

Inspection of Bridge House Independent School

Grantham Road, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 7NL

Inspection dates:

5–7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this inspirational school. They told inspectors that they are very happy and always feel safe. Staff know pupils very well. They care for pupils' complex needs expertly.

Pupils attend frequently and achieve very well. They get on well together. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare. The staff on the behaviour team manage any incidents of poor behaviour very skilfully. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are exceptional. They listen carefully and contribute positively during lessons. The rewards system motivates them to work hard. They feel proud when they receive points for reading and good conduct, for example. They are excited when they get to trade their points for 'me rewards', such as trips to places that interest them.

Staff provide pupils with a rich variety of experiences. Pupils really enjoy and appreciate the many extra-curricular clubs and educational visits on offer. These opportunities prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

The views of parents and carers are positive. One comment, typical of many, was, 'The change we have seen in our son has been incredible. He has undergone a complete social and emotional metamorphosis since his transfer from mainstream.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher and senior leaders are determined for all pupils to succeed. They ensure that pupils receive a good, rounded education. Many pupils have missed large portions of the curriculum before they start at Bridge House. Many have been excluded from mainstream schools. The leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures that staff receive appropriate information before pupils start. Leaders share information well with other agencies, such as social care, early help and the autism outreach team. Pupils settle into school life quickly.

Staff are rightly proud to work at the school. They receive frequent training and say that leaders are sensitive to their workload. One staff member commented, 'I am incredibly proud of the work we do at Bridge House. We make a real difference to pupils' lives and futures, both inside and outside the classroom.' New members of staff receive a thorough induction.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their clear explanations allow pupils to learn and remember new knowledge. For example, Year 11 pupils can confidently explain the process of photosynthesis. In Year 8 mathematics, pupils were observed calculating the area of a trapezium.

Teachers use assessment well. Frequent tests and quizzes help pupils to revisit previous material. Teachers use this information to spot gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. They and other staff then provide extra support to plug the gaps.

Leaders have identified that improving pupils' reading skills is a priority. Adults frequently listen to pupils read. They encourage pupils to read aloud during paired reading sessions. Younger pupils develop their phonics knowledge through regular sessions.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Daily 'house time' enables pupils to learn about different faiths and cultures. It also keeps them up to date with current news stories. Pupils experience a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. They visit many places of interest, including museums and theatres. They contribute positively to their community and to society, for example by fundraising for local and national charities.

Pupils achieve excellent outcomes. In recent years, all pupils have gained appropriate qualifications. These are a mixture of GCSE, BTEC and vocational awards. Pupils have gone on to further education, employment or training.

Leaders have planned most subjects carefully. These subjects are well sequenced and allow pupils to build on what they already know. This is not the case in a few subjects, such as history.

The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school complies with the 2010 Equality Act. It provides pupils with good careers advice. The three school sites meet the premises standards. All the buildings are well kept, and classrooms are appropriate places for learning. All requirements about fire safety are met. Staff write specific risk assessments when pupils make off-site visits and for other activities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor ensures that all staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff know how to spot the signs of potential neglect and peer-on-peer abuse. Staff can confidently describe the process for reporting any welfare concerns. The designated safeguarding leader keeps detailed records. Staff liaise with a wide variety of outside agencies.

The proprietor makes all necessary checks on adults before they work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum leader and the subject leaders for English and mathematics have made a very good start in planning and sequencing the curriculum. They have made sure that the vast majority of subjects are well organised. The plans show clearly how pupils build their knowledge and skills year-on-year. However, there are still some foundation subjects, such as history, that are not well planned

across all key stages. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are equally well planned so that pupils achieve highly across all areas of the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	139264
DfE registration number	925/6005
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10102147
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Carl Smith
Headteacher	Carl Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,000 to £50,000
Telephone number	01205 369111
Website	www.bridgehouseindependentschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@bridgehouseindependentschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November – 1 December 2016

Information about this school

- The school underwent a successful material change inspection on 3 September 2018. The change was to open premises for 25 key stage 2 pupils. The address for this provision is Great Fen Road, Boston. The school also underwent a successful material change inspection to admit key stage 5 pupils. Subsequently, the Department for Education (DfE) granted both the material change requests.
- The two other school sites are also in Boston. One is on Grantham Road and the other on Carlton Road.
- There are currently no key stage 5 students on the school's roll.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has applied to the DfE to make a material change to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is that the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.
- Further information about this part of the inspection is available in the annex of this report.
- Inspectors held various meetings with the headteacher and the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives into English, early reading and phonics, mathematics and computing. Inspectors met with the lead teacher for each subject, visited lessons, examined pupils' workbooks and met with pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the senior leadership team to discuss safeguarding. Inspectors also met with staff to discuss their safeguarding training and their understanding of the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector checked the school's single central register.
- The lead inspector toured the three school sites to check the school's compliance against Part 5 of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Davies

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

Details of the material change inspection that took place as part of the standard inspection.

- The school requested a material change to add key stage 1 pupils to the existing key stage 2 provision at Great Fen Road, Boston. This is because the local authority has a number of pupils with SEND who would benefit from the specialist provision the school offers.
- If the material change is granted, the number on roll at Great Fen Road will remain at 25. There will therefore be a mixture of key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils.
- The school proposes to add two extra members of staff, at least one of which will have early years experience.
- The curriculum leader has a good understanding of the key stage 1 curriculum.
- The headteacher has plans to develop the outdoor learning area to accommodate pupils' physical development.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and curriculum leader to discuss the proposed material change. Standards relating to the proposed material change were checked as part of the standard inspection.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.

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