



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

DANESHILL SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Daneshill School

Full Name of School	Daneshill School
DfE Number	850/6024
Address	Daneshill School Stratfield Turgis Hook Hampshire RG27 0AR
Telephone Number	01256 882707
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Email Address	deputyhead@daneshillprepschool.com
Headmaster and Proprietor	Mr Simon Spencer
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	231
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (108 boys; 123 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 181 3-5 (EYFS): 40 11-13: 10
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 231
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs S Spencer
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	23 Nov 2010 to 24 Nov 2010

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in November 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law..

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Originally founded in 1950, Daneshill School has undergone three relocations during its sixty years of existence. The current property was acquired in 1979 and the school remains privately owned. There is no governing body. Located in rural north Hampshire the school consists of a central main house and is surrounded by playing fields, and includes a sports hall and swimming pool. A dedicated pre-preparatory department has been built for pupils up to 7 years old and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision has been developed for children aged from 3 to 5 years. These and other capital developments have taken place over the years. The latest involves investments in information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and infrastructure, including facilities for music technology.
- 1.2 The school provides day education for boys and girls aged from 3 to 13 years. It aims to provide a happy, secure, well-ordered and stimulating environment where learning is enjoyable and self-esteem is fostered. To achieve this, the school seeks to keep teaching groups to approximately twelve pupils so that every child is well known by staff who, reciprocally, can provide individualised support. It further aims to deliver to all a broad curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection the EYFS held 16 part-time and 24 full-time pupils. A total of 191 pupils were in Years 1 to 8. Most pupils enter between the ages of 3 and 5. At these ages entry is non-selective. Those who join from the age of 7 years onwards undertake an assessment of ability. Assessments indicate that the pupils' ability profile is above the national average.
- 1.4 The pupils' families represent the local business and professional community, and reflect the limited ethnic diversity of the area. Fifteen pupils have been identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and receive specialised support. None receives specialist teaching in English as an additional language, and none has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection the school's age range has broadened to include Years 7 and 8, and the senior management team (SMT) has been restructured.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basis skills

