

Springboard Education Junior

St Wilfred's Upper Hall, 39 Whippingham Road, Brighton, BN2 3PS

Inspection dates 11–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- The teaching is good and enables all pupils to make good progress, particularly with literacy, numeracy and communication skills.
- The curriculum is good. It is well planned and suitably adapted for individual pupils. The school day is well structured to maximise pupils' concentration.
- The school is well led and managed and has strong support from its directors in its continued drive for further improvement. This ensures good teaching and achievement.
- The consistent approach by all staff to the management of pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The pupils learn effective strategies for managing their behaviour and make outstanding progress in their personal development.
- The high level of staffing ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for, and that they receive the attention they need.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The teaching and curriculum are not yet outstanding. Although all pupils make good progress over time, some occasionally need more support while others need more breadth and challenge.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Ten lessons were observed, including physical education at the local sports centre.
- The inspector examined the pupils' work, assessment records and individual education and behaviour plans. She talked to the pupils about their work and interests and heard some pupils read.
- Meetings took place with the proprietors and acting headteacher. A range of documentation was examined, including school policies, records, curriculum and teachers' plans, risk assessments and newsletters. The views expressed by five members of staff survey questionnaires were considered.
- No information was available from Parent View, but the inspector spoke to four parents and carers in person or by telephone about their views of the school.

Inspection team

Jane Cooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Springboard Education Junior is a small independent day school which is registered to take 10 pupils aged five to 13 years.
- There are currently nine boys and girls on roll aged between seven and 12 years, one of whom attends part-time. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs relating to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some have additional learning needs such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder and autism. They have all been placed at the school by their local authorities. Two of the pupils are in care.
- The school is located in Brighton. It makes use of a local leisure centre and pool for physical education, and the nearby park for recreation.
- The school opened in 2005. It adopts a therapeutic approach to child development and aims to treat all pupils with respect. The last full inspection took place in 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase teachers' understanding of specific learning difficulties so that lessons and tasks are always pitched at the right level to give pupils the support they need.
- Increase the breadth of the curriculum for the most able pupils in Key Stage 3 and ensure that tasks constantly challenge them.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good, due to a well-planned curriculum, good teaching, a constant insistence on good behaviour, and a consistent focus on the personal development of each pupil. Although small, the school caters for an extremely wide range of ability, aptitude and special educational need in addition to the pupils' behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All pupils make good progress from their respective starting points. The most able pupils achieve above average scores in national end-of-Key Stage 2 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). They can read widely, fluently and with good understanding, and express ideas accurately in a good range of writing. They achieve well in their understanding and use of numbers, although achievement and challenge are a little weaker in other aspects of mathematics and in the broader range of subjects at Key Stage 3. The other pupils make good progress particularly in the core skills of literacy and numeracy. Although their attainment is generally below average, the pupils are overcoming successfully their previous barriers to learning, for example with communication, and are catching up with the standards achieved by pupils of the same age and ability nationwide. Thus, most read with good understanding and can select information appropriately from a text or a story read aloud. They have a good understanding of numbers and the four rules in mathematics. A few pupils experience severe difficulties with dyslexia. Patient teaching and good use of resources, such as computer software, enable these pupils to make good progress with reading and writing from a very low level of attainment. All pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well. They enjoy physical education, are fit and can all swim.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

The pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs relating to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Most have not thrived in several other schools before coming to Springboard, and thus generally arrive with a history of disrupted education and school refusal, negative attitudes to learning and low self-esteem. Some have very high levels of dependency. The success of Springboard lies in the consistent application of the behaviour policy by all staff working together as a team, and their insistence on high standards of behaviour from the young people. There are clear boundaries, which the pupils know and understand, and warnings, when they are given, are carried out if behaviour does not improve. All staff treat the pupils fairly and with respect and patience, taking time to listen to them and take account of their views. A complex system of rewards reinforces good behaviour which earns pupils 'golden time' to pursue their own interests or contributes to a group reward. Relationships are very good. Several instances of unprompted kind and thoughtful behaviour were witnessed during the inspection, and staff were quick to notice these and offer praise. All pupils acquire effective strategies for managing their own behaviour and thus make outstanding progress in their personal and social development. All incidents are managed extremely effectively by well-trained staff and cause minimal disruption to others' education. Pupils are enabled to understand the impact of negative behaviour on others and are welcomed back after time out. The school provides a calm environment for learning. The pupils are well involved in their lessons and this enables them to make good progress. The structure of the timetable and high levels of staffing ensure that the pupils are given the help they need to keep focused.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies, lessons, the personal, social and health education programme and supervised breaks and lunchtimes all reinforce the importance of good manners, kindness, taking turns, and acquiring and using appropriate social language. Well-structured lessons, activities and off-site visits encourage excellent social development and promote pupils' confidence and enjoyment. The pupils gain a good understanding of how society works. They develop a very strong moral awareness and

