

Inspection of Seadown School

Seadown House, 1a Farncombe Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 2BE

Inspection dates: 13–15 July 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are benefiting from improvements in the school since the previous inspection. They learn happily and play safely in this positive, well-organised school. Staff have high expectations of the pupils, who are keen to learn and want to do their best. Pupils work hard and complete their work carefully and neatly. Classrooms have a positive and purposeful atmosphere, so that pupils are able to focus on their work.

Strong and caring relationships help pupils to feel comfortable and secure. They say that adults keep them safe and that bullying is not something that they need to worry about. One said, 'We are all friends here and we look out for each other.' Leaders take suitable action to address any concerns about bullying.

The school's curriculum supports pupils' personal and social development well. For example, pupils talk confidently and perceptively about relationships. One commented, 'It's important to be kind because when you're kind everyone wants to help you.'

Pupils behave very well most of the time. They enjoy using the school's play equipment, joining in with a game of football, or making a fuss of Blue, the school's therapy dog, during breaktimes. Pupils speak to visitors politely. They are understandably proud of their school.

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

Leaders have successfully addressed weaknesses in the school's work identified at the time of the previous inspection. They have established a series of robust procedures to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. As a result, pupils and staff can work safely and comfortably.

Leaders' determination and commitment to providing high-quality education have been central to the school's success in securing improvements. The headteacher and his team have established a positive and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Staff work very well together as a team and provide strong role models for the pupils. High staff morale contributes well to the school's upbeat, can-do atmosphere.

The school's broad, balanced curriculum has served pupils well in the past. Pupils enjoy learning a variety of subjects that provide them with a secure grounding of knowledge and skills. Leaders have rightly identified the need to update the curriculum so that it provides greater clarity about what should be taught at each stage of pupils' learning. A revised curriculum has been trialled this term, with a focus on reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are ready to launch the full revised curriculum in September.

Secure staff subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics ensures that these subjects are taught consistently well. However, variations in subject knowledge in subjects such as geography and art have led to inconsistencies in the

teaching of the wider curriculum. Leaders have already begun to deliver training so that all staff have the subject knowledge needed to deliver the revised curriculum effectively.

Teachers have a sound understanding of pupils' additional needs. They assess pupils' learning continuously and adapt activities accordingly. Sometimes pupils find it hard to maintain focus during lessons. Adults respond skilfully when this is the case, sensitively drawing pupils back into activities.

Often, pupils have fallen behind in their reading before joining the school. The school helps pupils to rediscover their enjoyment of books. For example, reluctant readers welcome opportunities to read to the 'reading dog', a regular visitor in the school. The school's well-established phonics programme equips pupils with secure early reading skills. Pupils make significant progress in reading and quickly grow in confidence.

The school's curriculum helps pupils to develop an increasing understanding of the wider community. They learn about world religions and are taught to respect the views and beliefs of others. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Activities such as shopping for ingredients at local shops, cooking a meal and learning how to make a phone call help to build pupils' independence and confidence. Work experience opportunities have been affected by the pandemic during the past 18 months. Leaders intend to reinstate these as soon as practical.

Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyle habits. For example, they usually swim regularly at a local swimming pool and all enjoy participating in 'the daily mile'. The school has appropriate plans in place to comply with Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance on relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education.

The school's well-established behaviour policy is followed consistently throughout the school. Pupils say that behaviour during lessons has improved over time. Good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute well to pupils' learning.

Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection. For example, governors have developed secure systems for checking that the school consistently complies with statutory requirements in relation to health, safety and welfare issues. Their roles in holding leaders to account for the quality of education are less well developed, however.

The proprietors have a secure oversight of the school's work. They have worked constructively with leaders to ensure that the independent school standards are met. The proprietors are understandably pleased with improvements made since the previous inspection. However, they are also clear about priorities for further development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders put pupils' safety at the heart of the school's work. They have made significant improvements to safeguarding procedures since the previous inspection, including tightening up procedures and establishing clear lines of responsibility. All safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and followed consistently. Recruitment checks are completed in a timely fashion. The school's safeguarding policy meets requirements and is published on the school's website.

All staff who responded to Ofsted's survey feel that pupils are safe in school. Pupils who spoke with inspectors during the inspection confirmed this view. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and know what to do if they have a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Not all teachers have the subject knowledge needed to teach the school's revised curriculum consistently well. Leaders have already taken steps to address this. They have created a carefully considered programme of staff training. Leaders should continue with their plans to deliver the training programme.
- Those responsible for governance do not hold leaders to account for the quality of education robustly enough. Questions about the quality of education lack challenge, and governors are too quick to accept leaders' responses. As a result, governors are not as clear as they should be about the effectiveness of the curriculum, about its impact on pupils' learning, or about priorities for improvement.

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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	135691
DfE registration number	938/6228
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10196782
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Terry Goble and Michelle Wright
Chair	Steve Alexander
Headteacher	James Eagle
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,220 to £56,550
Telephone number	01903 608750
Website	www.seadownschool.co.uk
Email address	office@seadownschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 May 2019

Information about this school

- Seadown School provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues. Many pupils have additional needs, such as those related to autism spectrum disorder.
- Pupils are assigned to one of four classes that are mostly organised by age. The two lower school classes have mainly primary pupils, while the upper school classes are for secondary pupils.
- All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan. There are considerably more boys than girls on roll.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has a governing body that includes school leaders and parent representatives.
- The last full inspection took place in May 2019, when the school was found to be inadequate.

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.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

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

- The inspectors held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included meetings with the proprietor, the chair of the governing body, school leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also held a telephone discussion with the house manager of a residential home.
- The inspectors looked closely at the following subjects when considering the quality of education: reading, mathematics, computing and art. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and reviewed curriculum plans.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktimes, and as pupils moved around the school.
- The inspectors reviewed four responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and accompanying free-text messages. They also considered the staff surveys.

- The lead inspector checked the single central record and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and documents associated with the independent school standards. The lead inspector reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shazia Akram

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021