

# Springboard Education

55 South Street, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8AN

## Inspection dates

14–16 May 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and proprietors have not addressed fully enough the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection.
- Variations in the quality of teaching and in teachers' expectations mean that pupils do not achieve as well as they should, including the most able pupils.
- Teachers and support staff have not received the direction and guidance needed to enable them to develop their practice.
- Until very recently, leaders' aspirations for the school have lacked sufficient ambition.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn about different careers and to develop work-related skills are underdeveloped.
- The school meets all the independent school standards. However, some procedures, including staff appraisal, have not been used effectively to secure improvements in teaching and learning.
- Teachers and leaders have not used information about pupils' learning and achievement well enough since the previous inspection to secure pupils' good progress.
- Recent improvements in procedures to assess pupils' learning and to monitor their behaviour are at an early stage of development.
- The curriculum does not provide sufficient scope for the most able pupils to achieve nationally recognised qualifications at a sufficiently high level.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher, working closely with the proprietors and the leadership team, has had an immediate and positive impact on the school's climate for learning.
- The newly established leadership team works well. Leaders are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school's performance.
- Pupils treat each other with respect and behave well.
- Adults care a great deal about pupils' welfare. Strong relationships ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Teachers make sure that pupils are able to learn in a positive and supportive atmosphere.

### 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?

- Make sure that pupils make consistently strong progress by ensuring that teaching:
  - builds well on pupils' prior learning
  - deepens and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively, particularly for the most able pupils
  - provides pupils with opportunities to study a wider range of nationally accredited qualifications.
- Improve teaching by making sure that:
  - training is used more effectively to support developments in teaching
  - recently improved appraisal and performance management systems are fully established.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - recently updated systems for monitoring pupils' learning and behaviour are fully established and used effectively to evaluate and improve the school's work
  - the proprietors hold leaders to account effectively for the school's performance.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to learn about different career options and to develop work-related skills to support them in life beyond the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not made the necessary improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. As a result, variations in the quality of teaching continue to hamper pupils' progress.
- Systems and procedures have lacked sufficient rigour to secure improvements in the school's work since the previous inspection. For example, staff appraisals have not been completed consistently or rigorously enough. As a result, strengths in staff performance have gone unnoticed and weaknesses in teaching have not been addressed sufficiently well.
- Training has not been used effectively enough to improve teaching since the previous inspection. Teachers have not been given sufficient guidance about how to develop their roles.
- The school's curriculum enables pupils to learn across a broad and balanced range of subjects, including history, science, art and sports. However, the curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to achieve as well as they could, particularly the most able pupils. For example, while pupils have opportunities to complete functional skills qualifications in mathematics and English each year, there are currently no arrangements for them to complete GCSE examinations.
- Activities such as working in the school's 'camouflage café' provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop personal and social skills. However, opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications from these activities, or to develop employment skills by completing work experience in the local community, are underdeveloped.
- The recently appointed headteacher has achieved a great deal in a very short time. She has introduced a stronger sense of purpose among the leadership team and established an optimistic atmosphere throughout the school.
- The headteacher has acted swiftly to address omissions in systems for monitoring staff performance, pupils' progress and the quality of pupils' behaviour over time. However, it is too soon for these developments to be fully established.
- The headteacher's enthusiasm for pupils' learning is infectious. She has already begun to share her highly ambitious vision for the school's future with staff, who have welcomed renewed direction. She has begun discussions with staff and proprietors about the possibility of introducing a wider range of qualifications, including more opportunities for pupils to study vocational qualifications.
- Comments made by staff during the inspection illustrate the school's increasingly upbeat atmosphere. For example, one member of staff said: 'The headteacher has hit the ground running', while another commented: 'The headteacher has loads of ideas and takes our views on board . . . As a team we really look after each other'.
- The headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding leader work very well together. They know that the school's work needs to improve rapidly if pupils are to achieve as well as they should. Leaders have established clear plans to guide future developments.

- Effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural education contributes very well to pupils' personal development and to their appreciation of British values. They learn about a number of different religions and demonstrate increasing understanding and respect for different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds.
- Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school's work and of the difference it has made to their children's lives. All parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View said that they would recommend the school.

## **Governance**

- The proprietors have not held leaders to account rigorously enough for the school's performance since the previous inspection.
- The proprietors are keenly aware of the need to increase the pace of development. They have taken great care to appoint a headteacher who has the skills, experience and vision to lead the school successfully in the next stage of its development.
- The proprietors take their responsibilities for staff well-being seriously. They pay close attention to staff welfare and listen carefully to staff views.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding policies reflect all aspects of the government's current legislation, including guidance on peer-on-peer abuse, child sexual exploitation and 'county lines'.
- The school's premises provide pupils with a safe, welcoming and attractive learning environment. Good-quality perimeter fences and well-established procedures for visitors to the school ensure that pupils are secure.
- Staff know pupils extremely well. Trusting and constructive relationships help pupils to feel comfortable and settled at the start of the school day. Adults greet pupils with genuine warmth and good humour in the morning.
- Adults establish exceptionally strong links with parents. Effective communication between home and school means that adults are quickly made aware of any difficulties pupils may be experiencing at home and are able to respond sensitively.
- Leaders and proprietors make sure that recruitment checks are completed promptly and fully prior to new members of staff starting work.
- Leaders were updating the school's website at the time of the inspection. The home page includes a clear statement to this effect and refers parents to the school for copies of policies and procedures if required.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school. Variations in the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and other subjects mean that pupils do not achieve as well as they should over time.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are not consistently high enough. The work set

for pupils does not always provide sufficient challenge. Teaching does not move learning on well enough when pupils complete activities with ease during lessons. As a result, the most able pupils make secure progress over time, but could achieve more.

