

Brown Moss School

C/O Advanced Education, Pinnacle House, Cheadle Royal, SK8 3SB

Inspection dates	23–24 October 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Students make good academic and personal progress, particularly given their previous poor educational history and turbulent experiences.
- Staff get to know students quickly and are skilled in treating them as individuals. They use students' interests effectively and this encourages them to enjoy and participate in lessons.
- Students' progress is measured carefully and shows that they make significant leaps in their progress over a short period of time.
- Students feel very safe. The school provides a warm, secure, positive and supportive environment. Expert therapeutic support is highly effective in helping them overcome their difficulties and this in turn promotes their good achievement.
- In conjunction with staff, the regional headteacher has secured effective teaching and a good curriculum. Although the school is new, it is developing and improving well.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Limited access to the internet to support students' learning restricts their learning opportunities.
- Students do not know their academic targets well enough and marking does not tell them what they need to do to improve their work.
- The use of deeper questioning by staff to test and extend students' thinking is underdeveloped.
- Teaching is not checked regularly enough and opportunities to share and develop best practice are limited.

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

- The inspection took place with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed four lessons taught by one teacher, looked at students' work and held discussions with the regional headteacher, students and staff.
- The school's documentation was examined, including information relating to the range of planning for subjects, records of students' progress and the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- There were no responses on Parent View. The views of students were gathered during the inspection.

Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brown Moss School is a small special school educating day and residential students from the ages of 11 to 17 years of age who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties due to turbulent life experiences.
- All students have had a fragmented school career, either attending numerous schools or having been out of education for some time.
- Students are of all White British origin. Some, but not all, students have statements of special educational needs.
- This is the first inspection of the school since it was registered in November 2012. Students were admitted in January 2013.
- The school is owned by the Advanced Childcare Company. A regional headteacher oversees a number of the company's schools in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve students' achievement by:
 - providing reliable and secure internet access to support students' learning and to access examination courses
 - developing questioning techniques which cause students to deepen their understanding and extend their thinking
 - ensuring that students know their academic targets improving the marking of students' work so that they know the next steps in order to improve.
- Monitor teaching more closely and increase opportunities for staff to share and develop best practice.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good. Staff are very good at working with the students to get them to re-engage with education and to rapidly make up lost ground, given their previous disrupted education. Some students initially are reluctant to access education, but over a short period of time they overcome their reticence and enjoy lessons. As a result of positive and supportive relationships, a good curriculum which builds on their interests and teaching which is often practically based, students develop very positive attitudes to learning. Students have made substantial gains in English and mathematics since starting at the school.

Students acquire a good range of knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects. The emphasis on numeracy and literacy skills to equip them for the wider world is highly appropriate. For example, in numeracy they learn about personal finance and how to work out tax, wages and credit. Students are confident readers and they read widely for pleasure and this is actively and regularly encouraged. They take pride in their work, which is well presented and are keen to show their work to visitors. Students achieve well in vocational courses and these help to prepare them well for life after school. They are currently undertaking nationally recognised academic and vocational qualifications, including GCSE in art and functional skills awards in literacy and numeracy, but have yet to achieve these qualifications as they have not been at the school long enough. The lack of reliable internet connectivity restricts the range of learning opportunities and courses that students can follow.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour is good and significant improvements they have made since joining the school. Staff are skilled in diffusing potentially tricky situations, although some students are reliant on these management techniques rather than having yet developed the maturity of self-management. Students' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good learning. They respond well to the high expectations placed upon them. In lessons there is a relaxed and calm environment, and this helps to get the best out of students. Improvements in students' personal development, evidenced from staff records and discussions with students, indicate that they make good gains in their self-esteem and confidence, and rapidly reduce disruptive behaviour. Students say that they feel safe and secure in school and that bullying is rare. Students' attendance in lessons improves well. Students develop positive attitudes and interact with each other and staff confidently. The school council meets regularly and provides opportunities for students to make suggestions for improvement, such as equipment or places to visit.