- 2.1 The pupils' achievements are excellent. They develop high standards of knowledge and skill in English, mathematics, science and other curricular activities. Concurrently, they achieve considerable competence in the relevant speaking, listening, numeracy and writing skills that enable this success. During their time at school, pupils develop strong skills in independent and corporate study, in investigation and, in particular, articulacy. These skills enable great independence of thought as well as all-round competence in team games and individual sports.
- 2.2 Pupils' attainments cannot be measured against national tests but, on the evidence available, they are judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress. The curriculum supports the pupils' development and progress well. It gives strong support to pupils with LDD and ensures good challenges for the most able. On leaving school, pupils successfully move to a wide range of local and more distant independent day and boarding schools. The high proportion of scholarships in music, sports and academic excellence, as well as 'all rounder' awards, underlines the effectiveness of the curriculum, the extra-curricular programme and teaching in supporting the pupils' progress.
- 2.3 The curriculum, from the EYFS onwards, is broad, well balanced and particularly carefully planned, having undergone substantial re-planning since the previous inspection. The school achieves considerable breadth in the opportunities offered and the pupils' personal experiences are consequently strong. Physical education (PE) and games receive a high profile, alongside academic and other lessons, and are highly popular. Recent focus on ICT provision is improving the opportunities available, although the effect of this has yet to be felt strongly by all pupils. The curriculum links well with the enormous diversity of extra-curricular opportunities that are on offer. Examples of this range include creative pottery, 'monster junk', cookery, knitting, science, chess and 'rookie lifeguards', and the leadership and adventure programme for senior pupils, as well as residential trips in the UK and Europe.
- 2.4 Teaching is excellent overall, with a number of particularly outstanding examples of classroom practice, including in the EYFS. Lessons are well planned. Their delivery across subjects and year groups is generally good. As a result, pupils are well challenged and involved in their learning and show strong co-operative efforts. This supports well the school's aims, as pupils develop good skills to enable independent and corporate learning and, at the top of the school, are well prepared for their onward move. Pupils with specific difficulties are clearly identified and each has a comprehensive teaching plan that staff use well. Staff keep good records. Formalised tracking and assessment against national standards are under adoption and being incorporated into planning. Much marking is excellent, giving pupils clear information and guidance, and setting targets for future improvement.
- 2.5 The attitude of the pupils towards their all-round education is excellent. They approach their lessons and activities with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils are well able to work independently and co-operatively. They are well organised and show considerable initiative.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.6 The pupils' personal development is excellent. As they mature and, by the time they leave, their personal characteristics and qualities, including their confidence, collaborative efforts and social skills, are outstanding and a strength of the school.
- 2.7 Spiritual development amongst pupils is good. Pupils are well aware of natural wonders, their appreciation being enhanced by the school's attractive estate. They have a sound understanding of Christianity, together with a good comprehension of other religions. Good opportunities exist for prayer and quiet reflection. These assist in setting a helpful spiritual tone for the school community from which pupils benefit well.
- 2.8 Moral development is excellent and all pupils, including those in the EYFS, are well aware of right and wrong. Pupils understand and respect well the school's rules and the occasional need for the application of sanctions, judging them to be fair. Staff members provide excellent role models, and give support and encouragement to all pupils. As a result, the pupils much enjoy being part of the school and enthusiastically embrace their opportunities.
- 2.9 Pupils have a particularly good understanding of social issues, this being well reinforced by the school's strong programme of charitable giving. In particular, the supportive relationship with a Gambian school is giving a great insight into deprived conditions in Africa, whilst national charities, for example Jeans for Genes, receive substantial giving, and support for the Love in a Box Appeal helps those in need in eastern Europe at Christmas. Local charities are also supported, such as the children's unit at a local hospital and a children's hospice that receives proceeds from the annual carol service collection. These events and the associated activities, for example designing Christmas cards and charity football fun days, ensure that pupils understand well, and empathise with, a wide variety of social need.
- 2.10 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. Their individual backgrounds and personal experience, as well as the school's deliberately broad range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, ensure a good breadth of cultural understanding. In music, art and drama, pupils of all ages achieve high standards. The school's success in sponsored art awards is a strong example amongst many. As a result, pupils enjoy excellent cultural awareness, benefiting accordingly.
- 2.11 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. Comprehensive policies give staff clear guidance and ensure safe practices. This includes staff recruitment and safeguarding, and all staff undergo full and suitable training. Pupils are therefore particularly well cared for and risks minimised. Good risk assessments are in place and are completed effectively for outings and other events. Should a potential weakness be identified, the school's rapid response corrects the matter and adapts both policy and practice.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.12 Governance is good. It is carried out as part of the headmaster's overall responsibilities for the entire school. Proprietorial responsibilities are dealt with effectively although rely more on informal rather than formal systems. An example is development planning, although recent appointments have been made specifically to address this. Advice is taken where necessary, from appropriate sources, and acted upon quickly. Safeguarding policies and procedures receive regular, thorough review.
- 2.13 Leadership and management are good. The SMT has been restructured since the previous inspection and has worked hard, to good effect, to ensure that the school conforms with regulations and supports pupils strongly. Comprehensive planning has taken place in all subjects and year groups, including the EYFS. These plans, policies and procedures give staff clear guidance in their academic and extra-curricular responsibilities so that their focus is very much on the pupils. As a result of this and of senior managers' evident example of care and concern for pupils, staff know their charges' abilities and talents well, especially from a pastoral perspective.
- 2.14 The appraisal and monitoring of staff are being developed. This has yet to be embedded in the school's culture, with the result that targets, both for teaching and giving pupils wider experience, are largely informal and consequently less effective. Some testing of pupils, based on nationally standardised methods, takes place and its effective use is under review. As yet the management team does not include specific strengths and experience on broad curricular and assessment matters. This limitation and the ongoing review of testing restrict the all-round scope of staff members' understanding of pupils, although plans are in hand to address these needs.
- 2.15 All adults associated with the school are appropriately checked. New staff members are recruited securely and are carefully introduced to the school's procedures. This enables them quickly and effectively to commence their academic and pastoral support for the pupils. All teaching and non-teaching staff receive child protection training that is consistently and suitably updated. Associated records are appropriately maintained.
- 2.16 Premises and accommodation are good. The newer extensions to all parts of the school have been thoughtfully designed. The older building and the original house have been carefully adapted. The close proximity of the games fields, sports hall, and swimming pool and facilities, in an environment of attractiveness and space, helps to ensure that they are well used. They therefore strongly enhance pupils' educational experience.
- 2.17 Parents are well informed of their children's progress and development. Written reports with staff comments and targets for future development are provided for most year groups at the end of the autumn and summer terms, with an effort and achievement report at Easter. Biannual parents' meetings occur for each year group and an informal social gathering with staff takes place at the start of each academic year. Opportunities exist daily for informal discussions with staff. These, backed by the ready availability of senior managers, enable parents to understand well the progress their children make.
- 2.18 The school goes to considerable lengths to keep families abreast of activities and events. Pupils have a message book that parents and staff sign. Much information,

including many policies, is available on the school's website and all is available from the school office. This extensive information and these opportunities enable parents, carers and guardians to be fully aware of the school's arrangements and give appropriate support to their children.