- Teaching does not always respond well enough to pupils' individual needs during lessons. Pupils' anxiety levels are heightened, when activities are not adjusted to meet their needs well enough. This can have a negative impact on pupils' behaviour for learning, because they quickly lose confidence.
- Skilful one-to-one help for individual pupils secures considerable success in the development of English and mathematics skills. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that these valuable gains in pupils' learning are not always reinforced well enough in class settings.
- There are some notable strengths in teaching. For example, adults take care to make sure that classrooms are calm and attractive environments. They teach with warmth, enthusiasm and good humour. This ensures that, in time and with great care, they win pupils' trust.
- Effective subject teaching in the older year groups enables pupils to achieve accredited qualifications at the end of key stage 4.
- The school's team of hard-working, committed and knowledgeable teachers and support staff work very well together. They recognise the need to secure further developments in teaching and learning and are keen to improve their practice.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school gives the development of pupils' personal skills high priority. Effective provision ensures that pupils make substantial progress in developing the personal skills and attitudes needed to learn well.
- Pupils' growing self-esteem makes a notable difference to their learning. For example, pupils who previously took little pride in their work quickly develop more positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to succeed and want to please their teachers.
- Pupils develop an increasing understanding of their classmates' needs and speak kindly to each other. For example, during the inspection, a pupil reassured a classmate who was having a difficult day.
- Pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Adults ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of how they can help to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet.
- All parents who responded to Parent View say that their children are safe, happy and well behaved. One parent's comment sums up the views of others very well: 'This is somewhere my child feels safe, feels a sense of belonging, and isn't judged'.
- Activities such as working on the school's allotment make a strong contribution to pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development. For example, during the inspection, pupils worked collaboratively with adults and with their classmates on a range of tasks,

including making hot drinks for the group, planting potatoes, building a tool shed and harvesting radishes.

- Pupils perform roles of responsibility, such as running the school's 'camouflage café', seriously and sensibly. However, opportunities for pupils to develop work-related skills beyond the school are more limited. As a result, pupils are not as well prepared for life when they leave the school as they should be.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Adults are committed to ensuring that pupils develop the personal and social skills needed to access learning successfully. Discussions with leaders, case studies and parents' comments in free text indicate significant improvements in individual pupils' behaviour over time.
- Strong links with parents, agencies and colleges, combined with high-quality support for pupils, contribute to significant improvements in pupils' attitudes to the school and in their attendance.
- Most pupils behave sensibly in lessons, during breaktimes and when moving around the school. They speak respectfully to adults and take increasing responsibility for their own actions. However, sometimes pupils who disengage from learning during lessons are not refocused promptly enough, and, as a result, they make slower progress than others.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils do not make sufficiently strong progress across the school.
- Many pupils have had an unsettled time in education prior to joining the school and, as a result, have substantial gaps in their learning which make it difficult for them to learn. As a result, pupils' starting points are often much lower than typical for their age.
- Inconsistent teaching means that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are not always addressed securely enough. Teaching does not support improvements in pupils' learning well enough to rectify weaknesses in learning, and so pupils continue to make slow progress over time. For example, some pupils have weak handwriting and phonics skills when they join the school which are not addressed sufficiently well and so hamper pupils' subsequent learning.
- Variations in teaching mean that the most able pupils make uneven progress across the school. Some of the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should, because teaching does not always deepen and extend their knowledge and understanding well enough.
- Some pupils make rapid progress. This is particularly the case in the older year groups, where confident and effective teaching in English, mathematics, science and other subjects prepares pupils well for examinations.
- Many pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 4. For example, most attain nationally accredited functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, so that they are securely prepared for life beyond the school. However, the courses offered currently do

not provide sufficient scope for the most able pupils to achieve higher qualifications.

- Almost all pupils have gone on to study in colleges of further education during the past three years. Close links with colleges of further education ensure that pupils are well prepared for the move from the school to college.

## School details

Unique reference number	135180
DfE registration number	938/6050
Inspection number	10091647

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	3
Proprietor	Judy Packham/Jeremy Cross
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Dale Brown
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,452 to £34,730
Telephone number	01903 605980
Website	N/A
Email address	office@springboardeducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–23 November 2017

## Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who have a range of social, emotional and mental difficulties. Many also have specific learning needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. All pupils have been placed in the school by a local authority.
- The school can cater for 27 boys and girls between the ages of five and 18. There are currently no pupils under the age of seven on roll and no sixth-form pupils.
- The school has a junior and a secondary department. Both departments are situated on one site on the edge of Lancing.



- The school does not use alternative provision. However, a number of pupils attend registered colleges on a part-time basis, including Plumpton College and Brinsbury College.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a special educational needs coordinator and a designated safeguarding lead.
- The headteacher took up her post in April 2019.
- The proprietors are also the company directors. The school does not have a governing body.
- The school's website was being updated at the time of the inspection.
- The previous standard inspection took place in November 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes. All were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also observed off-site activities on the school's allotment. A sample of each pupil's work was scrutinised during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also met with the proprietors and had a discussion with the staff.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in five completed staff questionnaires, as well as six responses to Parent View and six free-text comments. She also spoke with pupils informally during the inspection.
- A range of documents were analysed during the inspection, including safeguarding records and information about pupils' behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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