

# Keyes Barn

Independent school standard inspection report

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|-------------------------------|---------------------|
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| Reporting inspector           | Honoree Gordon HMI  |

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Keyes Barn School is one of three independent day special schools in the Preston area for children who have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties which are owned and run by the proprietors of the Beechkeys group. The school first opened in 2008. It is located in a rural area. It is registered as a mixed school for pupils from five to 12 years of age. The 12 pupils currently on roll are all boys, aged from eight to 11 years. They are taught in two classes, each with a teacher and one or two teaching assistants. The school was last inspected in ..... 2009.

The pupils are placed in the school by four local authorities. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs because of their emotional, behavioural or social difficulties. The school seeks to modify pupils' behaviour and to help them realise their individual potential.

## Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is outstanding: the school meets its aims exceptionally well. All aspects of the school's work are outstanding. The school meets all the regulations for independent schools and has made good improvement since its previous inspection. It has addressed the few regulatory failings identified at that time.

The school successfully helps to transform young lives; pupils swiftly improve their behaviour, enabling them to make outstanding progress in their learning. In this way, the school equips its pupils very well for the next stage in their education. The school ensures that all current regulations for safeguarding children are met.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. Schemes of work follow the National Curriculum, with an appropriately strong emphasis on the development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Well-structured programmes that include daily reading and regular spelling tests enable pupils' literacy skills to improve rapidly. Opportunities for developing and reinforcing writing skills are provided systematically in all subjects. The strong priority given to developing reading skills successfully

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

helps to remove a major obstacle to pupils' learning, enabling them to more easily access the full curriculum.

Pupils' numeracy skills develop steadily. Lessons efficiently fill in the gaps from previously disrupted schooling, securing pupils' better understanding of basic concepts such as number, shape and data. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in relevant and enjoyable ways. Provision for ICT has improved since the previous inspection. ICT is used effectively in lessons to set tasks for individual pupils that support their learning. Pupils also study a modern foreign language, science and humanities. A range of optional subjects, such as art, gardening and learning a musical instrument add to students' enjoyment of school.

There is a good range of visits out of school, including weekly swimming sessions, together with physical education, football and other sports at a local leisure centre. Visits have a clear educational purpose, but also have benefits for health and provide pupils with new ideas for how to spend their leisure time. Pupils say that they enjoy the visits out of school. The curriculum is supported by good plans and schemes of work. As a result, progress in lessons is at least good and builds up pupils' knowledge and skills exceptionally well over time. More positive attitudes to learning underpin pupils' outstanding progress from their various starting points.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. The school has maintained its high quality in these aspects. Lessons are engaging, well planned and draw on a suitable range of resources to match students' needs and learning styles. Pupils' progress in all subjects is tracked closely. Highly effective systems show the rapid progress pupils make, especially in literacy and numeracy. Records show significant improvement in pupils' behaviour from very low starting points.

Teachers' use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet each pupil's needs is firmly established. Pupils have suitable personal goals and targets, although sometimes these could be more precisely expressed, to enable the achievement of an individual pupil to be more easily measured. Work is appropriately tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils. Very occasionally some parts of lessons do not stretch individual pupils as best they might.

A well-disciplined environment prepares the pupils very well for the next stage in their education as the barriers to learning, for example, caused by their previously poor behaviour, have been significantly reduced. In the best lessons pupils get to use their initiative and have opportunities to work together collaboratively, developing these crucial 'softer' skills.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding, as at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' behaviour improves significantly, often within a very short space of time after admission. Pupils concentrate for long periods

and consequently make rapid progress in learning, swiftly filling in gaps from previously disrupted schooling. A calm, orderly environment prevails, which is highly conducive to learning. Pupils' attendance is high, reflecting their much increased enjoyment of school. Pupils are keen to learn, realise they can be successful and quickly gain self-confidence.

Morning sessions wisely focus on developing skills in literacy and numeracy whilst pupils are fresh. Pupils' listening skills develop well. Social skills are promoted through informal occasions, such as in the early morning playing indoor board games with an adult. Trips out of school develop these skills further. Pupils feel valued. They respond well to the highly-effective rewards system for encouraging good behaviour that 'reinforces the positive' and does not stress the negative. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education, through developing good working habits based on sound routines and cooperative behaviour.

Pupils follow an appropriate timetabled course in personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSCHE). The PSCHE programme and assemblies reinforce the school's values well. Through this programme, pupils learn about other religions and cultures, developing well their understanding and sense of respect and tolerance of others. Pupils show a growing awareness of how to keep themselves safe, for example, when accessing the internet. Pupils' cultural development is good. They are well prepared for life in a multicultural society.

Although pupils develop their social skills well, there is no formal programme for the development of these skills that draws together all the aspects of school life over and above what pupils learn in PSCHE. Pupils' progress in these skills is not tracked as thoroughly as other aspects of their education. At times the school misses opportunities to develop pupils' social skills still further, for example, at lunchtimes.

Pupils' outstanding behaviour is secured for the most part through the staff's highly effective management of behaviour when delivering lessons that closely meet pupils' needs. Occasionally, older and more settled pupils take on responsibilities helping around school, for example, in caring for small animals. However, opportunities to show initiative and exercise independence, make choice and develop a sense of personal responsibility are relatively limited. Pupils make choices in lessons within carefully controlled limits set by the teacher. This ensures good order in class and around school, but at times teachers miss opportunities to let pupils take decisions for themselves about how to proceed.

