

Springboard Education

55 South Street, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8AN

Inspection dates

21–23 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not have an accurate enough view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders do not have clear and focused plans to improve the school. As a result, staff are not clear about what proprietors and leaders are looking to improve.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress. Older pupils make good progress but younger pupils do not.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Planned learning can be too hard or confusing for younger pupils.
- Leaders do not look carefully enough at the progress that pupils are making.
- Leaders do not manage the performance of staff consistently well. Staff working with older pupils value feedback they get from leaders. Junior staff performance is not well managed.
- Directors have become too involved in the day-to-day running of the school. As a result, they have not developed clear or effective ways to hold leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders ensure that the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe, including those who have not enjoyed education in the past or felt bullied in their previous schools.
- Staff have created a calm and nurturing place to learn. Staff know pupils and their families very well. Pupils are very well supported to manage their behaviour. As a result, pupils' behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils receive exemplary support to help them prepare for life after they have left school. Pupils and families are very well supported in choosing, applying for and securing appropriate college placements.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. Staff are very skilled at listening to pupils, hearing their concerns and acting upon them.
- Parents and carers are extremely positive about the difference Springboard makes to their children's behaviour.

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 ensuring that:
 - leaders look more closely at the progress that pupils are making and the quality of teaching and learning
 - plans to improve the work of the school are clear, shared and understood
 - leaders manage the performance of all staff well, including enabling all staff to know what they do well and what improvements are required
 - directors develop effective ways to hold leaders to account for the quality of education that they offer pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, particularly in key stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that:
 - meaningful assessment information is used well by staff and leaders to ensure that all pupils are making at least good progress
 - adults do not give primary pupils work that is too complicated.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and directors have worked hard to bring the two separate schools together. However, they and staff recognise that there is still a long way to go until there is consistency and equity for staff and pupils across the two buildings that have occupied the same site since 2015.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders do not have an accurate view of what the school does well and which aspects of the school's work require improvement to be good. As a result, leaders do not have clear plans to improve the school.
- Staff in key stages 3 and 4 have valued the positive impact that the new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has made to their teaching. Staff receive regular feedback about their work. They are clear about what they do well and where improvements can be made. Staff who work with younger pupils do not get enough evaluation of their work.
- Leaders' understanding of pupils' progress is not as good as it should be. Leaders are tracking older pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, this work solely relies on old national curriculum levels for when pupils were in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders do not have a clear understanding of the progress that older pupils are making across the curriculum or the progress that primary-age pupils are making in any subject.
- The management of staff performance is inconsistent. Staff working with older pupils have regular meetings with senior leaders and are clear about their strengths and their focus for improvement. Primary staff are not.
- Staff feel listened to by leaders. They value the consultative approach that leaders have to important decisions, such as the admission of new pupils. Staff understand the ethos of the school and want the school to be the best it can. However, they are not yet able to talk about what the priorities are for the school and how they can help leaders achieve them.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The range of subjects that older pupils study has improved significantly as a result of effective staff recruitment. Leaders have appropriate schemes of work in place. Staff enrich the curriculum with a wide range of visits. Younger pupils recall trips to museums and zoos with excitement. Older pupils use cinema trips and film festivals to explore themes such as grief and feminism.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff think carefully about how to best present, debate and reflect on topical issues such as 'fake news'. As a result, pupils learn the importance of researching multiple sources of information. Staff are confident to tackle pupils' misunderstandings in a sensitive way because they have such good relationships with pupils. Pupils show tolerance towards each other and are given regular opportunities through the curriculum to consider tolerance more widely, for example through their recent work on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender role models.

Governance

- The two directors, the proprietors, provide governance. They are hardworking and ambitious for the school and pupils.
- The proprietors are currently restructuring the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders. They recognise that the legacy of having two distinct schools, separately led and in different locations, remains. They have made a conscious decision to become involved in the day-to-day running of the school to help leaders adjust to their changing roles. However, the proprietors have not stepped back to evaluate what the school is doing well and where improvements are required. They do not have a systematic approach to gathering information about the school and holding leaders to account for the quality of education that leaders provide.
- The school is having wide-ranging difficulties with its website. The proprietors have taken swift and decisive action to ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are available to parents in hard copy.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a safeguarding policy on its website. Leaders and staff know and understand the latest statutory guidance.
- Staff know pupils and their families very well. They listen carefully to what pupils say and are diligent in recording any concern about pupils' well-being. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding.
- Leaders' oversight of pupils' vulnerabilities is exemplary. Many pupils have had or continue to have significantly traumatic events in their lives. Leaders ensure that staff are extremely well trained to support pupils and go 'the extra mile' to support their families and carers.
- Leaders work closely with a wide range of other professionals, including the police, the placing local authorities, and social care agencies. Leaders make swift and effective referrals to other agencies. All communications with families, other agencies, and within the school, are meticulously logged. Leaders' use of the designated officer who works for the local authority is very effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Assessment information is not used well enough by leaders or staff. Leaders are currently trying to link old national levels to the new national curriculum. This system is not effective enough in helping staff plan for pupils, particularly in key stages 1 and 2.
- Staff working in key stages 1 and 2 do not use what they know and understand about pupils to plan their learning. As a result, too much of the work that pupils are asked to do is significantly too complex.
- Staff have inconsistent levels of subject knowledge. Staff who work with older pupils have good subject knowledge. As a result, they are able to use the right technical vocabulary and answer pupils' questions with clarity and authority. Planned learning for younger

pupils is not always appropriate because staff do not have the subject knowledge to break concepts and skills down into manageable and accessible learning.

- Relationships between adults and pupils across the school are exemplary. Adults show great warmth and respect towards pupils. All staff want the best for pupils.
- Time in lessons is well used. Staff working with primary-age pupils are skilled at managing the transition between activities. They are consistent in their language and in their use of resources to signify to pupils that a change in routine is approaching.
- Staff who work with older pupils are highly focused on making sure that pupils are ready to leave Springboard and be a success. They know that pupils will need additional skills when they leave their small, safe and highly nurturing school. As a result, staff teach pupils a broad range of appropriate life skills. This work is exemplary, and pupils make exceptional progress in their personal development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because the support that staff give for their personal and social development and welfare is exemplary.
- Adults work tirelessly to make sure that pupils feel safe and are ready to learn. Staff know and understand pupils' needs very well. As a result, pupils who have not enjoyed education or felt safe in their previous schools are happy and feel safe at Springboard.
- The curriculum provides valuable opportunities for pupils to talk and learn about sex and relationships, substance misuse and how to stay safe online. Staff are very aware of pupils' vulnerabilities. Consequently, they ensure clear communication with parents and carers around potentially sensitive curriculum content.
- Older pupils are given regular valuable opportunities to develop their teamworking skills, for example as they work on their allotment to plant, harvest and cook their produce. Pupils are taught to work safely with appropriate tools, such as knives, as they sculpt wood into artefacts.
- Younger pupils are taught to recognise the power of their kind words and actions. Pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence develops rapidly as staff carefully explain to them what they have done well. Pupils can recall this as they talk to visitors about their 'jar of strengths'.
- Older pupils and families receive exceptional support in preparing for life after school. Staff visit colleges to assess their appropriateness and help families and pupils make informed choices about what opportunities exist after school. Pupils receive invaluable support with applications and interviews. Pupils who attend taster placements at college are very well supported. Parents and carers feel the school could do 'no more'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils who have not been successful in managing their behaviours in their previous schools, thrive at Springboard.
- Pupils with high levels of exclusion from previous schools settle well. Their behaviour improves significantly during their time at Springboard.
- Classrooms are calm and purposeful places to learn. Staff understand what motivates individual pupils and what can be the 'triggers' for unwanted behaviours. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, behave extremely well because staff are highly effective in supporting them.
- On the whole, pupils attend school regularly. Where some pupils are unable to attend school regularly it is because of their mental health and well-being. Leaders work closely with families and local authorities to make informed judgements about pupils' readiness for school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is variable across the school.
- Last year, due to a number of staffing issues, primary pupils made inconsistent progress.
- Current primary-age pupils, particularly those who are working at levels significantly below age-related expectations, do not make good progress in mathematics, English, history or geography.
- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 make good progress in all subjects, including mathematics, English, art and science.
- The most able older pupils make good progress in mathematics, including with their ability to solve word problems and to reason.
- The most reluctant writers make good progress in key stages 3 and 4. They develop their confidence and resilience to commit their thoughts and ideas to paper.
- In July 2017, all pupils who left Springboard secured an appropriate college placement.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal and social development. Primary pupils learn the value of teamwork and thinking about the feelings of others. As a result, they work and play alongside each other very well. Older pupils are very well prepared with relevant life skills for when they leave school. For example, they are able to plan travel, access public transport with limited support, and plan, budget for, and cook, meals.

School details

Unique reference number	135180
DfE registration number	938/6050
Inspection number	10020930

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Judy Packham/Jeremy Cross
Headteacher	Simon Yorke-Johnson
Annual fees (day pupils)	Junior – £30,737 Senior – £26,452
Telephone number	01903 605 980
Website	www.springboardeducation.co.uk
Email address	office@springboardeducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–13 September 2013

Information about this school

- The 'junior' and 'senior' parts of the school came together on one site in 2015. The 'senior' part of the school is led by the executive headteacher. The 'junior' part of the school is currently being led by the junior manager. Directors are currently evaluating and restructuring leadership and management responsibilities. The SENCo, appointed in January 2017, works almost exclusively in the 'senior' part of the school.
- The school was last inspected in September 2013.
- The school caters for pupils who have a range of social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many also have specific learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. They are all placed at the

school by a range of local authorities.

- The school can cater for 27 boys and girls between the ages of five and 18 years.
- The proprietors are the company directors. The school does not have a governing body.
- Pupils attend registered colleges: Plumpton and Brinsbury.
- There are no sixth-form students in the school currently.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school, almost always accompanied by a school leader.
- The inspector evaluated work in pupils' books with leaders, and examined leaders' assessment information.
- Meetings were held with leaders and the proprietors.
- Staff views were considered during two meetings with different groups of staff. Several subsequent conversations took place with members of staff.
- Pupils' views were gathered from a wide range of conversations with individuals over the course of three days.
- Parents' views were considered through four responses to the 'Parent View' online survey, parents' free-text comments and telephone calls.
- A range of documents was evaluated, including improvement plans, curriculum documents, information regarding pupils' progress and complaints logs.
- Documents and processes relating to safeguarding were checked, including the single central record, case study files and risk assessments.
- All the independent school standards were checked during this inspection.

Inspection team

Mark Cole, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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