

Beech Grove School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Beech Grove School is situated within the Beech Grove Christian Community which is on a 140 acre site in Nonnington, Kent. It was established in 1996 to educate the children of their community aged from six to 18 years of age.

The school is one of two which are owned and run by Church Communities UK, a registered charity run by a board of trustees. The families of the children in the school live on the site and the parents and carers all work on the site. There is a large manufacturing plant on site which makes furniture for use in schools.

There are currently 87 pupils on roll, aged from six to 18 years of age. The younger pupils attend the 'School', which is for pupils in Years 2 to 9. The older pupils are in the 'Academy' for pupils in Years 10 to post-16. Pupils enter formal education aged six years, after being home educated by their parents and carers. Some registered pupils include a group of Key Stage 4 students who transfer from the proprietor's second school, Darvell in East Sussex, to complete their education at Beech Grove. These students live with community members on site between Monday and Friday. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The school aims to 'educate pupils to be orderly, truthful, caring for the needs and suffering of others, interested in learning and thinking, and disciplined in body'.

Ofsted last inspected the school in October 2009, when it met all but one of the regulations.

Evaluation of the school

Beech Grove School continues to provide a good quality of education and successfully fulfils its aims. The good curriculum and teaching promote the pupils' good progress effectively. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their behaviour and welfare, health and safety are outstanding. Pupils' outstanding personal skills and behaviour reflect the values of their community and prepare them very well for the next stage of their life. The school has improved since

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

its last inspection and meets all the regulations for registration, including those for safeguarding.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. The written documentation has been improved following a recommendation in the last Ofsted report. It shows clear progression from year to year and is directly related to the philosophy of the school which is to develop the 'whole child'. There is a full range of subjects taught with the introduction of French and German in the Academy this academic year. The pupils begin work very early in the day at 7.30am and the younger pupils work through until the communal lunchtime. After lunch the younger pupils participate in a range of practical indoor and outdoor activities with their parents and carers or other families. This opportunity to learn through contact with the natural environment is an important aspect of the school's provision. Older pupils have the opportunity for developing practical and some technological skills, for example, in woodwork and shoe making. Younger pupils do not use computers in school in line with the school's educational philosophy. The school believes that their pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their education when they have acquired a thorough training in basic skills. Older pupils have access to computers when needed and used them recently when they won a national Young Enterprise Award.

There is a strong emphasis on acquiring basic skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum focuses on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills systematically and methodically, ensuring that pupils' new learning is founded securely on their prior learning. The school provides clear and supportive careers guidance, which enables the older pupils to access work experience on the site in the factory and farming enterprises. The detailed and effective personal, social, health and citizenship education programme is fully integrated across the life of the school with a clear written policy, which was not available at the last inspection.

The school provides many meaningful opportunities for contact with the local community, which includes visits from other schools for sporting activities, especially cross-country running, using the extensive grounds. The pupils visit many places of interest including, for example, a recent visit to the Old Bailey when older students participated in the Bar Mock Trials winning their regional round. The curriculum is effective in enabling all pupils across the range of abilities and ages to make good progress.

As a result of the good teaching and assessment, the pupils thrive and make good progress, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers plan and present lessons in a meaningful, interesting and often fun way. Teachers and pupils have very positive relationships and there is an atmosphere of trust and purposeful learning in the classrooms. The small classes enable the teachers to give the pupils very good individual support explaining very clearly to them any aspect they do not understand. Most lessons move at a good pace with pupils concentrating well, trying hard and

persevering at their tasks. A strong feature of the lessons is the very respectful interaction between the staff and the pupils, who are encouraged to interact and confidently ask for help or further clarification if needed. For example, in a mathematics lesson when the homework was reviewed very thoroughly, two pupils asked for help with questions they found more difficult and other pupils helped them work through the problems. This complete trust in the helpful, supportive response, which pupils can expect from both the staff and other pupils, is a reflection of the firm foundation on which the community is based. During a life skills lesson older pupils reviewed a book on forgiveness and then highlighted how they could forgive others, demonstrating a level of compassion and maturity above that expected for their age.

The younger pupils enjoy a range of lessons, which include many practical applications such as three-dimensional map making. The staff are good at introducing the lesson objectives to the pupils but they do not always allow sufficient time at the end of the lesson to help the pupils focus and revisit what they have learnt. Pupils who take a little longer to learn are given very good support and those learning English as an additional language are well supported. The community's ethos of hard work and perseverance helps to build the pupils' confidence and love of learning and this is evident in their commitment and contentment in class. The school has identified through its self-evaluation the need to put in place a more systematic process of monitoring the quality of teaching to support staff development.

