



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**DALE HOUSE SCHOOL**

**NOVEMBER 2016**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Dale House Independent School and Nursery			
<b>DfE number</b>	382/6022			
<b>Address</b>	Dale House School Ruby Street Carlinghow Batley West Yorkshire WF17 8HL			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 422215			
<b>Email address</b>	admin@dhschool.freereserve.co.uk			
<b>Headmistress</b>	Mrs Sarah Fletcher			
<b>Proprietors</b>	Mrs Sarah Fletcher and Mr Andrew Fletcher			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils</b>	78			
	<b>Boys</b>	43	<b>Girls</b>	35
	<b>EYFS</b>	30	<b>Juniors</b>	48
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9 to 10 Nov 2016			

## PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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

**This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work.** It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and grade descriptors from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Dr Alison Primrose

Reporting inspector

Mrs Mary Bradfield

Team inspector (Head, ISA school)

Mrs Francesca Southern

Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)

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## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Dale House School is an independent day school and Nursery for boys and girls aged between 2 and 11 years. It is owned by the headmistress and her husband, who acts as bursar. They jointly founded the school in 1997 and are the sole proprietors, supported and advised by a small Foundation Committee.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, staff changes have included the development of a senior leadership team to support the headmistress. Resources to support the pupils' learning have been expanded, including increased facilities for information and communication technology (ICT).

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 Through providing a secure and caring environment, the school aims to enable all pupils to realise their potential intellectually, physically, emotionally and aesthetically. Focus on the core curriculum ensures that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Underpinned by Christian principles, the school seeks to be an inclusive community. It supports and encourages each individual, enabling them to grow in confidence and friendship, and to enjoy their learning.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Year group sizes vary considerably. The majority of pupils live within 15 miles of the school. The ethnic mix of the pupils is of significant diversity, with pupils from a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds. The school has identified 13 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 10 of whom receive additional support. More able pupils are provided extension work in class and may attend additional sessions before school. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 5 pupils, all of whom are supported in the classroom by their teachers, with 2 receiving extra support.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Nursery	Nursery 2 to 3 years
Prep class	Nursery 3 to 4 years
Transition	Reception
Lower Prep I	Year 1
Lower Prep II	Year 2
Upper Prep III	Year 3
Upper Prep IV	Year 4
Upper Prep V	Year 5
Upper Prep VI	Year 6

### **Recommendations from previous inspection**

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim Inspection in September 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Further strengthen management through the delegation and sharing of the headmistress's responsibilities.
  - Through the further development of resources for ICT, extend its use across the curriculum throughout the school, including the EYFS.
  - Develop further the outdoor provision for the EYFS, increasing play resources and the opportunities for structured play.
  - Ensure that there is a greater sense of focus within the EYFS development plan so that priorities are met.
  - Further strengthen the management of the EYFS.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met the recommendations of the previous inspection. Further detail is given in the report below.

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils achieve good academic standards and many make rapid progress as a result of work well-matched to their abilities and excellent support from teachers.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds become effective communicators. Children in the EYFS benefit from the excellent role-modelling of the teachers, rapidly gaining confidence and fluency in speaking.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and have positive attitudes, demonstrating perseverance and commitment.
- Older pupils' skills in demonstrating initiative and taking responsibility for their own learning are less well developed.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils are highly confident, polite and well-mannered, treating others with kindness and courtesy.
- Pupils display respect for those of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, appreciating the need for rules to order community life and keep everyone safe.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative skills and enjoy working together. They value the strong and supportive relationships within the school and contribute to them.
- Pupils' spirituality and understanding of non-material aspects of life is less well developed than their other personal qualities.

### **Recommendations**

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Increase opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills to support learning across the curriculum.
- Develop planning to include more opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for their learning and develop higher-order thinking skills.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to think about and discuss philosophical ideas.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school, including those with SEND or EAL. Results in National Curriculum tests at age 11 have been above the national average for maintained junior schools. They were well above the national average in 2014 and 2015. Results in 2016 were above national norms and from the evidence currently available, attainment is judged to be good compared with age-related expectation.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve good levels of literacy. They become fluent and confident communicators. These qualities are promoted through a range of activities such as drama, and supported through effective use of paired and group work in class. In the EYFS, children with EAL make rapid progress as a result of careful planning and highly effective role-modelling of teachers, who engage the children in constructive conversations. From early mark-making in the EYFS through guided handwriting, pupils develop good handwriting skills and most present their work well. They have a good understanding of grammar. For example, lower school pupils can explain how to use adjectives to improve their writing and confidently identify time conjunctions such as 'next', 'then' and 'finally'. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the features of different types of text, and writing for different purposes. Pupils enjoy creative writing; upper school pupils used their imaginations well to compose diary entries that engage the reader. These good writing skills are developing well as the school provides opportunities for pupils to apply them in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils achieve well in language studies, learning French from Year 1 and Spanish from Year 3. They are highly motivated in these lessons and make rapid progress as a result of the excellent activities planned to support their learning, and the motivational teaching. More able pupils make links between English and Spanish, and all enjoy using their knowledge beyond the classroom.
- 3.4 Achievement in numeracy is good; the development of secure number skills is supported by homework and regular practice. Some lessons provide additional challenge for more able pupils, and the planning of occasional open-ended tasks provides pupils the opportunity to direct their own learning activities. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are supported by the use of well-structured resources and additional booster classes, which are valued by the pupils. In Year 2 more able pupils work independently and solve number problems mentally, and those less confident are well supported by the teacher and provided appropriate resources so that they make rapid progress. Pupils apply their mathematical skills to other tasks, such as spontaneously measuring dinosaurs in the EYFS and recording results graphically in science. Upper school pupils are less confident when identifying opportunities to apply mathematical skills in other areas of learning. Teachers' thorough planning and the effective contribution of support staff observed in many lessons enables pupils of all abilities to make progress that is at least good, and often rapid.

