

Inspection of Bramfield House School

Walpole Road, Bramfield, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9AB

Inspection dates: 28–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and secure because staff know every pupil extremely well. Pupils like coming to school because they receive a great deal of support to help them to manage their own behaviour. Pupils told us that this helps them attend school regularly and learn more.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's work. Staff model positive behaviours and attitudes for pupils throughout the day. This helps pupils to adopt respectful attitudes towards others and accept differences. They learn about other ways of viewing the world and make comparisons with their own lives. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of how to be a responsible citizen in modern Britain.

Pupils feel safe at school. The school site is secure and pupils are well supervised throughout the school day.

Pupils understand what bullying is and why it is not acceptable. They told us that when bullying does take place, staff act quickly and effectively so that it does not continue.

Pupils new to the school settle quickly because their teachers take each individual's needs into account. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education when they leave the school at 16.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There have been significant changes in the leadership of the school since the previous standard inspection. Roles and responsibilities are clear. Staff told us that they understand and support the new headteacher's ambitions for the school.

The new leadership team has accurately identified priorities for improvement. Improving pupils' literacy has a high profile with staff and pupils. For example, a whole-school literacy programme is in place to improve pupils' reading and writing. This work is already well developed in key stage 2. This is still developing in key stages 3 and 4.

In key stage 2 pupils improve their phonic knowledge through daily phonics sessions. Pupils learn to read and write with greater confidence. Key stage 3 pupils who need to improve phonic knowledge and extend their vocabulary get suitable extra help. Pupils read regularly in most lessons. Older pupils were proud to show us the new school library.

Subject leaders have planned a carefully sequenced curriculum. Plans take into account what pupils need to learn across key stages 2 to 4. Pupils are well prepared to build on their learning year on year. For example, in design and technology Year 6 and Year 7 pupils learn how to use basic hand tools safely. This allows pupils to be

able to use a range of hand and power tools effectively and safely by Year 9. Pupils told us the correct name for each tool and explained what they are used for.

Teachers have detailed subject knowledge. They break learning into manageable steps and explain things well. Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout lessons and provide extra practice if required. Pupils are happy to ask for more help if they need it.

Many pupils join this school after periods of absence from education and with gaps in their prior learning. To address this, leaders adopt a 'team around the child' approach to planning learning. Curriculum and behaviour plans are adapted so that they match individual pupils' needs precisely.

Pupils told us they like attending the school because staff know them exceptionally well. This helps pupils to learn quickly how to manage their own behaviour and most have very positive attitudes to learning.

All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans. School leaders' approach to personal development takes these plans into account. Pupils develop the attitudes, understanding and skills they may need once they leave school. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons we saw how key stage 2 pupils explored the difference between 'want' and 'need'. In Year 10 PSHE, pupils had thoughtful and mature discussions about health and relationships.

Pupils know about a wide range of career opportunities, including college courses. They receive help with college applications. Staff often take pupils on visits to local colleges to find out more about the courses that pupils are interested in. Leaders have introduced in-house 'jobs' which pupils have to apply and be interviewed for. This programme prepares pupils well for the world of work.

The school meets all the independent school standards and complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor, the local governing board and leaders have systems and procedures in place to check and respond swiftly to health and safety and safeguarding concerns. Governors do not hold leaders to account for the quality of education as precisely. The recently appointed chair of the governing board is working closely with the new headteacher to improve this aspect of governors' work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained about how, when and why to make safeguarding referrals. They have received additional training about aspects of safeguarding which may be particularly relevant to pupils at this school.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe on the school site because they are well supervised and because they learn how to stay safe. All pupils we spoke with told us

that there are a number of adults they could speak to if they had a concern about themselves or a friend.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders make sure that pupils improve their literacy skills in key stage 2. Leaders have recently taken steps to make sure that this good work continues in key stages 3 and 4. Leaders should continue to improve how they ensure that pupils develop their literacy across key stages 3 and 4 so that even more pupils fully access the curriculum and enjoy reading.
- The current leadership team has brought renewed energy and a sense of direction to the school. Many changes have been made. It has not been clear how governors challenge leaders about the quality of education. The proprietor needs to make sure that governors further develop their systems and processes to hold leaders to account for the quality of education.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	124879
DfE registration number	935/6036
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10129466
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Nick Simpson
Headteacher	Davina Bell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,608 to £41,394
Telephone number	01986 784235
Website	www.bramfieldhouse.co.uk
Email address	info@bramfieldhouse.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–19 January 2017

Information about this school

- Bramfield House is a special school for boys aged seven to 16 years who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils have often been out of full-time education for long periods prior to admission.
- Each pupil has an EHC plan and is funded by their local authority. There are 17 pupils who are looked after by their local authority.
- Since the previous standard inspection, a new headteacher and a new chair of the local governing board have been appointed. The chair of the local governing body is also the Acorn Care and Education Limited deputy director of education for the east of England.
- The school is 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 does not comply with the registration agreement as it is recorded on The Department for Education website Get Information About Schools. The record of the proprietor is not up to date.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This inspection was aligned with a social care inspection.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We visited lessons in a variety of subjects. We undertook deep dives in English, mathematics, design and technology and PSHE.
- We spoke with subject leaders, teachers, and with pupils about their work and about other aspects of life in the school.
- We toured the school to check that all the independent school standards relating to the premises were met.
- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Acorn Care and Education Limited.
- We looked at a range of documents, including required policies, information published for parents, curriculum plans, leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, development plans, and attendance, behaviour and safeguarding records.

- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire Parent View to be reported upon formally in this report. However, we took into account the views of staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jenny Carpenter, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Rachael Judd Ofsted Inspector

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