

# Bramdean School

Richmond Lodge, Homefield Road, Heavitree, Exeter, Devon EX1 2QR

## Inspection dates

28 November 2019

## Overall outcome

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7–7(a)*

- At the emergency inspection in May 2019, it was found that the proprietor had not maintained some aspects of the premises or facilities well enough. Welfare, health and safety standards were not being consistently met.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website and pays due regards to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2019. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at school and that they know who to talk to if they have concerns about their own, or others', safety.
- The proprietor has acted to put in place systems to check the health and safety across the school. A leadership team has been formed. They meet weekly to discuss actions needed to improve different aspects of the school, including those to do with the welfare, health and safety of pupils. However, this additional oversight is not ensuring that issues are identified well enough or followed up rigorously. Leaders are not robust in their monitoring of newly introduced systems which are designed to secure the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the systemic weaknesses in the arrangements for keeping pupils safe are improving. The new designated leader for safeguarding does not have the support or time needed to fulfil the role effectively. As a result, there is a lack of rigour in ensuring that concerns about pupils' safety are followed up as they should be.
- The standard remains unmet.

#### *Paragraph 11*

- At the previous inspection, it was found that the health and safety policy was not implemented or checked well enough. As a result, some breaches in safety in the premises had gone unnoticed. These weaknesses remain.
- The health and safety policy has been updated but it is still not implemented sufficiently well.
- The specific weaknesses related to health and safety seen in the previous inspection

have been addressed: all windows have locks and there are padlocks on gates within the perimeter fence.

- A scrutiny of the records of the weekly health and safety checks shows that there is too little detail in the checks made. Some basic health and safety issues have been missed. In addition, as seen at the previous inspection, the system designed to ensure that staff report potential health and safety risks to leaders does not ensure that breaches in safety on the premises are noticed or addressed.
- The standard remains unmet.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- This standard was previously met. There are appropriate checks to ensure that pupils can evacuate the building safely and that the fire alarm works. However, during this inspection, a fire exit door leading from a classroom to a fire escape could not be opened. This puts pupils and staff at risk of harm. It had not been identified by leaders. Although leaders took immediate action to make the fire exit safe, this is a serious breach of fire safety. It shows that the proprietor continues to not be maintaining aspects of the premises well enough.
- The standard remains unmet.

#### *Paragraph 16, 16(a) and (b)*

- In the previous inspection, some risk assessments could not be provided. Leaders did not have a rigorous enough approach towards checking and evaluating risks for some vital areas such as those relating to premises maintenance.
- The format for risk assessments has been updated. Risk assessments about school trips and visits and fire risks are in place. However, leaders do not check them carefully enough to ensure that staff complete the assessments accurately. In addition, some important risk assessments, such as the risk assessment about the use of the school field, are not detailed enough. They do not inform staff well enough about the necessary steps they need to take to avoid risks to pupils. Information in the risk assessments do not outline appropriate strategies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The standard remains unmet.

### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

#### *Paragraphs 22 and 25*

- The previous inspection found that there were occasions when leaders had not been quick enough to identify or to respond to health and safety issues. This put pupils at risk of harm. These weaknesses remain. The proprietor has put in place the system described in the school's action plan. For example, there are weekly health and safety tours of the school premises. However, as described above, there is little oversight to ensure that potential risks to pupils' safety are attended to.
- Although most of the building is well looked after, some parts are poorly maintained. For example, the area designated for pupils to drink water was found to be damp, dirty and unkempt. Some taps did not work as they should.
- The standard remains unmet.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)–(c)*

- The proprietor does not ensure that the independent schools standards are met consistently. Although some actions have been taken to remedy the specific points made during previous inspections, the proprietor does not ensure that the systemic weaknesses are improving well enough.
- Leaders do not have a secure understanding of the independent school standards. This includes curriculum leaders who are at a very early stage of their understanding of how to ensure that the quality of education improves across the school. Teachers, and other staff, are attempting to complete the actions in the school's action plan. However, leaders' lack of rigorous scrutiny means that progress is slow.
- There is an attempt to strengthen the oversight of welfare, health and safety and the suitability of the premises. However, staff are not suitably skilled and experienced to fulfil their leadership roles. The proprietor does not ensure that the agreed systems for improvement are effective.
- The standard remains unmet.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	113562
DfE registration number	878/6001
Inspection number	10120985

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Diane Stoneman
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Diane Stoneman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,204 to £11,490
Telephone number	01392 273387
Website	<a href="http://www.bramdeanschool.com">www.bramdeanschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@bramdeanschool.co.uk">info@bramdeanschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	15–17 January 2019

## Information about this school

- Bramdean School is a non-selective, independent school in Heavitree, Exeter. Founded in 1901, it provides education in line with its registration from children aged three to 18.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher of the school. There is no governing body.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place on 15–17 January 2017. At this time, the

judgement was that the school requires improvement.

- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The previous inspection was in May 2019. It was an emergency inspection which was commissioned by the Department of Education (DfE) in response to a complaint it had received about the school. Following this inspection, the DfE required the school to produce an action plan. This was evaluated as acceptable with modifications in July 2019.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector met with the proprietor/headteacher and worked alongside senior teachers during the inspection. The inspector toured the school with a senior teacher to evaluate the condition and management of the school site.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including those on its website. The inspector reviewed key health and safety policies and sampled some risk assessments. The inspector also checked the school's single central record (SCR).
- The inspector spoke with some pupils across the school. She also spoke with members of staff to gather their opinions of the school.
- The inspector checked Parent View as part of the pre-inspection planning for the inspection.

## Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection*

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

#### **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; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

*Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection*

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.



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