

Brantwood Specialist School

1 Kenwood Bank, Nether Edge, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S7 1NU

Inspection dates

15 to 17 January 2019

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
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and managers ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- The trustees and the proprietor are passionate about ensuring that the school is a safe place for pupils and that pupils enjoy gaining new skills and knowledge.
- Pupils, including those in the sixth form, make good progress across a range of subjects.
- Pupils behave well. They learn to control their unwanted behaviours and are proud of their ability to do so.
- Not all pupils have access to high-quality careers advice.
- Senior leaders are currently judging pupils' progress termly and annually. While this is useful, it does not plot pupils' achievements from their initial starting points.
- Leaders have a very accurate assessment of what is done well in the school and what needs to improve. Consequently, they are able to positively influence the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders ensure that a rich, experiential curriculum motivates pupils to learn and supports their good personal development.
- Teachers build learning activities around the needs of individual pupils.
- At times, the expectations of what pupils can achieve is too low. This level of expectation is reflected in some teachers' planning and in their questioning of pupils during lessons.
- Pupils learn a great deal in the various craft activities. The skills and knowledge they learn, however, are not well captured to show their achievements, particularly in science.

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:
 - clearly identifying how far pupils have come from their academic, emotional and behavioural starting points, and use this information more successfully to aid school improvement
 - ensuring that pupils' achievements and learning in science are captured more accurately
 - improving the planning of careers support for pupils so that they benefit from more valuable and impartial careers advice.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that more teachers:
 - have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, and that this is reflected in their planning and learning objectives
 - use questioning successfully to help improve pupils' progress and extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and executive headteacher work extremely well together. They share a vision for excellence which is communicated well to other members of the senior leadership team. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Staff who made their views known feel well supported by the leadership team. They recognise that the school is well-led and managed and that the regular opportunities for training help them to help pupils in reaching their full potential.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the work that the school does to help their child. During the inspection, parents commented that the headteacher is 'inspirational', the staff 'amazing' and that their children are 'thriving' at the school.
- Adults carefully plan a good personal and social curriculum so that pupils learn about different cultures, religions and British values. Pupils have valuable discussions about equality and law, for example in hypothetical scenarios involving the theme of protected characteristics.
- Pupils have access to an exciting and exceptional curriculum. They learn through a range of craft activities, such as working with different metals to create jewellery and calculating angles and joints when working with wood. The knowledge and skills pupils gain in these hands-on activities, particularly scientific knowledge, are not recorded well.
- Senior leaders hold regular pupils' progress meetings with teaching staff. These ensure that any pupil who is not making good or better progress is identified and supported appropriately. However, the information about pupils' progress does not show how well pupils are progressing from their starting points. Consequently, pupils' achievements over time are not being analysed.

Governance

- The trustees and the proprietor are very much involved in, and well informed about, all aspects of school life. They receive regular updates from the student engagement manager about the behaviour of pupils in school and detailed termly reports from the headteacher.
- Trustees and the proprietor arrange for regular quality assurance visits to take place at the school so that they can hold the headteacher to account. This ensures that all the independent school standards are consistently met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective as the safeguarding manager ensures that safeguarding is a priority.
- Staff training and induction processes are thorough. The safeguarding manager follows up on adults' understanding of safeguarding and of their responsibilities to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The safeguarding manager leads a large safeguarding team of well-trained staff. He

ensures that records of incidents are fit for purpose and works with other professionals appropriately.

- The proprietor and trustees hold the safeguarding manager to account through regular reporting and auditing arrangements. They also ensure that the safeguarding policy, which takes into account current government requirements, and other information regarding child protection, is available on the school website for parents and other stakeholders, such as local authorities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers build good and trusting relationships with pupils which help pupils feel more confident about returning to learning and feeling safe about how to cope should they possibly make mistakes.
- Teachers plan learning around pupils' individual interests and adapt reading texts and activities to maintain their interest in learning.
- Teachers ensure that targets set in pupils' individual education, health and care plans are considered. They work well with other professionals, including clinical staff, to meet pupils' needs.
- Teachers ensure that pupils learn effectively, using creative hands-on learning. For example, key stage 2 pupils learned academic, social and physical skills while throwing a ball of wool to each other across the classroom. They made a spider's web while answering questions as they caught the wool.
- Teaching assistants work alongside pupils well. They accurately judge when they need to give pupils an opportunity to work by themselves, and when there is a need to support.
- Sometimes teachers do not use questioning well to encourage pupils into learning to a greater depth.
- Teacher's planning shows that their expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers introduce topics so that pupils can, for example, discuss and learn about protected characteristics and then lead into sensitive topics, such as the holocaust. These opportunities foster pupils' good personal development as they learn about the beliefs and lifestyles of others.
- Pupils are educated well on how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, while learning about different relationships and friendships, teachers raise important issues such as child sexual exploitation and cyberbullying. Pupils are also very knowledgeable about the need for safe practices when working in relatively hazardous environments.
- Pupils say they feel safe, and they regularly have conversations with staff when they are worried or feel anxious. Pupils say that staff listen to them and have helped them cope

with different emotions, such as anger.

