

# Bradstow School

34 Dumpton Park Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1BY

**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2013

|                                |                      |                    |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Outstanding        | 1        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Outstanding</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The school inspires students of all ages to make exceptionally rapid progress in their understanding of emotions and the way they relate to others as well as in their academic work.
- Students are highly motivated to succeed as a result of the high expectations set by staff.
- The outstanding teaching is very successful in ensuring the majority of students make excellent progress. Teaching targets the needs of individual students exceptionally well.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. This is because they are happy learners and feel safe and secure and valued by all staff. They have excellent attitudes towards their learning.
- Leadership and management are of a consistently high quality. The headteacher and senior staff ensure that the performance of staff is evaluated rigorously and developed to ensure the best for the students.
- The checks made on teaching are thorough and accurate and ensure consistently high-quality classroom practice.
- Most staff, though not all, are very skilled in reviewing data about how well students have done, in order to be absolutely sure that progress is as good as it could be.
- The sixth form is outstanding because students gain so many useful skills for independent living. They are prepared very well for the next steps in their education.
- The governing body provides outstanding challenge and support to the school's leaders. Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 12 lessons, all of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Informal discussions were held with groups of learners from each key stage, which included hearing students read.
- There were too few submissions to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for data to appear, but inspectors took account of the provision’s own surveys of parents and carers. Returns from 43 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, and senior and middle leaders.
- The inspectors evaluated documentation including information on the students’ current progress, the curriculum and development plans, as well as procedures and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The residential provision was not part of this inspection.

## Inspection team

David Scott, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jacky Blount

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bradstow is a residential special school for children and young people with severe learning, behaviour or communication difficulties; a high proportion of students have a diagnosis of autism.
- Students are generally admitted from maintained special schools throughout London and the southeast. They attend Bradstow having often been permanently excluded from their previous special school, with some being refused admission to the latter on the grounds of the severity of their disabilities and associated challenging behaviour. Most families require additional support to manage their child's complex needs.
- The proportion of students who are from ethnic minority heritages is above average, as is that of the students who speak English as an additional language and are at the early stages of learning English, most of whom are boys.
- Almost all students are boarders and all have a statement of special educational needs. There are four day students.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (those eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent or carer in the armed services) is above average. The local authority looks after 15 of the students, but none of the students in the school are from services families.
- All Year 7 students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- Around two thirds of students across the school are involved with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as a result of their behavioural needs.
- The provision works in partnership with many different bodies and organisations, including more than 20 local authorities.
- Eight of students in Key Stages 4 and 5 currently receive some of their education off site, delivered by a range of alternative providers, including East Kent College, The John Graham Centre, Hilderstone Adult Education Centre and the Community Art Project in Margate.
- The school only offers the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) externally accredited courses and does not enter students for other examinations.
- Since the last inspection the school has gained the prestigious European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Awards for 'Customer Focus', 'Leading with vision, inspiration and integrity' and 'Succeeding through people'.
- In June 2011 the school's residential provision was inspected by Ofsted, and was judged to be outstanding overall.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure all staff analyse the information on students' progress by comparing it more closely to national progress data.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- The majority of students make progress which is significantly above that expected nationally, and their achievement is outstanding over time. Students in the sixth form make excellent progress in literacy, numeracy and personal development, as a result of excellent teaching.
- A strong focus on the development of students' skills in communication and numeracy has a significant and positive impact on their achievement across all areas of their learning. Seamless use of signing, symbols and communication aids across the school ensures that all students are fully engaged in their lessons regardless of their difficulties. Extremely effective speech, language and music therapy and the use of the sensory zone are key factors in enabling students to make rapid progress in their thinking skills.
- Students with communication difficulties, including those on the autistic spectrum and those with severe learning difficulties, make huge strides in their communication skills and often make a leap forward in vocalising sounds and then using single words, as was observed when students greeted one another and described how they were feeling, using modern technology to stimulate discussion. As a result of the teachers' perceptive questioning, students' learning was excellent.
- There are no differences in the progress of different groups, including those of different ethnic backgrounds, those with severe learning difficulties and autism and those who speak English as an additional language. This is because of excellent tracking and checking of their performance and the effectiveness of the things the school does when a student is seen to be making slower progress than they are capable of.
- Students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium make outstanding progress, and the school ensures that the gap is narrowed between them and their peers nationally. Their reading, writing and mathematics development is excellent and they are well supported through the school's effective use of extra support to ensure they make progress to equal their peers. As a result, the attainment, as measured by average points score, of both groups of eligible students in the school has risen to almost match that of their peers in English and mathematics.
- All students follow pathways appropriate to their learning needs, and in Year 11 and in the sixth form are able to achieve accreditation in English and mathematics as well as in independence and life-skills, including food preparation, gardening, sport and leisure. The majority of students stay on into the sixth form. No one leaves without work experience or some form of accredited vocational qualification, or placement at college. Excellent links, for example with local colleges and local employers, support training and work experience very well.
- A small number of students in Key Stages 4 and 5 spend part of their timetable studying off site. Their progress is excellent with all four providers. The arrangements for checking their work, attendance, punctuality and behaviour are highly effective.
- Students make excellent progress in all aspects of their personal development due to an outstanding 24-hour curriculum and very good teaching. Boarding and day students gradually become able to learn on their own, confident in their abilities and very well motivated to succeed in their studies.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teaching, which was judged outstanding at the previous inspection, has continued to improve. Well-considered training, together with rigorous and supportive monitoring and coaching by the senior team, has ensured that over time teaching is typically outstanding and never less than good.
- Classrooms are delightful, both indoors and outdoors, with imaginative activities and 'threads' to capture and respond to students' interests and enthusiasm. For example, the sensory zone provides a secure indoor environment for quiet reflection and the outdoor state-of-the-art cycle track gives opportunities for students to practise their road safety and improve their cycling skills. High-quality resources made on site further enhance the learning journey. The school uses

its Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding to ensure individuals have specialist equipment as well as to enhance the levels of adult support.

