



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

DALE HOUSE SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Dale House School

Full Name of School	Dale House School		
DfE Number	382/6022		
EYFS Number	EY304757		
Address	Dale House School Ruby Street Carlinghow Batley West Yorkshire WF17 8HL		
Telephone Number	01924 422 215		
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Email Address	admin@dhschool.freemove.co.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs S M G Fletcher		
Proprietors	Mrs S M G Fletcher and Mr A R Fletcher		
Age Range	2 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	80		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (40 boys; 40 girls)		
Numbers by Age	2-5 (EYFS):	27	5-11: 53
EYFS Gender	Mixed (13 boys; 14 girls)		
Inspection dates	28 Sep 2010 to 29 Sep 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 Dale House School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from two to eleven years. It opened in 1999 and is located in the industrial town of Batley, West Yorkshire. It occupies a former Edwardian Sunday School, which has been extended over the life of the school, as it developed its age range, originally accepting three- to five-year-olds only. The school is divided into two sections; the Lower School, comprising the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 and 2, and the Junior School, for Years 3 to 6. It is a limited company, its headmistress and her husband being the founders and sole proprietors. He acts as bursar. The headmistress is advised by a Foundation Committee.
- 1.2 The school aims, within a happy, secure, caring, Christian-based environment, to enable children to reach their potential and develop lively inquiring minds. It seeks to ensure that learning is exciting and enjoyable. Through expanding children's knowledge, skills and reasoning, it aims to provide a firm foundation for future learning. Through a school community which encourages individuals to grow in confidence and friendship, it aims to develop children's self-image, self-motivation and independence and their ability to express emotions and demonstrate moral values and respect for others.
- 1.3 Pupils may join the EYFS at the age of two; some join the school at other ages when places are available. At the age of eleven, pupils continue their education locally either in independent or maintained secondary schools. Since the previous inspection, the school has completed the extension of its age range up to the age of eleven, and has developed its facilities for information and communication technology (ICT).
- 1.4 At the time of inspection, there were 80 pupils on roll, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls in both the school overall and the EYFS, which caters for 27 children, eight of whom attend part-time. Results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average, although year groups differ in their levels and ranges of ability. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, the majority of parents being involved in business or professional employment. Most pupils are of white British heritage and a small minority from other ethnic backgrounds. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs and none has English as an additional language. Four pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), all of whom receive specialist learning support from the school.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

School	NC name
Nursery	EYFS ages 2-3
Prep	EYFS ages 3-4
Transition	EYFS Reception
LP1	Year 1
LP2	Year 2
UP 3/4	Years 3 & 4
UP 5/6	Years 5 & 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

- 2.1 Pupils' achievements are good, in accordance with the school's aim to give children the opportunity to reach the highest level of personal achievement. They are extremely articulate and expressed themselves confidently during interviews and around the school. They are competent mathematicians, read and write fluently and have well-developed reasoning skills. Reading and spelling skills are a priority; high standards are achieved through close co-operation between the school and parents. Pupils have excellent social and personal skills. Standards in drama are high and pupils thrive on the regular opportunities to be involved in productions, which enhance their creativity and imagination. Pupils rehearsing for a 'Young Voices' concert sang with verve. Achievement and progress are rooted in pupils' excellent attitudes to work. They show clear enthusiasm for their learning. The presentation of their work is excellent. Their positive attitudes and the very good relationships they have with each other and with their teachers profoundly influence their success.
- 2.2 Results in national tests at the age of eleven have been far above the national average for pupils in maintained primary schools. Although the data sample is small, inspection judgements, including observed performance in relation to national targets, confirm this evaluation of pupils' attainment. On leaving the school, at the age of eleven, pupils consistently obtain places at their first choice secondary schools. Overall, results are good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress is above average for pupils of similar ability. Progress is enhanced by a broad, well-planned curriculum, which is carefully monitored and includes French and Spanish. Parents are happy with the breadth of the curriculum and the range and quality of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is further enriched by visits, speakers and residential trips. After-school and holiday activities strongly supplement learning and are valued by working parents. The school encourages pupils to experience competitive team sports in the local community.
- 2.3 The careful identification of pupils with LDD and gifted and talented pupils, together with the specialist provision made available to them, ensures that the school's aims are met in meeting their needs and providing good support and challenge. The school has improved its ICT provision since the previous inspection. The resources are adequate and the use of ICT has not been fully integrated across the curriculum. The indoor environment is bright and conducive to learning but the outdoor areas lack stimulation.
- 2.4 Teaching makes a significant contribution to attainment and progress, both academically and in pupils' personal development. Planning documents are thorough, progress is tracked formally and teaching makes effective use of the information to cater for individual learning needs and set suitable challenges. Independent and creative thinking is successfully encouraged. The best lessons are characterised by interesting tasks and by targeted questioning. Thorough marking ensures that pupils know what they should do to improve and sets helpful targets.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.5 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are self-confident and willingly engage in informed discussion. They are respectful of each other and of adults. They make a valuable contribution to the life of the school through assemblies, plays and concerts. Older pupils have opportunities, through election, to join the school council and support the running of the school. Pupils willingly take on positions of responsibility appropriate for their age and, through the school's support of charities, both locally and further afield, develop a good understanding of their role in the wider community. Pupils have a well-developed moral awareness and a clear sense of right and wrong. Their behaviour is excellent and pupils of all ages relate well to one another. Their cultural awareness is strong; through involvement in art, music, drama and educational visits, they develop a good understanding of their own culture. Assemblies and the curriculum, together with the sharing of experiences between pupils of different faiths, enable them to develop a broad understanding of other cultures. Through science lessons and personal, social and health education, which permeates all aspects of school life, pupils develop a thorough understanding of how to keep healthy.
- 2.6 Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are excellent. The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The school's leadership ensures that both physical measures and the awareness of the staff are of high quality. Consequently, pupils feel safe in their surroundings and on educational visits. They are confident that there is an adult to turn to should they have a problem. Risk assessments are completed to a high standard and carefully monitored. A high proportion of staff have appropriate first aid qualifications and the school's measures to deal with accidents and illness and to care for pupils with particular medical needs are robust. The school's arrangements for fire safety are thorough. Admission and attendance registers are completed appropriately and an accessibility plan details the school's intended measures for those with special needs and/or disabilities. Safe practices for the recruitment of staff and volunteers ensure that adults are appropriately qualified and suitable to work with children, and all staff have undertaken relevant child protection training. Well-developed policies to prevent bullying and promote good behaviour ensure a safe and positive environment, in which relations between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are strong.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.7 The governance of the school is good, ensuring that aims are well-chosen and are met. The proprietors, one of whom is the headmistress and the other the bursar, have extensive knowledge of the school and a deep understanding of its successes and challenges. They have a clear vision for the ethos of the school, which has developed strongly under their careful stewardship. They bring educational and financial experience to the school, ensuring that it is well run and that their obligations in relation to child protection, safe recruitment, the maintenance of the centralised register of appointments and the welfare, health and safety of pupils are rigorously met.
- 2.8 The proprietors ensure that the premises are well-maintained and attractive. These have been sensitively developed to meet the needs of the school, which has completed the expansion of its age range to the age of eleven since the previous inspection. The Foundation Committee is effective in supporting the work of the school through monthly meetings with the school's management. Its members bring

further educational experience to the school and provide useful advice for the discussion of issues and future school development.

- 2.9 The quality of leadership and management is good. The headmistress ensures that the school's aims are met and her monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school are very strong. However, an extensive workload does not always enable her to prioritise effectively. Appraisal is well focused on professional development and thorough checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning through observation and work scrutiny. The headmistress rigorously oversees the analysis of the assessment of pupils' work and progress. She ensures that pastoral and academic information is systematically shared in regular staff meetings, contributing strongly to the pupils' personal development and academic achievement. Through regular discussions and informal reviews, non-teaching staff share suggestions for improvement and make a positive contribution to the school. Mutual support and teamwork are paramount; teaching and non-teaching staff are valued and respected for the contributions they make.
- 2.10 Links with parents are good. Comprehensive information about the school is provided, and a diary is successfully used to communicate on a daily basis, promoting academic achievement. Biannual reports provide parents with useful information on their children's progress and give clear targets for improvement. Reports include sections for parents' and pupils' comments, further strengthening communication. Twice yearly parents' evenings provide formal opportunities to discuss children's work and progress. The school has effective measures for dealing with any complaints raised by parents, of which there are very few. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents showed strong support for the school. They were particularly appreciative of the high standards of behaviour and the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views. 'Friends of Dale House' is a very supportive parents' group, which strengthens the school community by raising funds and arranging social events.

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.
- 3.2 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 4 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - 1. Further strengthen management through the delegation and sharing of the headmistress's responsibilities.
 - 2. Through the further development of resources for ICT, extend its use across the curriculum throughout the school, including the EYFS.
 - 3. Develop further the outdoor provision for the EYFS, increasing play resources and the opportunities for structured play.
 - 4. Ensure that there is a greater sense of focus within the EYFS development plan so that priorities are met.
 - 5. Further strengthen the management of the EYFS.

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 This is a good setting with some outstanding features and it successfully achieves its aims. The dedicated adults who work with the children know each child's individual needs and promote an environment in which pastoral and academic development is nurtured. All children make progress in their learning and development. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and the careful attention to children's welfare is supported by a close relationship with parents. Since the last inspection, an Early Years teacher has been appointed, but there is no EYFS co-ordinator to bring specific management expertise to this age range. There has been some improvement in planning and organisation of the outdoor area, which was a recommendation at the previous inspection, but outdoor provision is still limited and does not serve as an extension of the indoor classroom.

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

4.2 Good leadership and management are at the heart of the setting. Excellent and well-implemented safeguarding procedures ensure that all children have equal opportunities to succeed. Well-qualified staff nurture the children's individual needs. Thorough risk assessment ensures that children are safe. Good teamwork, regular meetings and staff appraisal result in evaluative practice and identify targets for staff training, but the focuses for development on the current EYFS development plan lack clarity. There is a highly effective partnership with parents, and they are very happy with what the setting offers. Excellent links have been established with the local authority to further enhance outcomes for pupils. Readily available resources are effectively deployed in both adult- and child-initiated learning, but ICT resources are limited in the Nursery.

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

4.3 The quality of the provision in the EYFS is always good and in some respects outstanding. Children flourish because they are well supported by the caring staff. Children are provided with a stimulating balance of child and adult initiated activities across all areas of learning. Relationships are excellent. Staff listen to children and encourage their confidence. Adults prepare children for a seamless transition between classes. The limited outdoor area does not, as yet, reflect the welcoming and colourful indoor environment and is not widely used as an outdoor classroom. Thorough systems assess children's progress and plan next learning steps. Key persons work effectively with the children and bring their expertise to the setting. Staff actively and consistently promote the health, welfare and safety of children at all times. Children with special needs are quickly identified and given extra help and support.

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

- 4.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Children make significant progress in relation to their starting points and they begin to develop excellent skills for the future. They are happy and independent learners who respond wholeheartedly to activities and enjoy choosing their own tasks. They show an awareness of the wider world in their play. Children have excellent relationships with staff, who make them feel valued. They learn to work cooperatively and take turns. They listen to each other and celebrate others' achievements as well as their own. They are confident and articulate. An outstanding strength of the school is the exemplary behaviour of the children, who respond to the high expectations of staff. Children understand the importance of eating healthily, being safe and the need to maintain good hygiene.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 4.4 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Complaints since the last inspection

- 4.5 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff, with the proprietors and a representative from the advisory Foundation Committee, 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 Christopher Sanderson	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Hilary Betty	Former Senior Teacher, IAPS school
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Early Years Lead Inspector
Ms Sarah Mostyn	Early Years Team Inspector (Junior Head, GSA School)