

Dame Catherine Harpur's School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Dame Catherine Harpur's School is an independent, non-selective primary school serving Ticknall and surrounding rural villages in Derbyshire. It opened in 1987. The school is run by a school management team, comprising teachers, elected parents and members of the local community. The school is registered as a limited company and has charitable trust status. There are currently 19 full-time pupils on roll in two classes, including one full-time child in the Early Years Foundation Stage in Class 1. Class 1 caters for pupils aged four to eight years and Class 2 for pupils aged eight to 11 years. The school also manages a separately registered Nursery class situated in the same building. The Nursery class caters for three- and four-year-olds and was also part of this inspection. There are 11 part-time children in the Nursery class of whom 10 are in receipt of government funding. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school aims to provide an individual, child centred education in order to develop pupils' independence, sense of responsibility and prepare them to be responsible citizens. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2008 and the Nursery in June 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Dame Catherine Harpur's School provides a good education for its pupils and meets its aims; it has continued to improve since its last inspection and now meets all but three of the regulations. The curriculum and other activities match the ability range and interests of the pupils well and they clearly enjoy their education. Pupils make good progress because of effective teaching and assessment, which meets the full range of pupils' abilities. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children attain good outcomes. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave very well and they leave the school as confident and articulate young people. The school has robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils and provision for their welfare, health and safety is good.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good, having breadth and variety and securing the interest and enjoyment of pupils. Planning is supported by reference to the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage. It clearly identifies what pupils will learn to ensure the progression of knowledge and skills. Objectives are shared with pupils for each lesson though pupils do not always have individual targets to help them focus on what they need to do to improve to achieve their next learning goal. Pupils receive regular feedback on their work which is always positive and sometimes gives clear indicators of what they need to do to improve or to achieve next. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use this practice consistently and well. There is good coverage of all the required aspects of learning with an appropriate emphasis on the key skills of literacy and numeracy and a good focus on developing pupils speaking and listening skills. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning; they comment on the good range of activities they are given, including sports, games and swimming. They particularly enjoy the many first-hand experiences they are offered, either through visits out to places of interest including a residential trip to Wales, and through the visits of specialists such as historians or scientists. Several were keen to share memorable experiences such as building and firing rockets in science or dressing and dancing in Elizabethan and Tudor costume in history. Partnerships add strongly to the curriculum experiences, for example with the local National Trust property and the National Forest.

Teaching and assessment are good. Because teachers know their pupils well, and class sizes are small, there is a high degree of personalisation, with tasks that are closely matched to the abilities of all the pupils. This enables them to make good progress, as seen in most lessons and in the sampling of pupils' work. Teachers are particularly skilled at encouraging tenacity, independence and good learning behaviour. Though progress is rarely less than good, it is relatively slower in writing because pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise their skills by writing at length and to a high standard. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are developing suitably though teachers say they recognise the challenge of not having the most up-to-date technology to support them in their work such as an interactive whiteboard. Teaching assistants support teachers by providing effective help to small groups and individual children. They make a strong contribution to developing pupils' reading skills, as do the number of parents and carers who volunteer in school. In response to the recommendation at the last inspection, the headteacher now monitors pupils' attainment year on year and can evidence that levels of attainment are slowly rising. However, records are not kept and analysed of how quickly pupils make progress in different subjects across the school so it is difficult to evaluate where the school may do particularly well and where it may need to make improvements to do even better.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Providing high quality personal, social and health education is central to the school's ethos and highly valued by parents and carers. Every day there are opportunities for

pupils to reflect, discuss and debate a range of issues from the future of the environment to the importance of positive relationships. Pupils develop a good understanding of the institutions of the United Kingdom through classroom discussion, assembly themes and regular visits for example from the police and fire service. Independence is promoted particularly well and pupils often direct their own learning. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and take responsibility for their decisions and understand that there are consequences to their actions. They are well motivated by the system of rewards and sanctions to promote good behaviour and play their part by nominating classmates for awards. As a result, their behaviour is good, as is their attendance. Enterprise opportunities include working in the school shop and organising the selling of school lunches. They are proud to raise money for charitable causes and, indeed, of the part they have played in raising the essential funds to carry out the necessary building improvement work at the school. They are particularly proud of their contribution to the project to install a new eco-friendly boiler at the local National Trust property. They study the cultures and faiths of others, discuss them knowledgeably and when asked, forcefully protested that discrimination and racism should not be tolerated. They advocate healthy eating and say they love to be physically active. Pupils are prepared well for transition to senior school and none has any worries about settling in. One said that the school had given him the confidence he needs to be able to make friends and cope in new situations.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school cares well for its pupils, as seen in the attention given to promoting their well-being and enjoyment of school. This is central to the school's ethos and stated by many parents, carers and pupils as being one of the things about the school that they value the most highly. Some pupils volunteered that the best thing about the school was the teachers who look after them, treat them with respect and give them constant encouragement. Pupils are well supervised in school and on trips. There are no instances of bullying or other forms of harassment reported by pupils. Arrangements for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils, including staff training and risk assessment, meet requirements and their implementation is good. There is a comprehensive policy for child protection, which is implemented well.

