

# Brambles School

## Inspection dates

3–4 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress in literacy, communication and mathematics from low starting points and previously disrupted education.
- Behaviour is outstanding and has improved significantly in a short period of time.
- Teachers skilfully manage pupils' behaviour; they establish an extremely positive learning environment.
- Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is excellent.
- Teaching is good; teachers know all pupils very well and plan effectively to meet the needs of each individual.
- Leaders and managers have established effective systems to monitor teachers' performance. This has had a positive impact on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher has very high expectations for the school. A clear development plan for the school is communicated well to all staff.
- Leaders and managers have established the school effectively. They ensure that all the independent school standards are well met.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge to extend their learning in a wide range of subjects so that they can achieve outstandingly.
- Teachers are not provided with enough training opportunities to develop subject expertise and fully assess pupils' progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Middle leaders are not fully involved in school improvement.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed lessons taught by two teachers. The inspector looked at pupils' work and considered information about each pupil.
- The inspector spoke to the pupils, teachers and the headteacher. Responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires were considered. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's on-line Parent View questionnaire to be considered.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' behaviour and progress, monitoring reports of teaching, and school improvement plans.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.

## Inspection team

Shellie Barcroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Brambles is a small school which is owned and managed by Halliwell Homes.
- The headteacher also oversees two of the company's other schools. There is a lead teacher who undertakes a middle leadership role.
- The school was registered with the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2014. This is its first inspection.
- The school provides education for residential pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It is registered to take a maximum of seven girls and boys aged between six and 14 years.
- All pupils are engaged in full-time education. Some are dual-registered with other schools as part of their reintegration into mainstream education.
- Most pupils have a statement of special educational needs. No disabled students currently attend the school.
- The school uses local sports facilities for physical education and games.
- The school aims to 'provide the best quality of education and care through a vibrant curriculum which fully prepares children for their future economic well-being and nurtures outstanding personal development'.
- The school's key focus is to reintegrate pupils back in to mainstream education within two years of admission.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
  - providing more training opportunities for teachers to enhance their subject expertise in a wider range of subjects
  - improving the accuracy of assessment to further enhance pupils' progress in all subjects.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - developing more opportunities for pupils to acquire greater knowledge and a wider range of skills in more subjects
  - developing the role and involvement of middle leaders in supporting further improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The quality of leadership and management is good and has been established well in the short time since registration. This has resulted in good improvements over time in teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders and managers demonstrate high expectations and ambition for the school. Policies and procedures are up-to-date and successfully promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Risk assessments are in place, and health and safety checks are regularly completed.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school is accurate. All leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas needed to help improve the school. Leaders and managers communicate their high expectations and ambitions to staff. This results in good teaching that secures good achievement.
- The school has demonstrated very well its capacity to greatly improve pupils' attitudes to learning. Leaders are successfully meeting their aim of reintegrating pupils back in to mainstream education.
- There is a range of subjects on offer to all pupils that covers all the required areas of learning for independent schools. Teaching in different subjects is underpinned by planning that appropriately engages all pupils' interest and participation. The curriculum includes academic, technical and sporting opportunities as well as learning about safety matters.
- Monitoring of lessons, planning and marking are carried out very well on a regular basis. Teachers say they feel very well supported and have regular meetings to identify targets to enhance their teaching and personal development. Each member of staff is working towards a qualification in special educational needs.
- Each pupil has access to the company's educational psychologist, ensuring that an effective individual education plan is in place. Targets are a key focus in lessons and are understood by all staff.
- Pupils' progress is tracked each half term and carefully considered when planning for future lessons.
- Training for staff includes a programme to promote pupils' personal development. All staff are trained to deliver this approach in addition to a range of other courses to promote the safety and well-being of pupils. There are few training opportunities to enhance their professional development in teaching other subjects in order to secure pupils' achievement further.
- An ambitious and child-centred team of staff supports the headteacher very well. Middle leaders are highly committed to the school and have helped to establish an extremely positive learning environment. However, middle leaders are not fully involved in whole-school improvement.
- Personal, social and health education lessons are provided for all pupils, ensuring their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are taught about different cultures and beliefs. Daily discussions occur in class to enable pupils to learn the importance of valuing the opinion of others and how their actions may affect others.
- Pupils learn about British institutions so that they are prepared well for life in modern Britain. For example, a visit to the Houses of Parliament forms the focus of their work on democracy.
- Trips and visits play a valuable role within the timetable, developing pupils' personal and social development very well. Pupils stated that they enjoy going cycling, trampolining, visiting museums and going to local parks. Pupils have also taken part in a variety of fundraising events, such as Red Nose Day, Race for Life and Children in Need.
- Equal opportunities are promoted within school and any discrimination is tackled restoratively and effectively.
- The school has appropriate resources and is well-maintained.
- The school meets statutory requirements for secondary-aged pupils in relation to careers guidance. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education
- All safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- All of the requirements regarding complaints procedures and the provision of information for parents, carers and others are met. Parents and carers are kept informed of their child's progress through reports on a half termly basis and at annual reviews. Other opportunities are offered for parents and carers to speak to teaching staff and look through their child's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - the headteacher has an effective, close working relationship with the proprietors
  - regular meetings ensure that the headteacher is challenged by the proprietors in relation to the school development plan and outcomes for pupils
  - the proprietors are knowledgeable about the management of staff performance, the school's

achievements and the quality of teaching.

regular performance management is in place to ensure that the quality of teaching is of high priority for the school

the proprietors and headteacher ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.