understand right from wrong. They learn about cultural diversity and disability and they show respect for others' differences. The directors ensure effectively that pupils are not exposed to partisan political views. The pupils report that they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is high, and this is a major achievement given the pupils' previous history of disaffection and school refusal. Parents and carers praised the school's significant contribution to their children's behaviour, self-esteem and well-being, and noted the positive impact this had on both their social and academic progress. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Incidents of bullying occur rarely, and are tackled swiftly and effectively.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of the teaching and assessment is good and enables all pupils to make good progress. Each pupil has a clear individual behaviour and education plan, and work is suitably planned to address their targets and record when these are met. The staff know pupils very well and relationships are positive and respectful. The careful grouping of pupils according to attainment and ability for literacy and numeracy work enables teachers to devote attention to individuals and to plan activities which are appropriate for their interest and preferred learning styles. Lessons and activities have clear objectives which are shared with the pupils. Learnt material is helpfully consolidated at the end of sessions, with productive links made to other work. Expectations for engagement, effort and behaviour are high. The short timescale for most lessons is well suited to the attention span and learning styles of the pupils, and lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace. The acquisition of good communication and reading skills is promoted strongly in all subjects.

Resources are generally well chosen and deployed appropriately to support the pupils, such as the use of appropriate computer software to assist them with writing. Although teachers' planning and teaching styles are generally good, there are occasions where very able pupils could be challenged further, or where more guidance and support are needed for younger pupils and those with specific learning needs. Teaching assistants are fully integrated into the staff team. They are well prepared, observe and support the young people extremely well, and make a vitally important contribution to pupils' learning and progress. All staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well and treat any misdemeanours fairly and consistently according to the school policy. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and achievement are accurate and are used to review the individual plans for each pupil and to design future activities. Confident teaching in music and physical education makes high demands on the pupils' ability to listen and follow instructions responsibly, and makes a positive contribution to their cultural development, personal fitness and well-being.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good. It covers all of the areas required by the independent school regulations and by the pupils' statements and individual education plans. The emphasis is on the acquisition and practice of good communication skills, and on the core skills of literacy and numeracy which are practised every day. This enables pupils to make good progress. Topic work gives pupils experience of humanities and science, although this is not broad enough for the more able pupils in Key Stage 3. Lessons in art, music, design and technology and physical education have a good impact on pupils' fitness and creativity. ICT is well integrated into the curriculum and some pupils have considerable expertise in its use. A full and relevant programme of personal, social and health education promotes the pupils' learning and development strongly, and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to talk to staff about the issues it raises. The curriculum is enlivened by adventurous outings where pupils learn new skills and experience. Archery, rock-climbing, circus skills and bush craft are among the activities they have undertaken, all of which have contributed to pupils' enjoyment and to building their confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

The school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and meets all the independent school standards. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection, where some inadequacies were identified in the school's procedures, all of which have been subsequently rectified. There are now good systems in place to keep pupils safe and well-cared for. There are clear and detailed school policies and procedures which are implemented effectively and consistently by all staff, and reviewed on a regular basis by directors. These include effective procedures for tackling and eliminating bullying. All staff have received training at the appropriate level in safeguarding, child protection, fire safety and first aid. Recruitment procedures are clear, and staff files are comprehensive and well ordered. All staff have been thoroughly checked for their suitability to work with young people and the checks are recorded appropriately on a single central register. The staff work together as a cohesive team and are vigilant in ensuring that the pupils are well supported and looked after, and that the dignity of vulnerable pupils is respected. There is very good attention given to the health and safety and the security of pupils on the school site and on outings. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken. Information is shared at regular staff meetings. Records, for example of fire drills and accidents, are appropriate. The admissions and attendance registers are up to date and completed appropriately.

Leadership and management**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good. The directors have ensured that all the independent school regulations are met. The management of the curriculum, teaching and assessment are good and enable pupils to make good progress. Funding from the Pupil Premium is spent appropriately on improving the progress and achievement of the individuals concerned. There are appropriate procedures in place for appraising staff, for evaluating the quality of learning and ensuring that staff training is up to date and effective. These strategies have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching over time. The directors provide very good support and challenge to the school, and have an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. They ensure that good relationships are maintained with the local authorities who place young people at the school and that they receive all the information required.

The school's policies are clear, well understood by all members of the school community, and reviewed on a regular basis. They are operated consistently by staff and this enables pupils to understand the boundaries, feel safe, and make good personal and academic progress. There are good procedures in place to safeguard the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The directors have ensured that there is a high level of staffing, and that staff are well trained for their roles, so that the pupils are very well supervised at all times and there is a calm and respectful environment for learning. The school has developed strong relationships with parents and carers who receive all the information to which they are entitled. Those who spoke to the inspector confirmed that their children were happy, settled, and had made 'very good progress since joining the school'. The school's premises and accommodation meet requirements and are thoughtfully arranged to provide a suitable environment for learning and to keep pupils safe. Although there is no outdoor play space, the school makes very good use of local facilities for recreation and physical education. The school's procedures for handling complaints comply with statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education and care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education and care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education and care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	135180
Inspection number	422783
DfE registration number	846/6050

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Special School
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	7–12 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part time pupils	1
Proprietors	Jeremy Cross, Judy Packham
Acting Headteacher	Jane Williams
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2010
Annual fees	£26,812
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