The school makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Aspects of the curriculum encourage students to reflect on deeper issues, and encourage tolerance and respect for each other. There are good opportunities for students to be involved in community activities, particularly through work-related experiences. Students enjoy visits to places of interest, such as a confectionary manufacturer. The school provides students with a sound understanding of public institutions and services through visits and visitors to the school. They are developing good personal qualities to enable them to make a positive contribution to society. The school ensures that balanced views are presented in discussions about race, religion or politics.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and enables students to make good progress over a short period of time. A relaxed and informal atmosphere is very effective in putting students at their ease and in getting the best out of them. One student commented, 'I wouldn't normally work this hard in my

other school.' The supportive and nurturing relationships boost students' confidence to tackle topics that they initially feel are too hard for them. For example, in a mathematics lesson students were encouraged to look for sequences of patterns in numbers and work out the missing numbers. The work is highly individualised and well-matched to their different levels of ability. Support staff and the teacher work well together to provide the right amount of support, encouragement and challenge for students.

Students do not know their academic targets well enough. The marking of their work, while encouraging, does not set out what students need to learn next and the use of questioning to extend and deepen students' thinking is not developed enough.

Assessment is good. Students undergo a baseline assessment in basic skills within four weeks of entry. Students' progress is measured against National Curriculum levels. The measurement from baseline assessment to current levels of attainment shows that progress is good, with rapid gains being made. The school uses a computer-based system to track and monitor students' ongoing progress, so that any dips in progress can be quickly identified. Reports on students' progress and achievements are of excellent quality.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The school has developed a good curriculum that supports students' learning well and enables them to make good progress. Curriculum planning is thorough and is supported through detailed schemes of work; clear planning promotes good progression of skills and knowledge. The school's curriculum covers all of the required areas of learning and religious education. Some subjects, such as music and modern foreign languages, are not yet taught although they are highlighted in the improvement plan as an area for development. The personal, health, social and citizenship programme is an important feature of the curriculum. It teaches students how to deal with dangers such as drugs, abuse and exploitation and aims to equip them with skills to keep themselves safe. Very small class sizes allow the curriculum to be highly personalised and to meet the needs of each student. The curriculum helps students to achieve well in a range of accredited courses and the strong pastoral support helps them to maximise their learning potential.

The school makes very effective use of therapeutic input on a regular basis to help students to come to terms with some of their life events. This can also stir up emotions in the short term, but has a beneficial impact in the long term. The students who have attended the school the longest have shown the most progress in their personal and emotional development.

Students are given good opportunities in the local community to have work experience placements, such as the local stables or kennels. These placements build on students' interests well. Good careers advice is provided for students. There is a clear pathway mapped out for students when they leave this provision.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All the regulations are met and detailed policies support this area extremely well. This means that the school is able to provide a warm and secure environment for students, which helps them to settle very well and start to make good progress in their learning. Policies are thorough, regularly reviewed and very consistently applied.

Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. Systems for staff recruitment are robust; all the relevant checks are made on staff and these are recorded on the school's single central register. All staff are trained in safeguarding and a number are also trained at the higher level to ensure there is always someone on site should a concern be raised. Most staff are first aid trained and the

school's first aid policy provides clear guidance. Regular checks are made on fire equipment and there are regular evacuation drills.

Students say that they feel safe in school and recognise the improvements they are making through the good support they receive. Bullying is not perceived to be a problem by students. Staff are vigilant in this area through close supervision and the rigorous implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy. Any serious incidents of misbehaviour are fully recorded and attendance is meticulously monitored. The adoption of a safe lifestyle is a challenge for some students. They are making headway in developing positive relationships and keeping themselves safe because the excellent therapeutic support offered to students helps them to deal effectively with individual problems. The school works well with a range of agencies for the benefit of students.

Leadership and management

Good

The leadership and management of the school are good. They are not outstanding as outcomes are good and the checking of teaching is neither regular nor systematic enough. The regional headteacher has ensured that all regulations for independent schools are met and that teaching, the curriculum and students' achievement are good and improving. Staff receive good levels of training in relation to child protection, behaviour management and safeguarding. Training to improve teaching has been provided, but staff do not have enough opportunity to learn about good practice elsewhere.

The school's self-evaluation is succinct and accurate. It gives a well grounded picture of the strengths and areas for improvement for the school. This is supported by a brief school improvement plan which correctly identifies appropriate priorities for development.

The proprietors have provided good quality accommodation, which is suitable for the needs of students. Resources are adequate, but internet access is intermittent and interactive whiteboards are not provided. There is a separate annex where therapy takes place and this is a calm and relaxing space. All of the required information is provided or made available to parents, carers or local authorities through its written information, which is of good quality. The complaints procedures meet regulatory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	139220
Inspection number	422852
DfE registration number	893/6031

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 for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Advanced Childcare
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Simon Reynolds
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees	£197,600
Telephone number	0161 367 5966 (head office)
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