

Keyes Barn

Keyes Barn, Station Road, Salwick, Preston, Lancashire PR4 0YH

Inspection dates

9–11 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching across the school is good. Pupils acquire knowledge effectively because teachers match activities well to pupils' interests and abilities, particularly in English and science.
- Proprietors, leaders and staff share a common vision, which they work passionately to achieve. All adults care deeply about the welfare and personal development of pupils both in and out of school. Consequently, the school is a calm and safe place to learn which pupils like to attend.
- The school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is excellent. They welcome visitors and are keen to share their knowledge and interests with adults and each other. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because of the wide range of activities that capture their interests.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development, particularly in social behaviours and levels of confidence, because of the high-quality support they receive from teachers and key workers that reflects the ethos of the school.
- The systems in place to ensure pupils are safeguarded and protected from harm, including the dangers posed from radicalisation and extremism, are strong and closely follow national guidance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is consistently of the highest standard because teachers have limited access to curriculum training and experiences of outstanding practice elsewhere, particularly that relating to the teaching of mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of opportunities to use questioning to deepen pupils' learning and understanding.
- Teachers sometimes do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to use and apply the outcomes from the school's new marking policy to ensure pupils' misconceptions are addressed.
- The most-able pupils do not always receive enough academic challenge of which they are capable. As a result, their conceptual understanding is not always developed and so not enough pupils make outstanding academic progress.
- Leaders' plans for school development and formal monitoring records do not always contain sufficient detail to allow the proprietor to check easily that actions and investments are having the intended impact.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening the quality of leaders' formal monitoring of school effectiveness to better inform school self-evaluation and development planning
 - ensuring that school development planning is sufficiently detailed and includes measurable success criteria so that proprietors and leaders can easily check that actions and investments are having the desired impact.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it consistently matches the best practice in school and results in all pupils, particularly the most able, further accelerating their academic achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers and key workers benefit from access to appropriate, high-quality professional development, including curriculum training
 - ensuring that all teachers make the best use of the school's new marking policy to help pupils follow up and apply the advice they have been given
 - enhancing further teachers' use of questioning to encourage pupils to explain their reasoning and thoughts
 - ensuring that pupils who are most able consistently receive sufficient challenge and have opportunities to apply their understanding of concepts.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school's leaders ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Proprietors, leaders and staff share a common vision for the school and work passionately to achieve this. Consequently, the school's ethos percolates all areas and results in a calm learning environment in which pupils can achieve well.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is based around the National Curriculum and allows pupils to make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders draw upon the expertise and experiences of staff to enhance curriculum opportunities for pupils. For example, leaders make effective use of a Dutch-speaking member of staff to provide an opportunity for pupils to learn Dutch as their modern foreign language in the upper school, while the regular visits of a peripatetic music teacher gives boys the opportunity to learn to play the guitar.
- Leaders strongly promote social, moral, cultural and health education appropriately. Pupils study a range of other cultures and religions. For example, individual pupils shared with their peers what they had learned about the culture of Chinese New Year and the Christian observation of Lent during a whole-school assembly. Leaders are further strengthening this aspect of the curriculum and promoting fundamental British values by developing links with a local Sikh Gurdwara (temple).
- Leaders ensure that they meet the requirements for the provision of information for parents, carers and others. The school's policies for the handling of complaints are detailed and freely available. They adhere to regulations. The school has received no complaints recently but leaders continue to regularly review and amend policies in line with national guidance. Leaders ensure regular contact with parents through the effective deployment of key workers to escort pupils on their journeys to and from school that give opportunity for face-to-face sharing of information at each handover. Reports to parents are based around the annual cycle of reviews for education, health and care plans. These reports are highly detailed and informative and include evidence of pupils' work and progress across the year and pupils' own reflections on their progress. Comments received by the inspector during the inspection from parents and officers from local authorities placing pupils in the school were highly positive and, in particular, praised the impact the school has on pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school from their day-to-day involvement with pupils and staff across its small site. However, school improvement planning lacks sufficient detail, including measurable success criteria, to allow leaders and proprietors to check easily that their investments and actions are having the desired impact.
- Teachers' and key workers' professional development is closely linked to the school's priorities, particularly its responsibility for keeping pupils safe and managing challenging behaviours. Staff are well prepared and vigilant because of the up-to-date training they have received in first aid, child protection and the recognition of signs of radicalisation. Leaders support staff well to achieve additional professional qualifications; for example, one member of staff is completing a foundation degree to allow them to train as a qualified teacher, while another is undertaking the national qualification for special educational needs coordinators. Staff development programmes do not provide sufficient curriculum training to keep staff abreast of developments in teaching. Consequently, some staff are not as well prepared to teach the school's curriculum subjects as others, particularly in mathematics. This leads to some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Leaders are aware of this need and are planning action to improve staff's professional development opportunities, including closer links with other local schools.
- Leaders and proprietors take effective actions to support pupils' well-being beyond the school day through the provision of additional resources and help for families at home. For example, they provide suitable decoration or furniture to allow pupils to continue their learning and development at home after school. Additionally, leaders frequently accompany pupils on transition visits to other schools at the time of changing key stages so that they are well supported in their move to the next stages of their education.
- The leadership of special educational needs by the school's special educational needs coordinator is strong and reflects the ongoing training she receives. Additionally, leaders ensure that expert advice is readily available through the employment of an educational psychologist who works in school each week. Record-keeping relating to pupils' special educational needs is meticulous and leads to highly effective identification of individual needs, personalised learning programmes for each pupil and effective deployment of support staff.