The assessment of pupils' learning is good. The school has devised an appropriate range of assessment procedures and there is regular reporting to parents and carers, often with daily contact, which ensures that they are very well informed about their child's progress. High standards of presentation are expected and the pupils write in a confident cursive style from an early age. Homework is used well to build on the pupils' learning and the older ones confirm that it is just about the right amount and helps them to consolidate their learning in class. The school is in the process of devising, together with its sister schools in the United States of America and Australia, an assessment system based on new criteria, which will assist staff in more effective tracking of pupils' progress and will be used to reference standards reached against national norms.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a warm, friendly atmosphere in the school where every member feels welcomed and part of the whole community. The division between the community and the school is seamless and all work together for their mutual benefit. The pupils are exceedingly happy to be in the school, confirm that they love their school, commenting, 'It's brilliant, a wonderful place to be... we are just one big family.' They are confident to speak to visitors and delight in describing all the activities they have the privilege of taking part in, for example, racing their pigeons with a local club, learning taxidermy or making their own shoes. The opportunities provided by the natural environment

surrounding the school are extensive and are actively promoted as part of the community vision.

Pupils' spiritual guidance is underpinned by the Christian community which is open and welcoming to other faiths. The pupils' behaviour is outstanding and attendance is excellent. The staff are excellent role models and the pupils confirm that there is always someone to talk to. They are adamant that there is no bullying.

The school is a very sociable place and many of the community activities interact closely with those in school, which provides strong support for pupils' first-rate social development.

Pupils are currently preparing for an end-of-term celebration of Christmas around the world, to include singing, which is of an extremely high standard and an integral part of each day. Both the younger and older pupils have celebratory assemblies, which are known as the *Kinderschaft* for the younger pupils. The school has a strong connection with many other countries and this is reflected in the curriculum and in the celebrations which take place through craft, food and festivals which foster their cultural development very well. The school is an active participant in the life of the local community; it hosts many events on its site and takes part in numerous local events such as the recent celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and charity fund raising.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding, which is an improvement since the last inspection. High levels of staff care actively promote the safety and welfare of all the pupils. The school has devised and effectively implemented an extensive range of policies which pay due regard to national guidance. These include those for anti-bullying, health and safety, including visits outside school, behaviour and safeguarding. The designated person responsible for child protection is trained appropriately in both safeguarding and safer recruitment at the required level. All staff are trained in safeguarding and a detailed policy fully meets requirements and staff are fully aware of it. The school takes every care to ensure that it is a safe place for the pupils through its thorough risk assessment, for both on-site and off-site activities. A large number of staff are fully trained in first aid, there is a qualified doctor on site and accidents are carefully recorded. Regular exercise and extremely wholesome food, most of which is grown on site, encourages the pupils to stay fit and healthy. Precautions for fire prevention are very thorough: a risk assessment of the premises is undertaken annually, all fire appliances are checked annually and fire drills are undertaken very regularly and recorded. The pupils are well supervised at all times and staffing ratios are very high. The admission and attendance registers meet the regulations.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has checked the suitability of all staff and other adults to work with children and the information is recorded in an appropriate single central register.

Community members living on site who have access to the school have been checked.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises, accommodation and grounds create a very pleasant environment and assist the pupils to learn safely and effectively. They make a very positive contribution to the pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. The school occupies well-maintained buildings which provide suitable accommodation for the effective teaching. There is a very good range of outdoor facilities.

Provision of information

The school provides, or makes available, a clear and up-to-date range of information for parents, carers and others.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a set of procedures which meet the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets 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.

- Ensure that all lessons end with a suitable summary of the pupils' learning during the lesson.
- Develop more systematic systems for making checks on the quality of teaching.
- Further develop an assessment system to enable the school to more effectively track pupils' progress over time.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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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	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Christian		
Date school opened	1996		
Age range of pupils	6–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 42	Girls: 45	Total: 87
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	No fees charged		
Address of school	Beech Grove, Sandwich Road, Nonington, Kent CT15 4HH		
Telephone number	01304 842980		
Email address	schoolbgr@mailstack.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Rebecca Clement		
Proprietor	Church Communities UK		

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.



5 December 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beech Grove Nonington, Kent CT15 4HH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. It was so interesting to talk to so many of you and to find out how much you enjoy your school life and learn so much.

I judged that your school continues to provide you with a good quality of education. Your behaviour is excellent; you have a real passion for learning and try to do your best. You told me what a friendly place Beech Grove is and I agree. This is because it meets its aims of promoting tolerance and compassion for others so you develop strength of character and are helped to find clear direction for your lives. Your teachers are extremely helpful and are continually working towards making the school a better place for you all. They take exceptional care of you through their thorough procedures for your welfare and safety.

In order to help the school improve further I have suggested that the teachers should explore ways to make their teaching and your learning even better by making sure you have clearly understood what you have been learning by checking at the end of the lesson. I know that the school plans make checks on the quality of teaching so it can make it even better and to develop an assessment system so that staff can identify clearly how well you are doing and can help you better to improve your work.

With my best wishes

Jill Bainton
Lead inspector