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

**are good**

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very eager to learn and return to mainstream school.
- All pupils enter the school with very challenging behaviour. Most have a history of disrupted education. After short periods of time at the school, pupils display enthusiastic and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils say they really enjoy coming to school and that they like all of their lessons.
- The ratio between staff and pupils is one-to-one, and pupils are supervised exceptionally well at all times. Staff are very skilled at reducing disruptive behaviour. Incidents are monitored and have significantly decreased over time.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and staff know all pupils exceptionally well. High expectations, together with effective and consistent behaviour management strategies, result in excellent attitudes to learning in an extremely positive environment. Pupils are able to work and respect each other very well in a group setting.
- Pupils clearly understand the systems for rewards and sanctions. They are very keen to earn the rewards, and are very proud of themselves and each other when achievements are made. Pupils learn what is right and wrong. They respond very well to the consistent promotion of making correct choices.
- Pupils feel they have a say in helping to develop the school and are very proud to be part of the school council. They are, for example, in the process of re-designing the school garden.
- Attendance and punctuality are excellent, which is a significant improvement for some. The school day has an orderly structure and pupils respond to this exceptionally well. When pupils are in lessons, they display an eagerness to learn and good academic progress is made.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are effective, including staff recruitment and required aspects of training.
- Policies and procedures are implemented well and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and how to keep safe. They have recently undertaken work on how to keep safe when using computers. Pupils are willing to speak up if they have any concerns; this confidence is the result of the strong relationships they have with staff.

## **The quality of teaching**

**is good**

- The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are making good progress in their learning in short periods of time as a result of effective teaching in reading, writing, communication and mathematics.
- On their admission to school, each pupil's basic skills are assessed. Taking in to account each pupil's starting point, the lead teacher carefully plans work to ensure that all pupils' needs are met. Appropriate targets are set for each pupil, and communicated well to other teachers and support staff.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils have established a very positive learning environment within school. Pupils are interested and highly motivated to learn. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning, and are extremely sensitive to the emotional needs of the pupils.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and the quality of teaching are consistently good, including in mathematics and English; pupils are making good and at times exceptional progress in these subjects. Pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively in different subjects and opportunities within the school day encourage pupils to read widely and confidently. Pupils' progress in reading is at least good.
- Teachers have very high expectations, particularly in mathematics and English. They are skilful in questioning, and one-to-one support ensures that all pupils understand and stay on tasks set. This enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils expect to be challenged and respond well to the tasks set. However, in some subjects, such as geography and religious education, they are not always given the opportunity to extend their knowledge further.
- Teaching assistants support teachers extremely well.

- There are clear systems in place for assessing pupils' progress and these are implemented well by all staff. Pupils' work is always marked and they receive valuable feedback from teachers in every lesson. Pupils are also encouraged to explain to the class what they have achieved well and how they feel that they can improve. They enjoy this part of the lesson.
- There are activities on offer to engage pupils back in to learning and prepare them for the next stage of their education. Examples include the use of computers; food technology, including shopping and budgeting for food; and a variety of trips and visits.
- Although pupils engage well in all of their lessons, their progress is not as effectively tracked in some subjects, such as geography and religious education. This does not allow them to make significant and sustained gains in their learning in all subjects.
- Regular monitoring is in place for checking the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher. This is having a direct impact on the improvements in teaching and pupils' academic progress.

### **The achievement of pupils**

**is good**

- The achievement of pupils is good. Most pupils enter the school at low starting points, following a history of disrupted education. Within a culture of high expectations and through the effective promotion of personal and social development, pupils become more confident and eager to learn, resulting in good academic achievement.
- As a result of good teaching and individualised planning, school data show that pupils have made good progress over a short period of time. This includes those with special educational needs and those of higher ability.
- School records show that many pupils quickly close the gaps in their learning, with some exceeding their targets, particularly in English and mathematics. This level of progress, however, is not as secure in all of the subjects.
- As a result of the school's promotion of positive attitudes to learning and enabling pupils to make good progress, a number of pupils have successfully been reintegrated back in to mainstream education and applications for more to transfer into mainstream schools are already underway.
- The school aims to achieve re-integration within two years and ensure that no pupils are disadvantaged. The average timescale for pupils reintegrating back in to a mainstream setting is twelve months.
- More-able pupils are challenged well and are able to make good academic progress. Pupils are clear about how they are achieving, know what they need to do to improve further and are keen to progress.
- The school works well with other professionals to ensure pupils' needs are met effectively and that good progress is made.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140814
<b>Inspection number</b>	454307
<b>DfE registration number</b>	354/6004

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Day school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	3
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	1
<b>Proprietor</b>	Halliwell Homes
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Mitchell-Mellor/Andrew Constable
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mathew Hargreaves
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected



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Piccadilly Gate  
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