■ The governance of the school

- Proprietors know the school well because directors work in school on a regular basis. Beechkeys Limited uses directors' professional skills well to ensure that the school runs smoothly and promotes the aims of the school.
- Beechkeys Limited has ensured that the fabric of the school is maintained to a very high standard. The building is clean, bright and welcoming. Appropriate signage relating to health and safety is in place. The school grounds are well maintained and provision for outdoor play is of a good standard and meets requirements.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The school has detailed and effective policies in place, backed by appropriate training for staff that ensure practice keeps pupils safe while in school, on educational visits or during the transition home. Risk assessments are detailed and regularly reviewed, including one for the school pond. Fire drills are carried out regularly and pupils are able to explain confidently what they would do if a fire alarm occurred. The appropriate deployment of staff ensures good levels of supervision for pupils at all times of the school day.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers generally plan lessons effectively so that pupils make good progress. Lessons are interesting and most activities, especially those for middle- and lower ability pupils, are closely matched to pupils' abilities and interests. As a result, pupils maintain their focus and concentration and make good progress. The work in pupils' books shows that lessons build sequentially on prior learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science, while teachers' use of individual day targets ensures that pupils know what is expected of them.
- The nurturing environment, encouragement and support provided by teachers and skilled key workers allow pupils' self-confidence to blossom. At the end of an 'options' session, a period within each day where pupils choose different curriculum tasks designed to develop behaviour and social skills, one pupil overcame significant barriers to learning to share with the rest of the school how another pupil had helped them learn the rules so that they could play together collaboratively. Similarly, in a science lesson, pupils often present what new knowledge they have gleaned from research, for example about the lives of the naturalists Beatrix Potter, David Attenborough and Charles Darwin.
- Teachers continually assess pupils' progress and record evidence of this in the school's new electronic tracking system. This allows teachers and leaders to identify clearly the steps that pupils are making to achieve their goals and close identified gaps in achievement. Teachers' implementation of the school's new marking policy is improving the information given to pupils about how they can improve their work. Teachers, however, do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply and practise the advice they have been given.
- Teachers use homework effectively. Homework is appropriately set to help pupils develop understanding and enhance their eagerness for learning. Younger pupils regularly receive spelling and multiplication table homework, while older pupils are encouraged to research their own topics and make presentations about what they have learned, which develops their confidence and communication skills.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and is used effectively to promote learning. Systematic teaching of skills in English and mathematics ensures that pupils make good progress. However, some teaching, particularly in mathematics, does not develop pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. Consequently, some pupils lack confidence to apply their mathematical learning to different situations. In a minority of lessons, some of the most-able pupils are given work that is too easy for them. This occasional lack of challenge limits the academic progress they make in the time available.
- On some occasions, teachers do not seize the opportunities to use more open questions to enhance the progress pupils make in developing their reasoning skills by asking them to explain the thinking behind their answers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils overcome many significant barriers to learning, especially those relating to their own self-confidence and self-control because of the school's effective support and actions. Consequently, pupils become active learners in their classrooms and willingly participate in collaborative activities such as playing dice-based games or cards that require them to take turns and calmly accept defeat.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of fundamental British values such as the rule of law and democracy through participation in elections for the school council, the drawing up and consistent application of school rules and codes of conduct, and studies of British institutions. Two pupils were eager to share their model of the Elizabeth Tower that holds Big Ben, which they were creating during an 'options' lesson.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with staff and consequently try their hardest in lessons. Pupils respond extremely well to direction and guidance because of well-established rules and routines. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for adults in school because staff reciprocate this respect.
- Abundant opportunities across the school ensure pupils strongly develop their social, moral and cultural understanding. Pupils take on roles of responsibilities around the school such as helping with recycling, producing the regular school newsletter or caring for the school's chickens. They develop mutual respect for each other during regular whole-school meetings with staff and pupils, during assembly times or at 'options' feedback sessions. Pupils are heavily involved in supporting national and local charities and frequently raise funds for good causes, such as the British Heart Foundation and the children's charity Donna's Dream House.
- Pupils' roles as school councillors allow them to further enhance their understanding of democracy and develop their confidence to articulate their viewpoints to staff. These views are listened to and acted upon by leaders, for example in organising particular theme days such as World Book Day or the procurement of additional or more environmentally friendly resources such as push-operated taps. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of how decisions are made and the importance of the reasons behind them.
- Educational and cultural visits develop individual curiosity and interests. Recently, a fact-finding tour to a local museum to study art works allowed pupils to create highly informative leaflets on their return to school from which others could learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary. Pupils move around the school in an orderly and calm manner. They are welcoming and respectful of others.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. They say bullying does not happen and school records confirm that bullying in school is virtually non-existent. Pupils are confident that if it did occur, that their key worker or teacher would quickly deal with it effectively. The high levels of supervision contribute to pupils' safety.
- Pupils are proud of their school and demonstrate this in the way they look after their environment. There is no obvious damage to school property and books are well maintained. Pupils try their hardest to present their work neatly.
- Pupils say they like attending this school. One pupil said it was the best school he had been to because people helped him learn here. Consequently, attendance over time is high. Recent incidents of 'flu and other illnesses have had a disproportionate impact on attendance figures due to the small number of pupils in the school. Attendance is currently in line with the average for other primary schools nationally.
- The school's behaviour policy and procedures are highly effective in modifying pupils' previously highly challenging behaviours to those of which any school would be proud. Policy and staff practice reinforce and celebrate positive aspects of behaviour. Staff set clear boundaries and resolutely apply them in a caring manner. Staff are appropriately trained and deal confidently with any significant issues if they occur. Pupils frequently maintain high standards and reach their behaviour targets, for which they receive rewards at celebration assemblies.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- All pupils currently attending the school have a statement of special educational needs or are in receipt of an education, health and care plan. The school's tracking and work in pupils' books show that they make strong progress from their starting points in a wide variety of subjects, particularly in English, mathematical calculation skills and science because of the teaching and guidance they receive. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are closing and they are developing their self-confidence, resilience and skills as effective learners. Nearly all pupils have effective literacy skills and are able to communicate with confidence. Those who have not yet achieved this are making strong progress because of the teaching and additional support they receive. Many pupils have strong basic number skills, particularly in mental multiplication. Spelling is improving because of the structured practice pupils receive.
- Pupils benefit greatly from the additional service of an educational psychologist provided by the school on a weekly basis who works individually with pupils to help address their needs. Additional therapies, including art therapy, also have a positive impact on outcomes for pupils. They help pupils improve their behaviour and develop more positive attitudes to learning, which allows them to access the curriculum more effectively.
- Pupils read widely and often and develop a genuine love of books because they get to practise frequently with their key worker. Pupils are able to discuss what type of books they like, for example, factual books were the favourite of one pupil who had been reading about wind farms and energy. Teachers carefully monitor pupils' progress in reading and interests in books and add to the collections available so that up-to-date resources are available from which pupils can choose. Consequently, pupils' reading skills rapidly improve, with some pupils making remarkable progress in their reading ages.