- 3.5 Pupils enjoy discovering more about the world around them and engage eagerly in practical investigations, making predictions and testing them. Pupils in Year 2 speak enthusiastically about investigating the properties of different materials, including making 'slime' from cornflour. Teachers' comprehensive knowledge of each pupil underpins their planning, resources used are well matched to individual need which enables pupils of all ability levels to achieve success. A general focus on factual recall in lessons means that opportunities to extend pupils' thinking through more searching questions are less frequent, which limits pupils' development of higher-order thinking skills. In the EYFS, activities are carefully selected to enable children to achieve well in all areas. The wide range of resources, including those in the outdoor area, promote rapid progress and support high levels of achievement in communication, numeracy, creativity, social development and physical co-ordination. These significant developments within the EYFS fully address the recommendations of the previous inspection.
- 3.6 Pupils are confident users of ICT. From the early use of digital resources in the EYFS through to computing lessons in Year 3 where coding is taught, pupils achieve well and become competent users of ICT. They use digital photography effectively to record observations on school trips, such as a visit to the local church building as part of their studies in religious education. Older pupils proudly reported using ICT to present their research findings on rainforest animals to the class at the conclusion of a geography project. Pupils are keen to use their ICT skills, as demonstrated in the production of a school newspaper. These good levels of achievement and the progression of skill development observed in the school demonstrate that the school has effectively addressed the recommendation of the previous inspection to extend the use of ICT across the curriculum and throughout the school. Its use to support learning across a range of subjects is still inconsistent.
- 3.7 A rotation of extra-curricular activities throughout the year enables pupils to develop skills and interests beyond the curriculum. Through participation in a variety of sporting activities such as basketball, football and judo, pupils develop a good range of sporting skills. For some pupils, these experiences identify specific talents which they continue to develop successfully beyond school. Other after-school clubs enable pupils to acquire skills in areas such as cookery, debating, chess and drama. The pupils' successes and achievements are celebrated by the school, with mentions in assembly and in the school newsletter. This recognition and celebration of individual and group success promotes an understanding of the significance of all kinds of achievement whether academic, sporting, or creative.
- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. In the EYFS, children participate eagerly in the activities provided for them. Pupils of all ages are attentive in class and listen carefully both to teachers and each other. They are well-disciplined in their work, and pupils of all ability levels try hard and persevere with challenges. Pupils successfully complete independent projects of their own choice in some subjects, but opportunities for older pupils to become more autonomous in their learning are limited. Pupils with SEND display equally positive attitudes. Individualised plans are shared with parents and reviewed regularly, these support their learning and underpin their good levels of achievement and often rapid progress.