The school might wish to seek additional opportunities, as pupils show increasing maturity, to promote further their independent skills. In this way, teachers can ensure that pupils demonstrate more often that they are able to manage aspects of their lives and work by themselves.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school's arrangements for promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including the requirements for safeguarding children, are outstanding. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when arrangements were judged to be satisfactory. The training of staff in child protection procedures, for example, is now up to date. Suitable equipment for outdoor play has been provided. The school maintains thorough records relating to pupils' behaviour and well-being. All the required policies to promote pupils' safety and well-being are in place, up to date and fully implemented. Appropriate measures are taken for the prevention of fire and for promoting children's safety on school visits.

The views of pupils and the views of one of the local authorities who place pupils in the school, are all strongly positive. These views are echoed by parents and carers and by the school's staff in their responses to questionnaires. Pupils comment that their own behaviour has got much better. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation and makes good use of parents and carers' and pupils' views as it seeks to improve further.

Staff supervise pupils very closely, so that there is an orderly atmosphere. Staff 'go the extra mile' to support pupils, for example, in helping individual pupils with matters related to everyday living, health and hygiene. The school's work with families is a particular strength, successfully building relationships that help to foster positive attitudes to education. Daily transport in the school's minibus or car to and from home enables staff to have easy contact with families and ensures pupils' regular attendance. Pupils' emotional well-being is accorded a very high priority. The school works closely with other agencies and professionals to support individual pupils whose needs are more acute.

The taught curriculum, especially PSHE and sport, supports pupils well in understanding how to keep themselves safe and in appreciating the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. The rewards and sanctions systems operate highly effectively to encourage excellent behaviour, reflected in the very low incidence of staff resorting to physical restraint. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe in school.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school's procedures and practice for checking the suitability of its staff meet requirements. Staff recruitment checks are conducted as specified by the regulations. These include a check at the enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau to make sure that there is no reason why staff should not be employed to work with children.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The premises are good and are suitable for use as a school. They are well maintained, clean, bright and tidy. The location is quiet, providing a peaceful, highly appropriate environment for learning for pupils who have difficulties related to their behaviour and emotional well-being. The displays of pupils' work around school are excellent. These prominently reflect the value the school places on individual pupils being able to demonstrate their success.

There are two classrooms, an area for assembly, an open-style library and computer area, and a large, well-equipped conservatory room for therapeutic work with individual pupils aimed at enhancing their life skills. The school kitchen provides daily hot meals. The school makes regular use of a local sports centre for physical education, swimming and other sporting activities. The garden areas allow for options such as gardening and the care of small animals.

The school has improved the facilities for outdoor play since the previous inspection. These now meet requirements. However, the use of the hard playground was restricted during the inspection as it was covered in fallen leaves and slippery; and the soft play area was also restricted as the lawn was wet. As a consequence, pupils were not offered the opportunity to play outside during break or lunchtime on the first day of the visit. This reduces their choice and means that, at times, they have little opportunity for physical activity during a school day. The school should consider clearing the hard playground more frequently to allow more regular usage all year round, providing daily physical activity and opportunity for pupils to expend energy.

## **Provision of information**

The provision of information is good. This includes a very helpful website and an attractive school prospectus and a handbook for parents and carers. The school provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information to current and prospective parents and carers, and to inspectors, Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE) on request.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The manner in which complaints are to be handled meets all the requirements of this regulation.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- provide further opportunities for pupils to show initiative, exercise choice and develop greater self-regulation of their behaviour, commensurate with their growing maturity.



## Inspection judgements

|             |      |              |            |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

### The quality of education

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Overall quality of education   | ✓ |  |  |  |
| How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils | ✓ |  |  |  |
| How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs         | ✓ |  |  |  |
| How well pupils make progress in their learning  | ✓ |  |  |  |

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | ✓ |  |  |  |
| The behaviour of pupils  | ✓ |  |  |  |

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils | ✓ |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|

## School details

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>School status</b>  | Independent day   |
| <b>Type of school</b>   | Special: behavioural, emotional and social difficulties     |
| <b>Date school opened</b>   | September 2008  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>  | 5 to 12 years   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>   | Boys  |
| <b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>                              | Total: 12   |
| <b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b> | Total: 1 2  |
| <b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>                          | Total: 1  |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>                                       | £31,281   |
| <b>Address of school</b>  | Station Road<br>Salwick<br>Preston<br>Lancashire<br>PR4 0YH |
| <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01772 673672  |
| <b>Email address</b>  | keyesbarn@btconnect.com                                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>  | Mr Gary Holliday  |
| <b>Proprietor</b>   | Beechkeys Ltd   |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 November 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Keyes Barn, Preston, PR4 0YH**

I am writing to thank you for your help when I came recently to inspect your school and to tell you what I found. Thank you also for making my Dutch colleague feel so welcome. She enjoyed her visit. We both noticed all your good work on display. The quality of education that Keyes Barn offers you is outstanding, that means it is excellent! Your school has improved since its last inspection. All aspects of its work are now outstanding. The school meets all the regulations that it has to follow.

I was particularly pleased to see how well you all now behave. I know from reading the records the school keeps about your progress that this is a real improvement on what your behaviour was like before. You concentrate and try hard in all your lessons and because of this you are making excellent progress in learning. Your reading and writing, for example, are improving really quickly. Well done! You will be very well prepared when you go on to your next school.

You are good at doing what your teachers tell you. I have asked the school to think about how to encourage your independence a little more which would make your school even better. That means being able to make choices for yourself without the teacher telling you what to do every time. That way they can be sure you know what is right and wrong all by yourself. I also think it would be good for you to get outside more all year round to play.

Your teachers and other adults care for you very well. You told me that you enjoy coming to school much more than before and that you feel safe there. Coming to school to learn is important for your future. Some of your parents and carers filled in a questionnaire and said they were very happy with your school. I can see why.

Yours sincerely

Honoree Gordon,  
Her Majesty's Inspector