School details

Unique reference number	135543
Inspection number	10006075
DfE registration number	888/6041

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.

Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–12
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Beechkeys Limited
Chair	Mr Gary Holiday
Headteacher	Mr Alan Rainford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,034
Telephone number	01772 673672
Website	www.beechkeys.co.uk
Email address	keyesbarn@btconnect.com
Date of previous inspection	14–15 November 2012

Information about this school

- Keyes Barn opened in 2008. It is a small independent special school which caters for day pupils. It is registered for up to 16 boys and girls aged from seven to 12 years old who have significant social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is owned by Beechkeys Limited, which also owns two further special schools in the Preston area.
- The school's current headteacher joined the school from another headship within the owning company in April 2015.
- Currently there are 16 pupils on roll. All pupils are of White British heritage, and all have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. They are taught in two classes with a teacher and one or two teaching assistants in each class.
- The pupils are placed in the school by three local authorities.
- The school seeks to modify pupils' behaviour and to help them realise their individual potential.
- The school has no religious affiliation.
- The school was last inspected in November 2012, when it was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed pupils' learning in several lessons, including one jointly visited with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and at the school's records of pupils' progress.
- The inspector held meetings or telephone discussions with senior leaders, staff, pupils and other professionals.
- The inspector considered the free-text content of the one response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector considered the 12 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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