- 3.9 Pupils' good achievement is in part due to the school's response to the previous inspection recommendation to share management responsibilities among staff. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future. Most parent respondents considered the range of subjects offered to be suitable, and agreed that the curriculum is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities. In their questionnaire responses most pupils felt that they can be involved in a good range of activities, and all pupil respondents indicated that the school provides them opportunities to learn and make good progress. Inspection evidence concurs with these responses from pupils and parents.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils are extremely confident with high levels of self-esteem, fostered by the close and caring relationships that they have with staff. These relationships provide a secure environment in which pupils grow in self-knowledge and become resilient learners. Children in the EYFS move confidently from one activity to another and engage happily in conversation with the adults around them. The high levels of self-esteem evident in the older pupils is promoted by the school ethos of valuing each person and the distinct contribution that each person makes to the school community. Within an environment where teachers have high expectations, pupils strive to do well. They display determination and perseverance; pupils spoke confidently of the need to keep trying hard.
- 4.3 The safe environment created allows pupils to tackle new challenges without fear of failure, enabling them to become resilient and successful learners. This was evident in a French lesson where pupils were not afraid to make oral contributions even if they were little unsure, and in the approach of science lesson pupils when presented with a challenging activity that involved interpreting specialist vocabulary. Through the successful use of subject-specific, individual targets in core areas of the curriculum, pupils know how to improve their performance.
- 4.4 Pupils begin to develop an awareness of non-material aspects of life as they learn about the religious beliefs and practices of other traditions. They are less confident at articulating abstract ideas as a result of the focus on knowledge and understanding, and consequently little opportunity to debate the values and philosophical ideas underpinning religious practice. Times for reflection are incorporated in some school assemblies, festivals are celebrated, and pupils contribute prayers and readings at special services at the church, all of which nurture the development of the pupils' own spirituality. Participation in special drama events, large choral concerts with other schools, and visits to theatres and galleries all contribute to enriching and promoting pupils' spiritual development.
- 4.5 Pupils enjoy working together and collaborate extremely well. In class, they demonstrate the skills necessary for highly effective group work. In Reception, children who had finished their challenge helped others to complete the task. Older juniors worked confidently in pairs on an open-ended mathematics challenge. Pupils throughout the school behave responsibly and they move sensibly around the building, displaying consideration for others. Pupils of all ages relish opportunities to take on positions of responsibility. They demonstrate high levels of diligence in the discharge of those responsibilities. The youngest children in the EYFS take responsibility for their own environment, tidying up willingly at the end of a session. Junior pupils have various class responsibilities including managing the registers, water bottles and book corner. The regular residential trip for pupils in Years 3 to 6 makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. With pupils from different year groups participating in activities together, the older pupils enjoy their many opportunities to take responsibility supporting and helping the younger.

- 4.6 Pupils are fully aware of the consequences of their actions, and invariably choose to work hard and follow the expected code of conduct in order to be successful. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate that they have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They respect the school rules and understand their purpose. One pupil explained that the rules are good as they mean everyone can be safe and happy. Pupils explained spontaneously how the police help to maintain law, which keeps everyone safe. They gain an understanding of the rule of law in Britain through their personal, health, social and economic education (PHSEE) lessons. Junior pupils begin to develop an understanding of the judiciary system, supported by regular discussions of current news topics. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are kind and thoughtful to each other, display respect to visitors and are extremely well-mannered. Pupils know that bullying behaviour of any sort is unacceptable, and appreciate the fact that any incidents of unpleasantness or unkindness are dealt with promptly by the staff. The school's commitment to maintaining a happy and safe environment for everyone underpins the excellent relationships between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils themselves, who all report feeling safe at school. This caring atmosphere promotes high standards of pupils' behaviour, which result in a calm and productive learning environment.
- 4.7 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and can explain confidently how to keep safe in a variety of situations. Older pupils have a secure understanding of e-safety as a result of internet safety lessons and visiting speakers coming into school. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of risk, and value the freedoms and opportunities that they enjoy. Through the work of the school council including the election of members, pupils learn how to participate in the democratic process. Older pupils spoke confidently about the origins of democracy in the Ancient Greek civilisation. Pupils share their ideas and suggestions through the council, encouraged by the school's leadership. As a result of this, pupils have brought about change such as the introduction of judo as an activity and a school trip to France.
- 4.8 Pupils have a well-informed understanding of how to keep healthy, drawn from the many opportunities in the curriculum that promote this such as in science and PHSEE. Those in Year 2 spoke confidently about the need for exercise and good food, identifying fruit and vegetables as foods that are good for you. This understanding is reinforced by posters displayed in the dining hall. Pupils are also fully aware of the importance of exercise, explaining the need to stretch your body and to warm up. The older pupils enjoy a weekly session in the nearby sports centre and many belong to sports clubs out of school, supporting their development of healthy lifestyles.
- 4.9 Pupils are extremely accepting of each other's differences. They respect each other, whether it be in relation to specific dietary customs or religious practices. Pupils value the diversity of the school community and enjoy learning about the traditions and customs of others. The wide spread of ethnic backgrounds represented in the school enriches pupils' learning about the world and contributes to the development of positive images of different cultures. Pupils warmly welcome new children to the school regardless of their background. Those who join the school unable to speak English are quickly made to feel at home through the friendly support provided by the other pupils, who include them in their games often with the use of sign language. This helps the new pupils to settle quickly into the school and develop their English language skills.

- 4.10 Pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and are active in supporting them. They collaborate together to plan charity fundraising events, and support many different causes. Pupils donate gifts from their harvest festival to those in need in the local community and enjoy fundraising activities to support other charities such as Children in Need. Their enthusiastic participation in these events and support for them arise from a natural empathy with those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.11 As a result of the good progress they make in their academic studies, their positive attitudes to learning and their excellent personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.