- Teaching is characterised by thorough planning, secure subject knowledge, high expectations, rigorous tracking, effective questioning and good use of assessment to support learning. Staff employ the widest range of approaches to successfully challenge and elicit responses from learners. This was seen in a science lesson where students experimented with magnets in order to find out which objects were attracted and which repelled. Students were thoroughly engrossed in this activity and concentrated well. Learning was moved forward at a fast pace because of very effective one-to-one support received from adults.
- The school successfully attends to the needs of a student in any situation 'so that learning and healing' takes place in the context of a trusting, respectful and genuine relationship. As a result of this, teachers' excellent role modelling promotes very respectful relationships and develops high levels of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Students who find learning difficult or who have particular learning barriers are supported very well because staff focus sharply on their needs. This was observed in a Year 9 swimming lesson where each student, supported by an adult, enjoyed the sensory stimulation through feeling the water being poured over them from a central spout, and by being immersed and experiencing the sensation of floatation. The physical activities were highly effective as staff were able to raise students' self-esteem and confidence as well as ensure they derived enjoyment and relaxation from the therapy.
- Teachers and well-briefed classroom support staff provide high levels of individual tuition and support where necessary to make sure each student learns confidently and successfully. As a result, students receive very good oral feedback on their work. In each lesson, the teacher speaks to individuals so they know how to improve their work in the next small step.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is excellent and enables students to make outstanding progress. There are regular assessments of progress in communication skills across all subjects. Teachers ensure that students practise speaking, reading and writing at suitable levels. Other professionals such as speech and music therapists play a key part, working in partnership with teachers to assess students and to devise challenging targets for them. Teachers' expertise in techniques to provide for students with autism enables them effectively to support their communication and behavioural needs.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Students have excellent attitudes to their learning. Parents and carers are extremely positive about behaviour. One commented, 'The improvement in my child's challenging behaviour has been impressive. She loves the school and is now so happy and calm.'
- Students' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They are polite, attentive and respectful to the staff and other students. Learning is allowed to flourish without interruption. Outside the classroom, through the many trips and visits and in the extensive work experience opportunities, students behave responsibly and maturely.
- The school's records show an overall reduction of incidents for individual students and these are extremely well recorded. Bullying is almost unknown. The students have made excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. There are no recorded incidents of racist behaviour or derogatory comments about disability. An ethos of tolerance and positive support for others pervades the school. There have been no fixed-term exclusions for three years.
- Incidents of challenging behaviour are looked on as opportunities to discover what questions the student is asking through their behaviour. By managing the environment positively students learn to understand how to behave appropriately.
- The students have a good understanding of how to keep safe, especially as they are prepared for work experience and longer periods of vocational experience outside school.
- Attendance is high and significantly above the average for special schools. Students enjoy

school; they are punctual to lessons and come into school each day with smiles and friendly greetings for staff and other students.

## **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher's, expertise, commitment and nurturing leadership style have ensured that standards have continued to improve since the previous inspection. She is well supported by a highly competent senior team. The school's track record since the previous inspection, the high standards of teaching, the very effective work of the governing body and rigorous self-evaluation by the school to ensure progress continues suggest that there is an outstanding capacity to sustain further improvement.
- The promotion of equal opportunities is extremely well embedded in all aspects of the school's work. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. Students are never left out. The systems the school has for checking on how well things are working are sophisticated and ensure that all students have excellent opportunities to develop the skills they need to succeed in their lives after school.
- Teaching is so good because of high levels of checking by the senior team and a refusal to accept second best. Teachers are supported very well through rigorous performance management procedures; the work of individuals is monitored with great care and increases to teachers' salaries do not take place unless they have met their targets. Target setting is accompanied by tailored and effective training. As a result, there is a highly skilled and enthusiastic workforce. Teachers are in demand to advise and train other teachers within the local authority and beyond, because many of the school's courses have been nationally and internationally accredited.
- The school has strong procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. These meet government guidelines and include high-quality checks on adults and a carefully planned approach to managing the safety of students and child protection.
- Most staff are confident in using numerical information to track and monitor students' progress and to target support where it is needed. However, not all staff check this information carefully enough by comparing it with national figures to be sure that all students are making the best progress.
- The local authority provides effective and proportionate support. Regular checks on teaching, through paired observations, the quality of education provided and well-considered training from the local authority's adviser have been planned carefully and well received by staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body provide excellent support and challenge for the headteacher and ensure that the performance and salary progression of staff are checked and endorsed accurately and effectively. They take well-considered action when they need to and rigorously hold leaders to account for the school's performance. They receive reports from the headteacher and the local authority's adviser, and ask probing questions so that they fully understand the issues facing the provision, particularly information on students' progress and how it compares that from similar settings. Through visits and interviews with staff, they are well informed about the quality of teaching. Some members of the governing body are exceptionally knowledgeable about how to ensure high-quality teaching is maintained. Members of the governing body have an excellent overview of how the provision's resources are used to drive its priorities forward. They know precisely how the pupil premium is spent and the impact this resource is having.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |  |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

## School details

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 101095     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Wandsworth |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 408905     |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Special                         |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Community special               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 5–19                            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                           |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                           |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 56                              |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 15                              |
| <b>Number of boarders on roll</b>             | 52                              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body              |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Joseph Murphy                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Sarah Dunn                      |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 18–19 March 2009                |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01843 862123                    |
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