

IES Breckland

Crown Street, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 0NJ

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal's decisive and inspirational leadership has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. She sets very high expectations for staff and pupils alike.
- Sabres Education Trust, International English Schools and the governing body are ambitious for pupils. They work together well to improve provision and give pupils a wide range of learning and development opportunities, including working with their peers in Sweden.
- Leaders at all levels are united in their desire to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. They are effective in identifying priorities and implementing the necessary improvements.
- Pupils' progress is improving rapidly because the quality of teaching in the school is improving. Leaders check the quality of teachers' work very thoroughly.
- Regular analysis is used to identify when pupils fall behind in their learning. Rapid action is taken to ensure that leaders and staff plan learning that meets pupils' individual needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The student support team provides pupils with well-focused intervention and guidance that helps them to achieve well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the bespoke intervention they receive. Good leadership results in pupils receiving precise and relevant help when they need it.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Leaders have implemented a clear system that encourages pupils to reflect on their actions. Conflicts are resolved quickly and there are now fewer exclusions.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is now close to national averages. This is due to the school's partnership with parents. Leaders have further strategies in place to continue to improve attendance.
- GCSE results in French, computing and business studies were low in 2017. However, recent actions to improve pupils' achievement in these subjects are starting to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Despite changes to the processes in place to communicate with parents, some feel that the new systems are not yet effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve communication so that all parents are well informed about school matters and the progress that their children make.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use accurate assessment information to give pupils work that challenges them to do their best, especially in computing, art, French and resistant materials.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This is a good and improving school. The principal has developed IES Breckland into a calm and purposeful centre of learning where pupils behave and achieve well. She and the school's other leaders are resolute in raising the aspirations of pupils.
- Pupils benefit from receiving information and guidance about their futures, not only in the context of where they live, but nationally and globally. Pupils are given the opportunity to experience and consider life in a different context, for example through the school's pupil exchange programme.
- The curriculum is organised to ensure that pupils study a wide range of subjects. All pupils study a breadth of subjects in Years 7 and 8 that include music, ethics, philosophy and religion and drama. Pupils begin GCSEs in Year 9 where they are offered a range of GCSE courses matched appropriately to their needs and aspirations.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities extends the experiences of pupils well. A variety of sports and clubs are available, as well as additional support in subjects such as mathematics and English.
- Leaders quickly identify pupils that require additional support in literacy and numeracy when they join the school in Year 7. Pupils study an alternative curriculum that is focused on developing their basic skills so that they are able to access the wider curriculum as they progress through the school.
- Leaders use the pupil premium grant well. Extra-curricular activities include literacy and numeracy 'catch-up' alongside GCSE exam preparation. These activities provide pupils with the opportunity to target and overcome gaps in learning. Leaders also provide financial assistance to families supporting them, for example in purchasing school uniform and in meeting the cost of school trips.
- The extra 'catch-up' funding for Year 7 students who have fallen behind is used very effectively and these pupils make good progress. Pupils are well supported through individual and small-group sessions focused on reading, writing, spelling and numeracy.
- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities pupils is used effectively. The pupils achieve well. They make good progress throughout the age range, and some pupils make exceptional progress because their needs are provided for very carefully by well-trained staff. Their achievement is tracked carefully and the success of individual support is reviewed regularly. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has implemented clear systems to monitor and evaluate the support provided for this group of pupils.
- Leaders have rightly identified attendance as an area for development. The student support team have clear systems in place to work with pupils, parents and external agencies to ensure continued improvements.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly. They quickly identify teaching that is less than good and appropriate support is put in place to help teachers

to improve. For example, stronger teachers are often used as coaches for less experienced colleagues or for those who would benefit from further support.

- All staff receive focused and effective training and this is having a clear impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders ensure that the training provided aligns closely with leaders' priorities for the school's development, as well as supporting staff members' needs.
- Staff who responded to the survey overwhelmingly praised the supportive leadership of the school, commenting upon the good professional development opportunities they have.
- Leaders have forged links with local teacher training providers. This has improved the recruitment and support for newly qualified teachers. New teachers value the good quality training, support and guidance they receive.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve and develop positive partnerships with parents. They have introduced different ways in which to communicate with parents. While some parents welcome these changes, some do not feel the new methods allow them to be kept up to date with matters regarding the school and the progress their children are making.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted survey believe the school is well led and that pupils are well behaved, happy and safe.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of the local area and are committed to raising the aspirations of pupils. Governors are ambitious for their pupils and proud of their school.
- Governors work closely with the principal and other senior leaders. They hold leaders firmly to account for the quality of their work. Minutes of governing body meetings reflect governors' appropriate level of scrutiny and challenge.
- Governors have good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the school. They are well informed and this enables them to report to trustees accurately about the achievement of the school and areas for further development.
- Governors support and take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities in order to broaden their understanding of school life. They conduct mock interviews with pupils in order to help them prepare for further education and employment.
- Governors ensure that statutory duties are met. They check that additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Systems in place for reporting concerns are uncomplicated and their priority is clearly understood.

- The school has effective systems in place to ensure that pupils whose circumstances mean they may be vulnerable are fully engaged with school and their learning. Relationships with other agencies are strong and the staff team keep regular checks on these pupils' well-being.
- All staff and those responsible for governance have relevant training, which takes place annually. The school's designated safeguarding lead and his deputies are well trained for their roles.
- Referrals to external agencies are made quickly. Leaders keep detailed records of any actions taken to support pupils, including meetings with parents and external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have rightly made improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment the central focus of their work. In this they have been successful. Improved and consistent teaching practice is leading to good pupil achievement.
- Weekly teaching and learning briefings are used to share and review best practice. This has helped to improve teaching throughout the school. In addition, the briefings are used to keep staff abreast of individual pupils' needs. Guidance is provided to teachers on how best to provide additional support where needed.
- Learning support assistants provide intensive and bespoke programmes of support to meet individual pupils' needs. They focus on developing specific areas of pupils' learning that have been identified through assessment. For example, if a pupil in mathematics is found to be struggling with addition and subtraction, help with these basic skills is provided in order to enable the pupil to access more complicated areas, such as algebra.
- Teachers use questioning well to probe and extend pupils' thinking and understanding. Questioning is also used effectively to assess pupils' learning and to check that they have understood. This is helping to improve outcomes because pupils respond confidently to questions and seek further clarification if they do not understand.
- The recent focus on developing pupil resilience means that, in all subjects, pupils have to think carefully and present a coherent argument to support their opinions. For example, in an English lesson, pupils had to present an argument about who was responsible for the death of Romeo and Juliet. Pupils then presented their arguments with evidence and were prepared to defend their ideas and challenge those of others.
- Staff have focused well on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers and learning support assistants model good grammar and the use of interesting vocabulary. They have high expectations of how pupils should respond. As a result, most pupils now respond to questions in full and well-constructed sentences.
- Morning mentoring sessions focus on improving pupils' key literacy and numeracy skills. Some of this time is used for pupils to extend their vocabulary, for example, through the use of a greater range of adjectives. This is starting to have a positive impact on the work that pupils produce in other subjects.
- Teachers ensure that lessons are sufficiently challenging for all pupils, particularly the most able. This means that the most able pupils are not held back by being given tasks

to complete that are too easy. Pupils have noticed this improvement and now say that they feel 'stretched' in lessons.