The staff have the required training and attend to first aid and medical needs conscientiously and promptly on a day-to-day basis. However, they do not have a written first aid policy which sets out clear guidance on, for example, what levels of injury trigger a phone call home, are to be treated on site or automatically trigger a visit to hospital. Similarly, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, though diligent recordings are made of medications given which are confirmed by parents and carers, there is not a clear written policy on which medicines will be administered and under what circumstances. Arrangements to promote good behaviour positively are very effective and result in a calm environment for learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and to keep safe. They talk with secure knowledge and confidence about how to achieve this. The good emphasis placed on developing pupils' emotional health results in pupils saying they are confident that

they can talk to adults about any concerns. Strong relationships enable adults to pick up quickly when pupils are facing challenges and put the appropriate support in place. The school now fulfils all its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Staff have been subject to the necessary checks to confirm their suitability to work with children and all other checks required. The school keeps a single central register of checks made. The school meets the regulations.

Premises and accommodation at the school

School staff do all they can to maximise the use of the limited space available in the main school building, although it does provide an effective environment for learning. Good use is made of the village hall for physical education. The pleasant gardens with wildlife area and ponds to the rear and hard surface area to the front of the school provide a safe environment for pupils to explore and play outdoors. Pupils also say they enjoy going to the local cricket ground for a range of other sports and team games. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does not have appropriate amenities for pupils who are ill and lacks appropriate washroom and toilet facilities. However, since the last inspection a portable bed and curtain have been provided to improve comfort and privacy for those who are ill. A separate toilet for staff has been provided. The school has been successful in raising funds to adapt the attached school house which has recently become available and plans are in place to adapt this to include a medical room and additional appropriate washrooms and toilet facilities.

Provision of information

The range of information provided by the school, to parents and carers, has improved further since the last inspection. The helpful prospectus and school website provide a good range of information and indicate clearly what other required more detailed information can be obtained on request. These are supplemented by regular and detailed newsletters and detailed annual reports. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated their high degree of satisfaction with the school's work. A comment made by one parent, which is representative of several made, was 'I feel my child is having the best possible start in education. There is a nurturing yet structured environment. The teachers really know my child and he is truly blooming in the Dame Catherine Harpur's system.'

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints meet all requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and leads to good outcomes for children. Children make good progress in their learning. They

enter Nursery with skills broadly in line with age related expectations and by the time they leave reception are working at levels above those expected for their age. New children settle very quickly into the Nursery and parents and carers appreciate the family atmosphere and the way in which their children's needs and interests are developed. The children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted particularly well so that they quickly become confident and self-motivated learners. Children show delight and enjoyment as, for example, they discover the properties of magnetism, mix paint, sand and glue, and taste seasonal fruit and vegetables.

Provision is good. The indoor learning environment is welcoming and stimulating. Staff plan activities which are fun and exciting. They make good quality notes and formal observations of children's achievements and parents and carers appreciate the opportunities to look at their children's progress through work, photos and written observations. However, there is no clear link in the planning to show how these observations are used to plan activities which encourage children to work towards their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and ensure children are safeguarded well. The school has a clear vision of what is needed to make further improvements but as yet has not formulated an action plan. For example the school recognises the need to develop systems to track children's progress so that there is a clear picture of what is working well and what needs to be developed further.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.⁵

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that there is a written policy on first aid (paragraph 14).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure there are sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs and disability, which take account of regulations 3 and 4 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(j))
- ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure there is an effective policy on administering medicines.

What the school could do to improve further

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

School

- Introduce a system to record and track the progress pupils make.
- Ensure targets and feedback given to pupils are clear and focused and help pupils to improve their work.
- Give pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills at greater length and to a high standard.

Early Years Foundation Stage

- Identify clear links between observations of children's achievements and the identification of their next steps in planning.
- Record and track the progress that pupils make in each of the six areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Non-selective primary school		
Date school opened	1987		
Age range of pupils	3-11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 11	Girls: 8	Total: 19
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 7	Total: 12
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 3,275.00		
Annual fees (childcare)	£ 7 per session		
Address of school	Rose Lane Ticknall Derby DE73 7JW		
Telephone number	01332 862792		
Email address	damecatherines@hotmail.com		
Headteacher	Margaret Whyte		
Proprietor	Dame Catherine Harpur's School Foundation		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dame Catherine Harpur's School, Derby, DE73 7JW

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed speaking with you as we think your views are really important.

We found that your school is good and can see why you all enjoy coming to school. This is evident in your good attendance, your positive attitude to work and your good behaviour. All the adults at school take good care to make sure you are well nurtured and safe. As a result you grow in confidence and become well rounded independent young people by the time that you leave. Because of the good quality individual support you all receive, the good teaching, and the exciting things you are given the opportunity to do, you make good progress in your work.

We would like your school to continue to improve, so we have asked them to do a number of things.

- Introduce a system to record and track the progress that you make in Nursery and in school.
- Give you targets and feedback that help you to improve your work.
- Give you more opportunities to practise your writing in longer pieces of work and with good handwriting and presentation.
- When teachers record how well you are doing in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to also show what your next learning step should be and link this to their future planning.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector