

Bramfield House School

Walpole Road, Bramfield, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9AB

Inspection dates

17–19 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders, including the heads of education and care, share a strong vision and drive for improving the school.
- Leaders have worked closely with the chair of governors to ensure that all the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for residential special schools are met.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' learning, progress and personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have recently implemented a new assessment system, which does not yet fully show the progress pupils are making in all subjects.
- Leaders rigorously monitor the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning to ensure good progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and make good use of resources in planning activities that motivate pupils.
- All staff manage behaviour consistently well and maintain strong relations with pupils.
- Pupils feel very safe in school.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and care staff work seamlessly together to provide excellent welfare, support and guidance. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress in their behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning.
- Teachers sometimes fail to use assessment information to ensure that work is matched to different abilities. As a result, pupils sometimes find learning tasks too hard or too easy.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
 - teachers use the information about pupils' prior learning to give the lower-attaining pupils learning tasks that are not too difficult and the most able pupils learning tasks that are not too easy
 - the new systems of assessment show the gains in learning for all pupils across different subjects.
- Good practice recommendations in relation to the residential provision are as follows:
 - check to ensure that key workers' records are updated regularly
 - ensure that supervision meetings for night staff are provided on a more regular basis.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Good
How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision	Outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and chair of governors drive continuous improvements forward together, especially in pupils' learning, well-being, the quality of teaching and the quality of care. There is a clear vision for improvement and the relative weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been addressed well.
- Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are up-to-date, implemented well and available to parents.
- Staff morale is high, which is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive staff questionnaire responses and in discussions during the inspection.
- The school enjoys the confidence of parents and local authorities as shown in questionnaires and in discussions. Parents state that this school is life-changing and there are a number of extremely positive testimonies from parents and other stakeholders. Parent View results are extremely positive, describing the significant benefits of the residential experience and educational provision.
- Good leadership of teaching, through appraisal and regular monitoring of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, is continuously improving the provision and pupils' outcomes. Regular training for education and care staff supports professional development well. Staff are successful practitioners.
- The day staff, who form the majority of the care team, have regular supervision and an annual appraisal. New staff are prioritised to ensure that they can identify concerns. The night staff have had only one supervision meeting in a year, which is insufficient to ensure good practice.
- The residential provision is managed efficiently as an integral part of the school.
- The senior leadership team of the day and residential provision maintain a high profile and operate an open-door policy. The staff are skilled, enthusiastic and work well as a team. There is a culture that centres on overcoming barriers and meeting pupils' individual needs. As one parent said, this is 'an extremely well-managed school that puts young people at the heart of everything'.
- External monitoring of records is rigorous. Internal monitoring by residential leaders works efficiently for most reporting systems but the key worker records are not given regular oversight. There are several months where information has not been recorded, which is not rigorous enough.
- Supervision and support of residents is good. There are ample staff on duty, which enables residents to make individual choices about whether to take part in activities with others or to spend quality time with staff.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities to develop learning in a wide range of

subjects, with a strong emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and science.

- The curriculum develops pupils' independence well and prepares pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education, especially through the successful work of Ibstock House for Year 11 pupils in residence.
- A wide range of visits and well planned residential activities, such as sailing, climbing Mount Snowdon, cinema trips and shopping, build confidence, self-esteem and resilience. There are good opportunities to develop social skills, including turn-taking, through activities such as water polo and practical investigations in science.
- There is a range of well-thought-out opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of British values through topics on different cultures, world religions, the celebration of Remembrance Day and in raising funds to support the work of the Norfolk Blood Bikes.
- The programme for personal, social, health and economic education and the successful implementation of the discipline and behaviour policy help pupils to respect the law and distinguish right from wrong.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The accessibility plan is improving access to the curriculum effectively.

Governance

- The governing body holds staff to account and provides good support to make sure that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for residential provision are met.
- The chair of governors has a highly accurate view of the school's work through first-hand joint visits with senior leaders to lessons and residential activities.
- Members of the governing body ask challenging and probing questions on the progress pupils are making and the impact of teaching on learning and progress.
- Governors carefully consider reports on the impact of the quality of care on residents' well-being, behaviour and personal development.
- Governors ensure that the arrangements to safeguard children are implemented effectively through rigorous checks and scrutiny of reports.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a suitable safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website.
- The safety of residents and day pupils is paramount in this school. Arrivals, departures and visitors are managed with absolute care by attentive reception staff. The site is managed very effectively to ensure that safety checks and service checks are regularly undertaken and meticulously recorded.
- Arrangements to protect children are embedded throughout the school and managed extremely well. Child protection records show detailed and clear chronologies, with

concerns reported without delay to the designated person and appropriate agencies. Staff are well trained.

- Designated staff maintain a high standard for keeping pupils and residents safe, such as reminding staff how to whistle-blow and remain constantly vigilant.
- All of the day pupils and residents spoken to say that they feel safe, and that the school will not tolerate bullying or racism. There has been one bullying incident in the last year and staff responded to the incident quickly and successfully.
- There have been three incidents where pupils have left the site briefly and were quickly located by staff. The incidents were recorded appropriately and the school's policy was implemented well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils' work and leaders' records of lessons over time show clearly that teaching is good across the school.
- Good teaching is linked to teachers' good use of subject knowledge and use of resources to provide stimulating learning activities. The activities promote good learning, such as younger pupils being totally absorbed in constructing mountains and finding out about the countries which border the Alps in their topic work in geography. In another example, older pupils learned a lot from carrying out practical investigations in the rate of osmosis using potatoes and dye.
- Consistent behaviour management and good relationships between staff and pupils successfully motivate pupils to learn.
- Teachers use the school's marking policy effectively to provide good feedback on how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers usually make good use of assessment information to build on pupils' learning so they make steady progress.
- Teachers are beginning to familiarise themselves with the new assessment system in the school to track progress in all subjects.
- Most teachers ask probing questions to deepen pupils' reasoning. This was seen in a technology lesson where pupils were constructing boxes using different joints and the teacher asked them how they could tell if the joints were square. This led on to a discussion of how many right angles are in a straight line and in a circle.
- Pupils' work over time shows some low expectations of what pupils can do and some work that is too difficult for lower-attaining pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff provide excellent role models and provide strong pastoral support for each pupil.

- Care staff work very effectively with education staff as pupil support workers to support and return pupils to lessons successfully when pupils occasionally disengage from the learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their awareness of British values, is outstanding.
- By the time they leave school, pupils are mature and sensible, following their chosen career pathways. Independent careers guidance is of high quality.
- High-quality guidance and support ensures that pupils deepen their awareness of the positive contribution their good behaviour makes on their learning and well-being.
- Residents have a strong voice in the school. Their views are respected and acted on.
- All staff assess thoroughly any potential risks in and outside school, including when pupils attend college or participate in school visits.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment where pupils feel safe and secure.
- The premises, accommodation and school grounds are safe and secure.
- Parents, staff, pupils and visitors agree that pupils feel safe and thrive in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Parents, pupils, staff and visitors confirm that pupils make rapid progress in their behaviour and attendance during their time in school.
- Pupils re-engage with learning quickly as their attendance moves from well below average to broadly average in a relatively short space of time.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They demonstrate consideration and care for one another. There is a strong culture of tolerance and acceptance.
- Minor disagreements are quickly resolved. The use of formal consequences is minimal. Strong relationships with individuals enable staff to resolve concerns informally. This mutual respect and young people's trust in staff are the foundations of the school's success.
- Pupils learn how to self-regulate and self-reflect, building valuable life skills over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter the school with significant gaps in their learning and histories of poor attendance, leading to low attainment. The school's information about progress over time, pupils' work and records of lesson visits by senior leaders demonstrate that pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects over time from their low starting points.
- At key stage 2, pupils develop good reading and writing skills because the teaching of phonics is good. They make good progress in mathematics because they are given opportunities to use and apply problem-solving to real-life situations such as shopping for food to prepare a meal. Pupils make good progress in a wide range of other subjects such as swimming, where they all gain certificates, humanities and art.

- Pupils at key stage 3 build on the good progress made in key stage 2 and begin to prepare for examination courses in Year 9, gaining entry-level qualifications in literacy and numeracy.
- At key stage 4, pupils make consistently good progress in their examination courses, including GCSE. There has been a year-on-year increase in the examination successes, with twice as many pupils gaining GCSE examinations and at higher grades, since the previous inspection.
- Pupils attending the local college on a part-time basis make good progress in animal care.
- All pupils who have left school in the last three years entered further education, employment or training and were well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils including most-able pupils, make equally good progress as their classmates because good use is made of the additional funding to provide individual support for their learning.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision **Good**

- Pupils in the residential provision positively thrive. Residents are upbeat and positive about the school. They articulate their views confidently, recognising their own personal progress. This is significant for residents whose previous experiences include a number of failed educational placements or no placement at all.
- A key strength of the school is the quality of the relationships between residents and staff. Staff consistently promote enjoyment and are good role models. Residents are motivated and engaged because staff believe and invest in them, which has a very positive impact on pupils' social, emotional and academic progress.
- Parents spoken to are delighted with the progress residents make in core subjects such as English and mathematics. A parent said: 'I see a future for my child since he's been at Bramfield which I never imagined at his previous school.'
- Residents clearly have a strong voice in this school. They regularly participate in meetings in the knowledge that their views influence change. This encourages them to articulate their ideas and make choices.
- Ibstock House provides a mature environment for older boys. There is a strong culture of preparing pupils for further education through GSCE preparation and work experience. Young people cook, budget and use public transport, developing valuable life skills in preparation for their next stage of education.

Quality of care and support in the residential provision **Good**

- Links between the residential provision and the school are seamless. The staff work across both the residential and day provision, providing consistency and continuity, which supports young people to be clear about the behavioural expectations. Consistency and

continuity help residents to feel secure and settled in their routines as they begin their

journey of re-engaging with learning.

- The majority of the residential provision is centrally housed on the first floor. Refurbishment work has generated a cosy, comfortable and personalised environment that reflects young people's tastes and preferences. Istock House for Year 11 is extremely well appointed and provides a high standard of accommodation. Consoles, televisions and a pool table provide a variety of activities suited to adolescents. Young people respect and value the environment.
- Healthcare is overseen by a dedicated school nurse. A new medical room on the ground floor offers residents opportunities to drop in at any time, which supports their physical and emotional well-being successfully. The school nurse also liaises with families, supporting induction and ensuring that any health needs are managed safely and effectively.
- Residents benefit greatly from an exciting and varied activity programme that offers ample choices. This has resulted in residents realising their unique potential through a range of on-site and off-site activity clubs. Activities include snowboarding, martial arts, football, swimming and cooking.

School details

Unique reference number	124879
Social care unique reference number	SC024575
DfE registration number	935/6036
Inspection number	10006050

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Number of part-time pupils	1
Number of boarders on roll	24
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Julie Taylor
Headteacher	Dee Jennings
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,608 to £41,394
Annual fees (boarders)	£52,816 to £62,921
Telephone number	01986 784235
Website	www.bramfieldhouse.co.uk
Email address	info@bramfieldhouse.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2012

Information about this school

- Bramfield House is a residential special school for boys aged seven to 16 years who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils have often been out of school for long periods prior to admission.
- Each pupil has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs and is funded by their local authority. There are 13 pupils who are looked after by their local authority.
- Since the previous inspections of the residential provision (November 2015) and the education (November 2012), there has been a significant increase in the number of day pupils, with a reduction in the number of residents. Of the 72 pupils on roll, there are 48 day pupils and 24 in residence.
- Since the previous inspections, a head of education has been appointed and there has been a significant turnover of staff.
- The residential accommodation consists of a main house situated in 10 acres of gardens and 1 mile from the centre of the village of Bramfield. The classroom facilities, which have recently been refurbished and extended, are separately located within the grounds.
- Since the previous inspection there have been considerable improvements to the accommodation, with newly refurbished teaching areas and outdoor play areas.
- The school was established 46 years ago. Originally owned by a private individual, the school is now one of several similar schools owned by Acorn Care and Education. A chair of governors oversees the work of the school on behalf of the proprietors.
- The school uses one alternative provider at Easton College, Norfolk, for a very small number of pupils who attend for one day per week for animal care studies.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a variety of lessons and activities, including residential activities, jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy head, the heads of education and residential care, staff and the chair of governors. Informal discussions were held with different groups of pupils in lessons, in the playground, during residential activities, at breakfast and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across the school and the school's tracking information about the progress pupils were making across the school, including examination results, with senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through the 13 responses to Parent View and through telephone discussions with a small number of parents. They scrutinised the school's arrangements for safeguarding for all pupils including those in residence. They also considered 49 questionnaire responses from staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation available on the website and in hard copy. These included the complaints policy, the school's self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings, a range of policies to promote the welfare and safety of pupils, records of behaviour, restraint logs and attendance figures.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Randall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deidra Keating	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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