- 2.19 A pre-inspection questionnaire elicited a limited response from parents but analysis indicates particularly strong support for the school. The school's complaints procedure is well publicised although parents, carers and guardians rarely find its use necessary. The complaints record contains few entries and, in the last academic year, no formal complaints were made.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Formalise development planning arrangements.
 2. Ensure that pupils' academic work and progress receive dedicated oversight from senior management.
 3. Extend the use of ICT across the curriculum and throughout the school, including the EYFS.
 4. Extend the current examples of good EYFS practice throughout the EYFS and pre-preparatory department.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 The setting's effectiveness is outstanding. Regular staff meetings involve the planning of activities to meet each child's needs and response to special, often topical, interests. Individual support addresses specific learning needs. Children develop their self-confidence and inquisitiveness well, in line with the aims of the school. Carefully focused assessments identify the children's needs and ensure progress. Since the previous inspection, the Nursery's self-evaluation has identified areas for improvement and plans are in hand to carry them through. Secure outdoor space has been increased and a scheme linking assessment with planning has been implemented.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.2 Leadership and management are good, with some outstanding practice. Regular policy and procedural review ensures that all safeguarding requirements are met, as well as those relating to equality and diversity, so that children are well supported. Suitable risk assessments are in place. Outside agencies are consulted appropriately and children's protection is assured. The Nursery's development plans are externally evaluated and used strongly to identify potential improvements, a practice not mirrored in Reception. Managers encourage staff members' professional development and ensure they undertake appropriate training although this has yet to dovetail with appraisal. Links with parents are excellent, questionnaire analysis indicating strong parental support for the setting. Informative displays enable parents' good understanding of EYFS requirements and each class's weekly plans. High quality and carefully organised resources complement learning. These are used effectively, providing good choices of activities which foster well children's independence.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.3 Provision is outstanding. Staff know children particularly well and go to great lengths to ensure their welfare. Small class size means that individual needs can be met strongly. Careful, individualised planning and observations identify next steps and effectively incorporate the children's special interests. A good balance exists between adult- and child-initiated play. Children confidently choose activities and use their imagination creatively. Reception's direct outside access strongly promotes free activity flow. The Nursery makes highly effective use of its spacious rooms and has enlarged its dedicated, secure, outside space to provide wide ranging, stimulating learning experiences. Outdoor play equipment, PE and swimming lessons strongly encourage physical co-ordination whilst indoor opportunities give practice in finer handling skills. Visitors and outings enhance specific curricular areas. Excellent use is made of the extensive grounds to explore the seasons. Spontaneous 'Jack Frost' walks on cold, clear mornings are a strong example and especially popular. Specialist teachers take music and PE. However,

ICT is limited to the use of the computers in the classroom. Lunch arrangements are efficient.

4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.4 Outcomes are outstanding. Children progress strongly towards the Early Learning Goals and all exceed national and local authority averages. No significant differences exist between girls and boys or between other groupings. The EYFS profiles built from the Nursery onwards are being used effectively to inform and facilitate smooth inter-class transition and the planning of next steps. In the Nursery, children enjoy the multi-sensory activities used to reinforce the lessons. Class computers are used confidently by children to practise their phonics. Stories are listened to well and instructions in songs are followed closely. In Reception, children use their developing skills to build words. Most are familiar with simple mathematical language and some demonstrate emergent writing skills. Healthy living is promoted through balanced food choices at lunch and frequent hygiene reminders, to which children respond sensibly. They well understand the benefits of regular fresh air and exercise, being equipped to go outside in all weathers. Children become strong independent learners, confidently choosing and preparing for their activities. They work well in groups or individually and enjoy solving problems. Behaviour is exemplary and they all feel secure in the setting and in their learning.

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Robin Lewis

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Chris Lewsey

Head of Administration and Senior Tutor, IAPS
School

Mrs Gillian Bilbo

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector