

Break Through

121 Nuxley Road, Belvedere, Bexley, Kent DA17 5JX

Inspection dates

19–21 June 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and continues to improve. Leaders have ensured that the requirements of the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher and proprietors have a clear vision and strong approaches for school improvement, which they are implementing effectively.
- Leaders and proprietors know their school well. They have a clear understanding of strengths and priorities for improvement.
- Staff provide good support for pupils. Many of these pupils have high-level needs, are vulnerable and have been excluded from other schools.
- Teachers are skilful in breaking down information for pupils and supporting them to manage their learning. Pupils make good progress as a result.
- Pupils who have previously experienced long periods out of school have improved their attendance and commitment to learning.
- Most pupils make good progress in addressing gaps in their learning in English and mathematics at the school.
- The school provides a safe environment, and all staff work effectively to safeguard the welfare of pupils.
- Pupils behave well. They respect staff and each other, and the school environment and they are proud of the work they produce.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum since the previous inspection. A wider range of subjects and additional experiences are now provided. Leaders are determined to improve this further through their links with local providers.
- The use of assessment to evaluate pupils' progress across the curriculum is not well developed.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable in all their subjects.
- Teachers do not use questioning skills consistently well to assess and develop pupils' understanding.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in different subjects.

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 teaching, learning and assessment, and raise achievement by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that all teachers use questioning to develop and consolidate pupils' understanding in lessons
 - making sure that most-able pupils are challenged by work that is suitably demanding in all their subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - implementing plans for recording and evaluating assessment information to strengthen school leaders' understanding of pupils' progress in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders know their school well. They take an honest, objective and accurate view of their work. This enables them to comply with the independent school standards. Leaders' perceptive self-evaluation enables them to identify the key areas for improvement. Consequently, leaders tackle weaknesses quickly and decisively.
- Leaders have created a strong team that works with pupils at the school. The combination of qualified teachers, well-trained teaching assistants, youth workers and language therapists works well. Staff know what is needed to help these pupils succeed. As a result, pupils who have previously been unable to work in other schools settle down to make good progress in a supportive environment.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum since the previous inspection. The quality of English and mathematics provision has improved and is reflected in higher outcomes. A wider range of subjects enrich pupils' learning, for example through art, coding and cultural studies. Well-taught programmes in social skills and well-being provide pupils with plentiful opportunities to reflect on their personal goals and relationships. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The school keeps good records of pupils' individual needs. Education, health and care (EHC) plans for those who require them are well documented and carefully followed. Records of each pupil's behaviour and starting points are clear, and provide a reliable basis for discussion of their academic and social progress. Strong leadership ensures that pupils' individual needs are catered for well.
- Leaders assess, monitor and track pupils' improvements in behaviour. They analyse behaviour patterns with a view to understanding pupils' needs. This enables them to be supportive to individual pupils and the teaching staff.
- Parents and carers spoken to are very supportive of the school and value the quality of education provided. One parent remarked, 'If it wasn't for this school, my son would be a total mess!'
- The school has good relationships with the relevant external agencies. Leaders are well regarded by the local authority team which places pupils in their care.
- The school promotes well the British values of tolerance, respect and the rule of law. For example, pupils visit the House of Commons and role play the process of supporting or rejecting a particular law. Discrimination is not tolerated in the school and is explored fully.
- Leaders have put in place assessment procedures to ensure that pupils' progress is effectively monitored and recorded in English and mathematics. Consequently, they know pupils' starting points and how much progress they make in these subjects. However, assessment in other subjects is not well developed. As a result, leaders have less information about gaps in pupils' previous knowledge and skills.
- The school has applied to the Department for Education to increase its registration number by an additional five pupils to 25. The school has a garage, which is part of the leased building, with strong foundations and is currently used to store equipment. The

proprietors have plans in place to convert the garage into an additional learning space. The school is likely to continue to meet all of the independent school standards if the request for a material change is approved.

Governance

- Two directors who are also the proprietors provide the governance of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's work and of pupils' progress and achievement. The directors use this information effectively to provide challenge and support to the school and to hold leaders to account.
- The directors believe that the school has an integral role in equipping pupils for life after school, and helping them to become good citizens. Governance has made good progress in improving the quality of provision based on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
- Although much progress has been made since the previous inspection, the directors acknowledge that more remains to be done. They understand, for example, that assessment is not yet strong enough across the curriculum and elements of teaching need further improvement. The directors work closely with the headteacher to implement these improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are appropriately trained, and checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children are up to date and comprehensive. Staff are guided by the school's safeguarding policy, and quizzed by leaders to assess their understanding. The policy is written in accordance with the latest guidance, and contains all necessary information.
- Staff are vigilant, and have a clear understanding of potential indications of abuse. Their close knowledge of pupils is important in recognising changes in pupils' mood or attitudes. Where pupils have been at risk of child sexual exploitation or involvement with gangs, effective work with specialist agencies helps pupils to stay free from harm.
- The culture of support which has been established in the school ensures that pupils trust staff and feel able to share their concerns. Good training ensures that staff know how to keep pupils safe, so that all aspects of their welfare and safety are assured.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers care deeply about pupils' personal well-being and educational progress. Relationships between pupils and staff are based on mutual respect. All of this helps pupils to work steadily and make good progress.
- Staff create a calm learning environment that supports pupils to sustain their attention. When pupils find learning hard, staff break down the problem into smaller parts, which makes it easier for pupils tackle their work. As a result, pupils are able to build on their previous learning.
- Staff provide each pupil with a personal timetable tailored to their individual needs. Staff understand the barriers to learning previously experienced by pupils, and help them to

learn in ways that suit them individually. As a result, most pupils make much stronger progress than previously.

- Teachers plan effective lessons. They make the objectives of the lesson clear to pupils and guide them systematically through appropriate tasks and activities. This helps them achieve. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils with low attainment improved their understanding of how to add mixed numbers. In art, pupils honed their skills in using the technique of tonal shading to draw three-dimensional objects.
- Most pupils accept guidance from their teachers and are willing to persevere and improve their work. Staff expect pupils to engage and respond, and are mostly successful in achieving the desired outcomes.
- Teachers use illustrations to explain concepts, and everyday examples to aid pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities develop confidence in and engage in learning.
- Teachers' questioning skills are not consistently effective across the curriculum. This results in teachers sometimes not knowing how much pupils have understood and when is the right time to move on.
- Some of the most able pupils are studying a few GCSE courses and making reasonable progress from their starting points. However, they are not stretched and challenged enough in lessons, for example in science.
- Teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on the development of reasoning and thinking skills across the curriculum. Consequently, this aspect of pupils' development is weaker.

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 well looked after by staff, who have their best interests at heart. Pupils, who can be wary of placing their trust in adults because of negative past experiences, speak positively of staff at the school. They know staff work hard for them.
- Pupils are provided with good support to meet their social, emotional and behavioural needs. For example, the social skills programme and other therapies help pupils to reflect on how they feel and find solutions to problems.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying in the school and if it does happen, 'it's sorted out quickly'. Partly as a result of this safe culture, pupils feel able to express their individuality. This helps build their confidence and self-esteem.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the deeper meaning of everyday events. For example, in a careers education session, pupils learned about the negative impact of prejudice in the workplace, and what can be done to combat it.
- Pupils receive good guidance to help them with their next steps after school. Staff understand how important it is for pupils to have goals and realistic plans once they leave school. Staff ensure that guidance matches pupils' aspirations and abilities. As a result, almost all pupils go on to study appropriate courses in local colleges of further education.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are mindful of each other when moving around the building, and often show consideration when sharing resources.
- The school has a behaviour policy in place, which staff apply consistently. It carefully balances a range of rewards and sanctions in an effort to get the best from pupils. As a result, the school is mostly a calm, orderly place. When incidents of poor behaviour do occur, they are dealt with appropriately, in accordance with the policy.
- Staff are determined in their efforts to reduce absence. They use various approaches, including working with the educational welfare officer, to improve attendance. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance in different ways. Conversely, leaders are not afraid to apply sanctions when necessary, such as penalty fines. They have to work hard to combat the impact of pupils' poor attendance at previous schools. The school's information shows that attendance and punctuality have improved this year, although there remains further work to do.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects demonstrates that most pupils make good progress over time. This is because of the effective support for the social, emotional and academic development of pupils that is provided by the dedicated staff.
- Pupils join the school with knowledge and skills that are typically below that expected for their age and phase of education. By the end of Year 11, many pupils achieve functional skills accreditation in English, mathematics and science. This year, several pupils have taken GCSEs in these subjects, and an additional accreditation in information and communication technology. Almost all pupils go on to achieve the ASDAN and Duke of Edinburgh awards. Through a range of outdoor activities, for example camping, pupils build their resilience, navigation and leadership skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and verbal communication skills. This is because staff ensure that pupils practise these skills frequently in lessons, supported by useful verbal feedback on how to improve.
- Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good because support is tailored to need on an individual basis. Resources are used well, for example to secure external support such as speech and language therapy. This range of support ensures that pupils make strong personal and academic progress.
- Some pupils lack basic social skills when they join the school. During the time they are at the school, staff successfully teach pupils to become better citizens and make a contribution to wider society. Pupils learn to become more tolerant, understanding and respectful of others' differences. They understand the importance of achieving qualifications to help them secure work.
- Some pupils, in particular the most able, do not learn as much as they could in lessons because they do not get enough opportunities to apply their reasoning skills in different subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	140039
DfE registration number	303/6001
Inspection number	10035811

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	Day special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietors	Susanne Jones and Lorraine Wetherilt
Headteacher	Charmaine Ayisi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£17,550 to £28,860
Telephone number	01322 440049
Website	www.breakthroughschool.co.uk
Email address	breakthrough@ie-informaeducation.org
Date of previous inspection	18–20 June 2014

Information about this school

- Break Through is a day special school, located in the Belvedere area of the London Borough of Bexley.
- It is registered to provide education for up to 20 boys and girls aged from 11 to 17 years who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Pupils have typically been permanently excluded from placing schools or have refused to attend school. A number have been out of school for significant periods before placement at Break Through.
- There are currently 19 pupils on roll, 4 of whom attend part time. Twelve pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Some pupils are dual roll, but the majority are registered solely with the school. No pupil

attends other alternative provision for all or part of the time.

- The school aims to ensure that 'every young person should experience a broad, coherent curriculum that is focused on their individual needs and is designed to develop skills for learning, life and work'.
- Recently, the school applied to the Department for Education to extend the number on roll from 20 to 25. This request for a material change was given consideration as a part of the current inspection.
- The two directors are also the proprietors of the provision. The headteacher has been in post since January 2018.
- This is the school's second inspection since its registration as an independent school in August 2013.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and the two directors (proprietors), all of whom comprise the leadership team.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in many lessons, in academic and practical subjects. A few sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Separate meetings were held with a teacher and a group of pupils.
- The inspector carried out scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects. He also held a meeting with three parents. There were insufficient responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. No responses were received from staff.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including: the school improvement plan; analysis of the school's performance data; information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils; safeguarding and child protection records; and the school's admissions register and risk assessment documentation.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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