

The Brighton Waldorf School

Roedean Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 5RA

Inspection dates

5–7 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and trustees have an over-generous view of the quality of education the school provides.
- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and learning because their monitoring is ineffective.
- Teachers do not plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils. Consequently, pupils' progress in a range of subjects is not strong enough.
- Teachers do not receive timely advice about how to improve their practice, because leaders do not monitor their work well enough.
- Although leaders track pupils' absence well and follow up when they have concerns, pupils' rates of attendance are too low.
- Some pupils have poor attitudes to learning because teaching does not inspire or enthuse them.
- New systems to track pupils' progress are underdeveloped.
- Trustees' monitoring of improvement and development planning is ineffective. They do not hold leaders to account for the quality of education the school provides.
- Staff do not deal with poor behaviour in a consistent manner. As a result, disruptive behaviour has a negative effect on learning.
- Although there are some strengths in the school's curriculum, it does not meet the needs of pupils well enough. Consequently, pupils' outcomes are inadequate.
- Support staff are not utilised effectively to develop pupils' learning.
- Leaders and those in positions of governance have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed principal has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders are beginning to address the school's weaknesses, but it is too soon to see the impact of their work.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils' welfare, health and safety have a high priority at the school.
- Children get off to a good start in the kindergarten classes in early years.
- Most parents and carers have a positive view of the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve systems to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that leaders:
 - have a clearer understanding of the quality of teaching and the way that this affects pupils' outcomes over time
 - have access to an effective system to monitor the progress pupils are making
 - are better able to hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make
 - can provide teachers with timely and effective advice about how to improve their practice.
- Improve the way trustees hold school leaders to account, by:
 - developing trustees' knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly of the quality of teaching and how this supports pupils' progress
 - establishing a more formal approach to monitoring the impact of improvement and development planning.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan learning that takes into account pupils' different starting points
 - have high expectations of the progress pupils can make, including the progress of most-able pupils
 - have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and engagement in learning, both in and out of classrooms
 - utilise support staff more effectively.
- Ensure that the curriculum is designed and adapted to enable pupils to make strong progress across all phases of the school.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and those in positions of governance have not ensured that the school has improved since the last inspection. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate and not all the independent school standards are met.
- The principal and other senior leaders have a vision for the school which is not yet realised. They know that the quality of education offered by the school needs to improve rapidly. Recent changes in the leadership and management structure of the school have enabled the first steps to be taken to address current weaknesses.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and the impact this has on pupils' outcomes is ineffective. This means that teachers are not held to account for their work in classrooms. Nor are they offered timely advice on how to improve their practice.
- Processes to assess pupils' progress and attainment are underdeveloped. A new monitoring system has been introduced recently. It is too soon to judge what impact this is having on helping teachers to plan learning, or for leaders to monitor pupils' outcomes.
- While the curriculum has some strengths, it does not ensure that pupils make enough progress across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is served well by the curriculum. Older pupils are able to debate complex matters that challenge their views on political, emotional and moral issues. Pupils' understanding of world history, religions and different cultures is also supported well.
- Pupils are positive about the enrichment and extra-curricular activities staff plan for them. These include residential trips and visits into the local community to support their learning, linked to their main lessons. Pupils' immersion in the arts, including music and drama, is also a strength of the curriculum.
- Despite weaknesses in their academic outcomes, pupils are generally well prepared for life in modern Britain. Their understanding of equalities is strong. Differences are understood and celebrated. Discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils understand the concept of rules and the need for laws. Democracy, tolerance and contributing positively to wider society are all values that they understand and aspire to.

Governance

- Those in positions of governance do not hold leaders to account adequately for the quality of education in the school. The trustees, who collectively act as the proprietary body, do not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Trustees' monitoring of the school's development and improvement planning is weak. They do not have a strong grasp of the key areas that need to be improved. This is particularly the case regarding the quality of teaching and the impact this has on pupils' outcomes.
- Trustees have recently approved changes in the leadership structure of the school. They understand that rapid improvement needs to be made. Other aspects of their work have

ensured that the school provides a safe environment and the welfare, health and safety of pupils are given a high priority.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that staff are trained appropriately. All staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard children.
- Policies, procedures and systems to keep pupils safe are fit for purpose. This includes the safeguarding policy, which follows current guidance and is published on the school's website.
- Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about safeguarding. Partnerships with outside agencies are well developed. Staff feel that pupils are safe at the school.
- Parents who talked to inspectors and those who completed Ofsted's online parent questionnaire were positive about the care staff afford their children. Pupils say that they feel that the school is a safe place for them to be, but that some pupils do not behave as well as they might.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate because too many teachers do not routinely take into account pupils' different starting points. Too often, teaching is uninspiring and pitched at the wrong level. When this is the case, learning slows, and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' expectations of the progress pupils can make are not consistently high enough. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, who are not provided with appropriate levels of challenge.
- On occasion, teachers do not make clear enough what they expect pupils to do. This leads to pupils becoming confused and frustrated, and their learning slows or stops altogether.
- When teaching does not engage and motivate them, pupils become disengaged with learning. In some classrooms, this leads to off-task or disruptive behaviour, which has a negative effect on the learning of other pupils.
- Although provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is generally strong, teachers do not use support staff well enough. Classroom visits showed that often, support staff are merely passive observers who play little role in supporting pupils' learning.
- Because leaders do not routinely provide teachers with good-quality feedback about teaching and learning, teachers are unaware of the weaknesses in their practice. Nor are some of the strengths in teaching acknowledged or shared for the benefit of others.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers constantly assess pupils' progress and provide additional support or challenge during lessons. Some teaching in the school is inspirational and meets the needs of pupils very well. When this is the case, staff have high expectations, use questioning well and constantly remind pupils of what they are