- Teachers provide pupils with useful feedback that helps them to understand what they need to do in order to make progress. Pupils like the 'find and fix' approach, where teachers point out elements of pupils' work that could be improved and describe this as supportive and helpful.
- The quality of assessment is continuing to improve. Leaders work with local schools to share expertise and to assure themselves that assessments are accurate. This external moderation is complemented by leaders working together in school to check that teachers' judgements are fair and well evidenced.
- Some weaknesses in the quality of teaching remain. Despite the improvements, assessment information is not always used to ensure that pupils are challenged to do their best.
- The quality of teaching is weaker in computing and physical education and does not match that found in English and mathematics. Leaders have taken action to improve teaching in these areas. The impact of these actions is quickly evident.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are given good-quality careers advice and guidance. They are given the opportunity to take part in mock interviews and curriculum vitae workshops. During the inspection, in an assembly, Year 11 pupils were given advice regarding choices after GCSEs. They were provided with useful advice about vocational courses, A levels and apprenticeships.
- Pupils' abilities to self-reflect and take responsibility for their behaviour is supported through personal, social and health education. Planned by teachers in conjunction with the school's safeguarding lead, these activities bring together different areas of expertise effectively. This provides teachers with a level of confidence when discussing complex issues.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are given opportunities to develop their public speaking skills and this helps them to develop their confidence to speak in front of large audiences. During the inspection, the head boy and girl presented an assembly about sustaining positive and respectful relationships. They presented their messages very well and their classmates listened respectfully.
- The student support centre is a welcoming and safe place for pupils to discuss any concerns they might have. As well as providing a listening ear, staff give pupils support with issues such as how to cope in times of stress. Pupils feel confident and secure discussing and finding solutions to challenges they may be facing.
- Pupils report that bullying rarely happens. Pupils feel confident that, if they were being bullied, they could speak to a member of staff and issues would be resolved quickly. This confidence is an example of the school's strong and open safeguarding culture.

- Pupils are well informed on issues around mental health, e-safety, relationships and the 'Prevent' duty. These topics are discussed during morning mentoring sessions, in assemblies and as part of the personal, social, health and economic curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and the school environment is calm and purposeful.
- Staff are increasingly skilled at recognising when problems are likely to occur and taking action to prevent them. Pupils are given time and space to reflect on their own behaviour and to discuss it with a trusted adult. This reflective process means pupils are less likely to repeat poor behaviours.
- Pupils who struggle to follow the school's rules are now better able to reflect on their own behaviour and take actions to improve it. For example, when pupils have to leave the classroom because of poor behaviour, they are now able to articulate what they have done wrong and how the situation might be avoided in the future.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They look after their school and there is very little litter around the school grounds. Inspectors observed pupils conducting themselves well around the school, both in their classrooms and during less structured parts of the day.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils at IES Breckland are improving strongly. Inspection evidence, including analysis of pupils' work, demonstrates that pupils across year groups are making good progress.
- In key stage 4, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects. This is particularly the case in English, geography and physical education. This is helping pupils catch up with their peers nationally following historical underachievement.
- Pupils at key stage 3 are making good progress. Improvements in teaching, learning and assessment mean pupils are better prepared to achieve increasingly high standards by the end of key stage 4.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress. This is due to effective extra-curricular support for groups of pupils and illustrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge is ensuring that pupils' achievement across a range of curriculum areas is improving. The school's precise monitoring of assessment information indicates that outcomes across all key stages is rising rapidly towards that found nationally, especially in geography, physical education, drama and design and technology.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. The school uses additional funding to provide bespoke programmes of support that results in the pupils achieving in line with their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers and better than others nationally. This is because leaders precisely monitor their progress, ensuring that the additional

funding provided is making a positive difference to the progress they make across all subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	138250
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10036263

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katherine Curtis
Principal	Alison Tilbrook
Telephone number	01842 819 501
Website	http://breckland.iesschools.co.uk
Email address	office@breckland.iesschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 November 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- IES Breckland opened in 2012. The school was set up by Sabres Educational Trust under the government's free school initiative. The trust employs International English Schools (IES) as their education provider.
- The school is a much smaller than the average secondary school. The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 27 lessons in order to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Some of these observations were conducted alongside school leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 8 and Year 10. They observed and met with pupils both formally and informally.
- Meetings were held with the principal, other leaders, governors, the chair of the trust, the education provider, a representative of the alternative provision, learning support assistants and teachers.
- Inspectors considered the 37 responses to the staff survey and the 44 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. In addition parent responses to the school's request for parental feedback were scrutinised.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including those relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching, assessment and behaviour.

Inspection team

Gwyneth Gibson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Phillip Barr	Ofsted Inspector

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