- Pupils speak confidently and proudly about how their self-esteem has grown and how they have become peer mentors, guiding and supporting other pupils.
- The pathways coordinator arranges a programme of support and advice to help pupils make choices relating to their future. This advice is not always valuable, as it is given after some choices have already been made or does not give pupils enough information to help them make choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good as is demonstrated by the behaviour seen around the school at different times of the day.
- Pupils are polite to visitors and speak articulately and sensibly to them about their opinions of the school. Most of the pupils responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire. The majority of their responses were positive and 68% of them said that they enjoyed school most or all of the time.
- The behaviour manager ensures that all incidents are recorded and actions are taken to learn from any unwanted behaviours. He monitors all behaviours meticulously. He is therefore able to identify trends and the improvements in behaviour, particularly in the last academic year.
- The headteacher rarely excludes pupils from school, and therefore rates of exclusion are very low. Overall, pupil attendance is below the national average. However, one third of pupils have made substantial improvements in their school attendance as they had previously been out of education for a considerable period of time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in English and mathematics. Seventy-five per cent of key stage 2 pupils made strong progress in these subjects during the last academic year.
- Pupils' work in books and assessment information demonstrate good or better progress across all year groups in a range of subjects. In English, pupils' work shows how they carefully draft and review their work, and the final product demonstrates the success of this strategy in promoting good progress.
- In mathematics, some pupils in key stages 3 and 4 make strong progress. Many pupils learn mathematics while completing tasks, such as making windows when at the outdoor Eyam site. This growing knowledge and confidence improves their mathematics work in the classroom environment.
- Pupils learn good enterprise and business skills as they create and consider profit margins for exceptional pieces of work, such as outdoor tables, benches and planters.
- Pupils have access to libraries at both the Tintagel and the main school site. They are also introduced to a range of texts, such as *Skellig* by David Almond and the *Marvel Characters*. This has led to some good-quality work, for example in pupils interviewing characters. This, and the use of a systematic phonics scheme for some pupils, has enabled them to make good progress in their reading skills.

- Pupils have made excellent progress in a range of subjects, such as in Japanese and playing the guitar in music. Pupils' individualised curriculum allows them to follow their interests and have the potential to achieve their aspirations, for example to go on to study engineering at a Japanese university.
- Pupils gain good scientific knowledge and skills while working with raw materials at the outdoor centre and in craft lessons. However, school assessment information indicates that pupils make poor progress in science. This is because this learning is not being captured accurately.

Sixth-form provision

Good

- Overall, pupils in the sixth form make good progress, particularly in mathematics, where 78% of pupils made strong progress during the past academic year.
- Pupils are well prepared when they leave Brantwood, with six of the seven pupils who left in the last two academic years attaining certificates in accredited qualifications. Some pupils have also moved on to study degree qualifications at further education establishments.
- A substantial majority of pupils who leave the school carry on successfully in their chosen field of study.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They listen and respond intently in discussions, for example when considering the views of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Their discussions are mature and thoughtful.
- Teachers in the sixth form build good relationships with pupils. However, as with other teachers in the school, they do not always question pupils skilfully and successfully in order to foster deeper thought and learning. At times, their expectations are too low.
- The deputy head teacher, who leads the sixth form, works closely with the headteacher and executive headteacher in identifying strengths and weaknesses to foster school improvement. Along with other strategies, the introduction of a new library and new texts at the Tintagel site have been a response to disappointing progress made in English last academic year.
- Pupils benefit from impartial careers advice. However, the timing and quality of this guidance could be improved.
- All of the pupils currently in the sixth form have already gained functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics and have taken part in work experience. This enables them to be better prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	136936
DfE registration number	373/6002
Inspection number	10055379

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Aonghus Gordon
Chair	Mr Aonghus Gordon
Headteacher	Ms Caroline Bell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,000–£121,000
Telephone number	0114 258 9062
Website	www.rmt.org
Email address	enquiries@brantwood.rmt.org
Date of previous inspection	2 to 4 February 2016

Information about this school

- Brantwood Specialist School is part of the Ruskin Mill Trust Group. It is registered to accept up to 50 children between the ages of 7 and 19 years.
- There are currently 30 pupils on roll. All pupils have a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan. All pupils have been referred to the school by one of four local authorities and have social, emotional or mental health difficulties or

have an autistic spectrum diagnosis.

- Learning takes place for pupils at three sites: Brantwood main school, Tintagel House and Eyam Edge. The Brantwood and Tintagel sites have large outdoor areas and Eyam Edge is outdoor provision.
- The school does not use any other alternative provision.
- The school seeks to rebuild pupils' engagement in learning and grow within a holistic, inclusive educational framework with the practical curriculum at its heart. Its aims are grounded in the approach of the educationalist Rudolph Steiner and the principles of John Ruskin and William Morris.
- The school was previously inspected in February 2016, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The inspector met with all members of the senior management team during the inspection.
- The inspector observed lessons and looked at pupils' work in their books in all subjects with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the executive headteacher.
- The inspector held a meeting with the proprietor, a member of the board of trustees and with an independent consultant.
- The inspector spoke with pupils informally during the school day and observed behaviour throughout the school day.
- Sixteen responses to Parent View and the Ofsted online parent text service were received. Twenty-eight responses to the staff questionnaire were received and 22 pupils' responses to the pupils' questionnaire. All these views were considered.
- The inspector toured the school's buildings at the main site and Tintagel, inside and out, to check whether the relevant independent school standards are met and that pupils' welfare is taken into account.
- A range of documentation was examined by the inspector, including policies, the record of safeguarding checks and other safeguarding documentation. All documents relating to the independent school standards were studied and their implementation and effectiveness considered.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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