learning and why.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mixed. When teaching inspires and motivates pupils, their engagement in learning is strong. However, too much teaching leads to passive or negative attitudes because expectations are not high enough.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is supported well by the nurturing culture of the school. This is also the case for pupils with SEND. The family ethos and close communication between staff and parents also help support pupils with their social and emotional development. Parents particularly welcome this aspect of the school's provision.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe in and out of school through the daily curriculum. Older pupils are particularly aware of how to stay safe when using social media. Younger pupils are less aware of the potential dangers when using the internet, although they have basic knowledge about not sharing passwords or personal details online, for instance.
- Pupils say that bullying does happen in the school. Although they report that staff do try to deal with this, some pupils are not confident that this stops the same problem re-occurring in some cases.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils are generally polite and welcoming to visitors, lapses in their behaviour in classrooms and as they move around the school are not rare.
- In some classrooms, low-level disruptive behaviour has a negative effect on learning. Inspectors' classroom visits and their discussions with pupils showed this to be the case. Often, pupils are simply being 'silly' in front of their friends. However, teachers do not deal with this in a consistent manner, leading to poor behaviour that most pupils disapprove of.
- Although leaders monitor attendance well, rates of absence are too high. Despite the fact that some pupils have valid reasons for being absent, leaders know that their work to improve attendance requires renewed focus if rates of absence are to reduce further.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate because too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is true across all phases of the school, other than in early years, where children make good progress.
- Scrutiny of current pupils' work during classroom visits showed that many of the tasks set for pupils do not take their starting points into account. This was further confirmed in a separate scrutiny of books in the presence of school leaders. Teachers' expectations are not high enough. This is especially the case with most-able pupils.

- The principal has recently introduced a new system to monitor pupils' outcomes in mathematics and English. Teachers are beginning to use this to track progress and attainment over time. The system also enables staff to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. At the time of the inspection, it was not possible to judge how effective this system is.
- GCSE outcomes in 2018 were disappointing. Too many pupils failed to achieve their predicted grades. For some, this meant that their next steps in education were not as expected or intended.
- While outcomes are inadequate, there are some strengths in current pupils' work in the arts. This is entirely due to the better quality of teaching in subjects such as art, drama and music.
- There are too few pupils in the school to compare the school's outcomes at the end of key stage 4 with those of other schools nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- Provision in early years is good. Staff are knowledgeable and well led. They know the children in their care very well and cater for their individual needs successfully.
- Parents are very positive about the education their children receive in early years. Staffing is stable in the four mixed-age kindergarten groups. Expectations of children's behaviour are high. Older children are encouraged to set an example and share their experiences with their younger peers, leading to a calm, safe and nurturing environment.
- Despite exemptions from some aspects of the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage, children make good progress with their language and communication skills. Teachers are successful at modelling language throughout the day in structured activities both in and out of the classroom.
- Social interaction is strong. Staff are skilled at answering questions, while encouraging children to explain or reason for themselves, following the principles of Waldorf Steiner education of minimal direct teacher input.
- Shared experiences, such as counting pips or seeds in fruit at snack time, enable children to think and imagine for themselves, while developing a sense of number through real-life experience.
- Children's artistic skills are developed well here. Role play and experiencing different aspects of learning about the world around them through music and dance help to build their confidence. This also has a positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development, which is catered for well in this setting.

School details

Unique reference number	114661
DfE registration number	846/6016
Inspection number	10094398

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 school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Brighton Steiner (Waldorf) School Council of Trustees
Chair	Thais Bishop
Principal	Damian Mooncie
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,900 to £6,960
Telephone number	01273 386300
Website	www.brightonwaldorfschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@brightonwaldorfschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–13 October 2016

Information about this school

- The school's last standard inspection took place in October 2016. This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service, an approved inspectorate. At this inspection, the quality of education provided by the school was judged to require improvement. The provision and procedures to ensure pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety were found to be inadequate. A number of independent school standards were also not met.
- The school was subject to a progress monitoring inspection in March 2017. This inspection was also carried out by the School Inspection Service. At this inspection, all previously unmet independent school standards were judged to have been met.

- Brighton Waldorf School is a co-educational, independent school for pupils aged two to 16. It adheres to the International Waldorf Steiner curriculum developed by the Austrian philosopher Dr Rudolf Steiner.
- The school has an approved exemption from some aspects of the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out a number of classroom visits during the inspection. All classroom visits were accompanied by school leaders. During classroom visits, inspectors observed teaching and learning, assessed the quality of pupils' work, and talked to them about the progress that they were making.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in classrooms and as they moved around the school. This included at the start and finish of the school day, at break- and lunchtime, and during an assembly.
- Inspectors conducted a separate scrutiny of pupils' work in the presence of school leaders. An inspector also heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the chair of trustees, who also represented the proprietor, and two representative groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with an officer of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents in the playground at the start of days two and three of the inspection. Inspectors considered the 23 replies to Ofsted's parent survey and accompanying free-text messages. Inspectors also considered the online pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, records and policies, including those regarding safeguarding and other aspects of the independent school standards. Minutes of trustees' meetings, the school's own self-evaluation, improvement and development planning, and information about pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance were also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clive Dunn

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils, self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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