

New Barn School

Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 3PQ

Inspection dates

15–17 May 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led. The principal and directors share a strong vision and drive. They have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Senior leadership is well supported by a dedicated staff team. Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Staff ensure that pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils gain accreditations in English and mathematics as well as many other subjects.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have useful careers advice. Pupils enjoy work experience. They are well prepared for their future lives.
- The directors are very supportive. They hold the school well to account in areas such as safeguarding and pupils' welfare. They do not receive clear enough information from leaders about the quality of teaching or pupils' progress. This has an impact on how well they can monitor these aspects.
- Behaviour is good. Effective support from staff and therapists helps pupils to control their anxieties. Staff make sure that pupils' well-being and safety are paramount.
- Those who previously have been out of education attend well. Personal development is strong. Pupils build trusting relationships with staff. This gives pupils the confidence to try new experiences.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not always detailed enough. This means that it is sometimes difficult for them to check the impact of their actions.
- Middle leadership roles are not well enough developed in information technology, art and design, and the humanities. This has an impact on pupils' progress in these subjects.
- Staff training in some aspects related to special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is still ongoing. Leaders are in the early stages of developing links with other schools so that staff can broaden their experience.

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 success criteria in development plans so that leaders can more carefully evaluate the impact of their actions
 - providing directors with clearer information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress so that they can hold the school to account more effectively in these areas
 - developing middle leadership roles in subjects such as information technology, art and design, and the humanities.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by seeking opportunities to work with other similar schools to enhance the training and development of staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Much has been achieved since the school opened in January 2017. The principal and vice-principal have ensured that staff have settled quickly into their new roles. Leaders and directors have dedicated themselves to creating a warm and caring school. Staff share the same high aspirations that senior leaders have for the pupils. All of the independent school standards are met.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire would recommend the school. Many said how pleased they were with the improvements in their child's personal development. Several parents said that there had been a 'transformation' in their child since starting at the school. One parent, expressing the views of many, said, 'Staff go out of their way to find what makes him tick.'
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school's curriculum provides many valuable experiences. There is a strong emphasis on basic skills development in reading, writing and mathematics. Subjects such as music and art give pupils the opportunity to develop their creative skills. Displays around the school showcase the imaginative paintings and models that pupils have made.
- The curriculum helps pupils deepen their understanding of British values. They learn about democracy, the rule of law, and tolerance and respect. Inspiring quotes around the school have a positive impact on pupils' well-being. For example, a quote for Autism Awareness Month was, 'It's not a disability but a different ability.' The curriculum is well planned to help pupils to develop their independence. It prepares them well for the next stage of life.
- The outdoor education programme gives pupils a good awareness of the local environment. Pupils say how much they enjoy developing their map-reading and woodworking skills. They talk proudly about the flower containers they have made for the school entrance. During the inspection, pupils were building raised beds to grow vegetables. Pupils enjoy visits by experts who teach them how to handle animals. Pupils then use these skills when looking after the school guinea pigs and budgies.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders understand which areas are still left to develop. However, criteria to judge whether the actions have had a positive impact are not clear.
- Middle leaders are starting to make a contribution to the school's effectiveness. Those with responsibilities for English and mathematics fulfil their roles well. The impact of middle leaders in subjects such as information technology, art and design, and the humanities is still developing. The main reason for this is that staff are new in post.
- Leaders recognise that training for staff in SEN and/or disabilities is still ongoing. They are seeking to work with other similar schools so that staff can broaden their range of experience. The school has already started to put this in place.

Governance

- The directors are passionate about the well-being of each pupil. They have considerable experience in corporate governance and child protection. They monitor rigorously aspects related to pupils' welfare, attendance and personal development.

- The directors are mindful that there is no one with education expertise on the board. They addressed this by commissioning an independent education review. The information provided gave directors a clear overview of the educational provision. However, school leaders do not provide directors with regular information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, directors are hampered in holding the school to account for these aspects.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All pupils, including those attending the alternative provision, are safe. This is because leaders ensure that safeguarding is the school's key priority. All parents who responded to Parent View consider that their child is safe at this school.
- Staff have been well trained in a range of safeguarding issues, including the signs and symptoms of neglect. Activities for trips are risk assessed carefully. Arrangements for checking and recording the suitability of staff meet statutory requirements.
- The school has a safeguarding policy that is published on its website. It is fully compliant with the current government requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is strong. There are strong and supportive relationships within the new staff team. Those who responded to the Ofsted staff questionnaire clearly enjoy their work. They feel valued and well supported by senior leaders.
- Teachers understand the needs of pupils well. They check pupils' understanding by careful questioning. Pupils say that they do well because the 'staff really care about us here'.
- The school has accurate assessment procedures. The majority of pupils have been out of education for many months before they start at New Barn School. As a result, they often have significant gaps in their learning. Staff accurately identify these gaps. They work with leaders to ensure that each pupil has the right level of work to meet their needs.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' reading skills. Those who need to catch up receive effective support. Older pupils are able to talk about the different types of books that they enjoy reading.
- Staff constantly encourage pupils. Teachers give pupils the confidence to develop their writing skills. Books show that when pupils first arrive they often have negative attitudes because of earlier failures. Due to effective teaching pupils rapidly start to improve their skills.
- Mathematics is well taught. Pupils learn to reason out their answers carefully. They practise real-life problem solving in subjects such as outdoor education. For example, pupils realised that they needed to know the number of degrees in a right-angled triangle when they were cutting wood.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents who were spoken to during the inspection, or who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, said that their children learn well at this school. They say that one of the reasons for this is that staff give their children the confidence to try new experiences.
- Pastoral support is strong. Staff get to know each pupil quickly. They are aware of any potential triggers that may affect learning or behaviour. Therapeutic provision, such as play therapy, provides useful support to some pupils.
- The school provides an effective programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss sensitive issues within a caring environment. For example, pupils understand about the negative effects of smoking.
- School councillors develop a strong sense of responsibility. Recently, they have been instrumental in deciding on the healthy options at lunchtime.
- Impartial careers guidance helps pupils to start to think about the future and the different paths they might follow. Pupils learn to follow instructions and how to keep safe during work-experience opportunities.
- There is close liaison between school and the alternative provision. Staff from this school accompany those who attend Plumpton College. This helps school leaders to be confident that pupils' attendance, pastoral support and educational provision are good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, behaviour is well managed. Pupils work hard and are proud of the work they produce. School records show that there are few incidents. Around the school, pupils treat each other with respect and courtesy.
- Staff, parents and pupils agree that pupils behave well. Pupils settle into school routines quickly. Any behavioural issues are quickly tackled, with staff gently reminding pupils about the school's expectations.
- Pupils' attendance at their previous schools has been low. Some have not attended school for over a year. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils want to come to this school. They have done this by having an interesting curriculum and providing a caring environment. Attendance levels are now approaching the national average.
- There have been some fixed-term exclusions since the school opened. However, incidents reduce rapidly the longer a pupil is at the school. This shows the effectiveness of the school's behaviour policy.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. This is because staff provide the right level of work to meet their individual needs. Older pupils, including those

in the sixth form, develop a growing sense of confidence in themselves as learners. As a result, they are able to successfully complete a range of accreditations. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment.

- Pupils often enter the school with very limited writing skills. Pupils' books show that some pupils can only write a few words when they start. Due to effective guidance and support, pupils become more proficient writers.
- Younger pupils are able to use their phonics skills effectively to read difficult words. Older pupils develop the skills to read with expression and using the correct intonation. They are able to explain key themes in the books they are reading. For example, when reading the book 'An Inspector Calls', pupils talked knowledgeably about poverty in Victorian times.
- Many pupils develop a good understanding of mathematical operations, such as addition and multiplication. Books show that once these skills have been developed, pupils successfully apply them, for example when adding or multiplying fractions. Mathematical skills of problem solving and reasoning are developed effectively.
- School records and work in their books show that pupils are making expected progress in science. Many are starting to think scientifically, for example they can make predictions based on their scientific understanding.
- Pupils develop good skills in food technology. They understand how to follow a recipe and measure and combine ingredients. Pupils enjoy making cakes and cookies.
- Sport has a high priority at the school, and pupils make good use of the indoor and outdoor facilities. They enjoy representing the school in football tournaments. Pupils do well in swimming. Most pupils are now confident in the water.

School details

Unique reference number	143400
DfE registration number	938/6002
Inspection number	10044148

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	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Proprietor	Treehouse Educare Ltd
Chair	Amanda Rogers
Principal	Simon Reynolds
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,000–£60,000
Telephone number	01403 289606
Website	newbarnschool.co.uk
Email address	info@treehouseeducare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- New Barn School is an independent day school for girls and boys aged between seven and 19 years of age. All pupils have an education, health and care plan related to autistic spectrum disorders and associated difficulties.
- The school opened in January 2017. This is the school's first standard inspection. It is registered for 34 pupils; currently there are 19 pupils on roll between Year 3 and Year 13. Most pupils have only been at the school for this academic year. At the time of the inspection, there were too few pupils in key stage 5 to report on without them being identified.
- The school's aims are to inspire and engage learners through a range of positive learning experiences in a safe and caring environment.

- The school is situated in a rural location. There are specialist facilities for art and design, science, music, woodwork and food technology. There are indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The school has an outdoor learning provision.
- Therapeutic staff visit the school regularly. These include an art psychotherapist, a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school uses one alternative provider called Plumpton College in East Sussex.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes. She talked to pupils about their work and looked in their books. There was a meeting with pupils to ascertain their views of the school. The inspector also observed a meeting of the school council. Some pupils read to the inspector.
- Meetings were held with the principal, vice-principal and other staff. Discussions were held with two of the directors of Treehouse Educare Ltd, including the chair of the board.
- In order to check compliance with the independent school standards, the inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including information on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- There were informal discussions with parents at the end of the school day. The views of 15 parents who had responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, together with one email. Staff views were gathered through meetings and the 18 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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