quality of teaching and the good curriculum, pupils make good progress in their time at the school. Pupils' standards in national tests are high, and almost all pupils go on to the senior school of their choice, with an average of three scholarships awarded every year.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, successfully fulfilling the school's over-arching aim. Pupils respond very well to regular opportunities to reflect in assemblies and lessons about issues of importance to them, their community and the wider world. Within the curriculum, the pupils have focused on the world eco-system and support a charity devoted to ensuring that

impoverished people abroad have access to drinking water. Pupils are strongly encouraged to take responsibility within school, taking such roles as sound technicians and monitors, helping the school run smoothly. Membership of the school council is taken very seriously; one member commented, 'We are in charge of it, but the teachers help'. The council members regularly seek the views of their peers and have recently decided to fund measures to protect the native red squirrel. Behaviour is outstanding; pupils understand the expectations of staff, who provide good role models and treat them with courtesy and respect. Pupils respond well to earning 'positive points' even though the reason for receiving them is not always clear. One pupil said, 'Teachers are friendly even though they are here to help us learn'. All pupils enjoy school as shown by their excellent attendance and punctuality. Through the 'life skills' programme, pupils understand personal, social and health issues, including what is required for a healthy lifestyle and many regularly participate in sport. Pupils' cultural development is especially strong and they have excellent opportunities to learn about their own culture and institutions and services in England as well as other faiths and cultures in their community and the world.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The staff are committed to ensuring the welfare of pupils and the quality of supervision is high. Pupils say they are well cared for and relationships between pupils and staff are strong. There is a positive code of conduct and a suitable behaviour policy. Pupils say they feel valued and safe within the school community. Pupils say that, should bullying occur, they are confident that staff will deal with it effectively. They can identify an adult to whom they would turn if they had a problem.

Appropriate policies are in place to safeguard pupils and all staff have undertaken the relevant training in matters of child protection. A suitable health and safety policy ensures that risk assessments are completed on buildings and on all activities. The policy and procedures for the administration of first aid are suitable. However, whilst any accidents are recorded, details are not sufficiently described for a full analysis and risk assessment to be undertaken. All appropriate measures to reduce risks from fire and other hazards have been taken. Admission and attendance registers are completed correctly. The school does not meet the requirements in respect of the Disability Discrimination Act as it does not have in place a three-year accessibility plan to further increase access for those with disabilities to the premises, the curriculum or information.

Pupils are encouraged to follow active and healthy lifestyles and they understand the benefits of regular physical exercise, enjoying all sporting activities available. All pupils participate in short daily sessions of 'brain and body buzz'. Fruit is encouraged as a snack at break time and water is available throughout the day. Lunches are nutritious with fresh fruit, vegetables and meat served, and varied dietary needs are met.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Effective safeguards are in place to ensure that pupils do not come into contact with unsuitable adults. Correct procedures are undertaken with regard to the recruitment of staff and checks are recorded on a centralised register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises are satisfactory with some excellent features. Some classrooms are used at times as specialist teaching rooms for science, information and communication technology, art and music, and there is a separate library. Best use is made of all available space, but some classrooms are cramped; the Year 2 classroom is inadequate in size. The Year 6 classroom is suitable for the current number of pupils, a smaller cohort than usual. All classrooms contain bright displays of pupils' work which help to create an effective learning environment. A large multi-purpose hall is used for many activities including dining. Whilst the number of washrooms is sufficient for staff and pupils, there is no running hot water in the staff cloakrooms. The outstanding swimming pool makes a significant contribution to pupils' physical development, together with the use of local community facilities. The outside space available is excellent. However, there is currently no medical room for pupils who are ill during the school day. The deficiencies within the accommodation have been recognised as priorities within the development plan.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents and carers are provided with a great deal of information by the school, including the prospectus, website, newsletters and welcome packs for parents which give very helpful information on school routines, policies and procedures. In addition, they receive detailed information about the termly curriculum. Whilst a small minority of parents and carers indicated they would like further information about their children's progress, they are kept well informed through termly parents' evenings and reports, and are made aware of their children's targets through homework diaries. Just over one-third of parents and carers responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and the majority are pleased with all aspects of the school's work.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a very clear policy on handling complaints which is made available to parents when their child is offered a place at the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of parents indicated that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with their concerns, which are handled with due care.

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:

- maintain an accident book in the prescribed manner (paragraph 3(4)).

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

- improve accommodation for the Year 2 class (paragraph 5(j))
- provide running hot water in the staff cloakrooms (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

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:

- ensure that the targets within the individual education plans of those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are effectively focused on the pupils' learning needs;
- improve the focus of learning objectives in lesson planning;
- bring the pace and challenge in all lessons up to the standard of the best.

School details

Name of school	The Danesfield Manor School		
DCSF number	936/6091		
Unique reference number	125360		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1943		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 66	Girls: 50	Total: 116
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 9	Girls: 11	Total: 20
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,721to £6,210		
Address of school	11 Rydens Avenue Walton-on-Thames Surrey KT12 3JB		
Telephone number	01932 220930		
Fax number	01932 225640		
Email address	lfidler@cfbt.com		
Principal	Mrs L Fidler		
Proprietor	CfBT Education Trust		
Reporting inspector	Elizabeth Coley		
Dates of inspection	6-7 March 2008		