

# Inspection of Beech Grove School

Forest Drive, Nonington, Dover, Kent CT15 4FB

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Inspection dates: 4–6 December 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Insufficient evidence**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a happy school at the heart of a caring community. The school's Christian ethos underpins all aspects of day-to-day life here. Pupils are kind and respectful to others. They get on well with each other. Discrimination and meanness are not tolerated. Pupils work hard because their teachers and families expect them to do so.

Classrooms are industrious places. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work and play are excellent. Physical education and the arts are celebrated and embraced here. Pupils enjoy singing and drama and take part in group activities with gusto and great passion. Many play an instrument. Most take part in team sports regularly, often against local schools or in the local community.

Despite living in a close-knit community, pupils are prepared well for life beyond the school. They achieve well academically because of the high expectations placed on them and the support they receive from dedicated and caring staff. Their personal development is planned for well because of the importance attached to this by leaders and the wider school community.

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

Leaders and teaching staff are dedicated and hard working. They share a total commitment to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. This includes pupils who are in danger of falling behind, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and the most able. Consequently, the school has continued to provide a good quality of education since the last inspection and all the independent school standards are consistently met.

Pupils enjoy reading here. Because of the unique context of the school, reading is greatly valued by all as a way of enriching pupils' lives and bringing the curriculum to life. Parents ensure that their children read often. Teachers ensure that pupils read widely. As a result, reading is at the heart of pupils' learning.

Children in kindergarten begin the process of learning to read early. This is despite the school's exemptions for the learning and development aspects of the early years foundation stage. Too few children were attending kindergarten at the time of the inspection to make a meaningful judgement about the quality of provision in the early years. However, it was clear that all aspects of the welfare, health and safety of children are catered for well.

Classroom visits and discussions with pupils provided strong evidence of how much pupils appreciate books. The lead inspector was particularly impressed with the eagerness of pupils as they explained what books they were reading to support their learning across the curriculum. This enthusiasm, coupled with excellent attitudes to learning in general, continues across the school. This includes in the school's equivalent of the sixth form, Grades 11 and 12.

Leaders have recently reviewed the mathematics curriculum. As a result, expectations are now higher than they were in the recent past. This reflects leaders' ambitions for continual improvement, although outcomes in national GCSE examinations show that pupils achieve well in both mathematics and English. Student outcomes at the end of the 12th Grade are also positive, with many continuing to college and university courses when they leave the school.

Classroom visits showed inspectors that most staff have very good subject knowledge which they put to good use when planning learning. However, occasionally, input by teachers is overly long, leading to pupils disengaging with learning. Pupils shared their frustrations with this aspect of their learning with inspectors. Older pupils also said that they sometimes wanted to participate more in their learning. Leaders acknowledge this and have already made it a priority for development.

Pupils learn about history as part of the social sciences curriculum. Leaders have ensured that the history aspect builds pupils' knowledge over time, including knowledge of the world's great faiths and religions. Visits into the local community also teach pupils about the history on their doorstep, including to national historical sites such as Canterbury Cathedral and Battle Abbey.

The school's extra-curricular offer is a great strength and helps prepare pupils for their next steps in education, employment or training. Careers advice and work experience are built into this. Pupils' health and mental well-being are given a high priority. A bespoke programme, 'navigating our world', is also provided for older pupils. This includes learning to drive and giving pupils rich experiences such as going out to lunch in London with successful people from the world of business and enterprise.

Pupils were very positive when talking to inspectors about their school. They enjoy the curriculum on offer to them, which has good breadth. This is especially impressive when the size and age range of the school are considered. Despite the excellent variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs, leaders acknowledge that the vocational element of the curriculum could be developed wider. This will allow pupils a broader range of co-curricular activities outside of the school's more traditional academic curriculum.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture to keep pupils safe is strong. The welfare, health and safety of children in kindergarten are also given the highest priority by staff.

Because of the context of the school, pupils have limited or no access to information technology or the internet. Despite this, they are taught about aspects such as the potential dangers of using social media.

Staff know what to do if they have concerns. Leaders and those responsible ensure that safeguarding training is up to date. This includes checking that staff understand what to do in different made-up safeguarding scenarios.

## **Information for the school and proprietor**

- Although most teachers have good subject knowledge and a firm grasp of classroom practice, occasionally their teaching input is overly long, leading to pupils disengaging from learning. Leaders are aware of this. They should develop this aspect of classroom practice, so that pupils are encouraged to become more independent in their learning.
- The school's curriculum is evolving. Leaders are proactive when tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, especially in Grades nine to 12. More traditional academic routes are catered for well. Leaders should now look to introduce a wider range of co-curricular options, so that the school's vocational strand is strengthened further.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131181
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6073
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10100502
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent boarding school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	74
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	20
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Church Communities UK
<b>Chair</b>	Bernard Hibbs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Timothy Maas
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	No fees charged
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 842 980
<b>Website</b>	None
<b>Email address</b>	SchoolBGR@ccimail.co.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27–29 September 2016

## Information about this school

- Beech Grove School is situated within the Beech Grove Bruderhof Christian Community on a 140-acre site in rural Kent. Established in 1996, the school provides education for children aged from four to 19 years.
- The school aims to educate pupils to be orderly, truthful, caring for the needs and suffering of others, interested in learning and thinking, and disciplined in body.

- The school is one of two schools in England which are owned and run by Church Communities UK, a registered charity run by a board of trustees.
- An education committee is responsible to the board of trustees for governance of the school.
- The school's headteacher is also responsible for the proprietor's other school in Robertsbridge, East Sussex.
- There are currently 74 pupils on roll, aged from four to 19 years of age.
- Children aged four to six attend kindergarten. Pupils aged six years and upwards attend the school, which is for 1st Grade to 8th Grade, equivalent to Years 2 to 9. Older pupils attend the academy, which is for 9th Grade to 12th Grade, equivalent to Years 10 to 13.
- The families of most of the children in the school live and work on the site, which includes a manufacturing plant that makes wooden furniture for use in schools.
- The school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- At the time of the inspection, too few children were attending kindergarten to make a meaningful judgement about the quality of the early years foundation stage provision.
- Ofsted last inspected the school in September 2016, when the overall effectiveness was judged to be good and all the independent school standards were found to be met.
- The school has recently opened a boarding provision, which was not part of this inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school does not have a website.

## **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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included meetings with representatives of the proprietor, school leaders, teachers, two representative groups of pupils, and parents.
- When considering the quality of education, we focused particularly on reading, mathematics and history. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects

builds on pupils' knowledge over time.

- The lead inspector reviewed the 52 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey and accompanying free-text messages. He also took into account the staff survey.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and as they moved around the school.
- We assessed the school's culture to keep pupils safe throughout the inspection. A wide range of documentation was considered, including policies and documents associated with the school meeting all aspects of the independent school standards. The single central record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children was also scrutinised.
- The lead inspector greatly enjoyed attending a rehearsal for the school's imminent Christmas production.

### **Inspection team**

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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