

Inspection of Brantridge School

Staplefield Place, Staplefield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6EQ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Brantridge School. Most arrive having missed large periods of schooling or having experienced a series of mainstream schools. At Brantridge, a specialist approach meets pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), especially their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs really well. Consequently, pupils are happy and do well.

Leaders have established an atmosphere of calm belief that all can achieve. Pupils respond very well to this and settle quickly, working hard to meet the high expectations. Parents and carers note this in their unanimous praise for the school, with many commenting on the positive difference they see in their children. One noted that their son, 'has come on leaps and bounds, cognitively, behaviourally and socially'. Another parent called the school, 'a happy place for all'.

Pupils learn how to identify their own emotions and responses to events and, from this, how to recognise how other people might respond. Pupils are confident that staff are always there for them. They feel safe and report that all the grown-ups act quickly if anyone is mean or behaves poorly, including for the rare occasions of bullying.

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

Leaders have created a school that is totally focused on the specific SEND of pupils. They successfully develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Alongside this extensive personal development curriculum, pupils follow an academic curriculum.

Staff are highly skilled in identifying pupils' SEND. They adapt activities to support pupils' SEMH and specific learning needs thoughtfully and effectively, matching provision to need exceptionally well.

All pupils have a wide, rich set of experiences that help them to grow as happy, rounded individuals. They learn to reflect on their own view of the world and to be interested in the world around them. Weekly off-site trips and experiences help them to prepare for adulthood as they successfully navigate expectations beyond school and home.

The quality of the academic curriculum is not as strong as that for the pastoral one, but pupils do well overall. Many sit their national curriculum tests at the end of key stage 2, despite assumptions prior to their arrival at the school that they would not be able to access these.

Leaders have ensured that staff are expert in meeting pupils' needs, both SEMH needs and SEND. They have not focused as much on building staff's academic subject knowledge. Consequently, some staff have weaker knowledge of how to adapt some academic subjects. In addition, leaders recognise that their focus on topics has meant that the history curriculum is muddled. They have already

redesigned this, ready for next term, to help make the knowledge flow more logically over time and therefore better supporting pupils' learning.

Books and reading are celebrated throughout the school. Staff have successfully engaged pupils in stories and in wanting to read. Many pupils join the school as very reluctant readers or even non-readers. Staff identify what pupils' needs are and help them to read fluently with understanding by the end of key stage 2. Inspectors met pupils who are now avid readers and happily making their way through many of the well-chosen series of books in the school library.

Pupils' behaviour is supported well. Leaders make sure that all staff use the same language and processes. The approach is carefully matched to pupils' SEND and works very well. Pupils understand the high expectations and meet these much of the time. Leaders constantly review and reflect on what is working and what they need to address. The focus on de-escalation and graduating the response has been very successful. There are far fewer behavioural incidents needing staff to intervene than when the school first opened as an academy.

Staff appreciate the support from the multi-academy trust (MAT), especially the opportunity to exchange ideas with staff from other special schools. However, some duties that are the responsibility of governors are not completed effectively enough. These include publishing statutory documents and assuring themselves of the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of the risks facing pupils and the signs to be alert to. There are clear processes in place that staff follow well.

Leaders act swiftly when concerns are raised. They communicate well with school staff and relevant external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the help they might need.

All staff understand the need to educate pupils about risks and how to identify them so that they can learn to keep themselves safe, including when online. Alongside a well-planned curriculum, staff address this with pupils when opportunity arises.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the

curriculum in all subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

- Some subject knowledge of some staff is not secure enough. This can hinder pupils' learning in these areas. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the expertise to deliver all the national curriculum subjects that they are expected to.
- Those responsible for governance have not assured themselves that all statutory duties are fulfilled in a timely fashion. They need to be systematic in their oversight, so that they can assure themselves that all aspects of the provision are delivered to the quality intended.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145394
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10227671
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	6 to 11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jay Mercer
Principal	Dafydd Roberts
Website	www.brantridge-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Brantridge School is a special school for boys with SEND aged between six and 11 years of age. All pupils have an education, health and care plan related to SEMH and associated needs, including those associated with autism spectrum disorder. Many have been out of school for long periods before joining Brantridge. The school is part of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, which is a MAT.
- The school converted to become an academy in January 2018. When the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision for up to one day a week. Two alternative providers are used. They are not registered.
- Following consultation and work with West Sussex local authority, the school is expanding to admit pupils aged up to 16, including the construction of new buildings. From September 2022, the school will admit pupils in Year 7. The older age range will then rise each year until there are Year 11 pupils. It is intended that girls will be admitted from September 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, vice-principal, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the head of pupil support. They also met with teachers and teaching assistants. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the MAT and two governors, including the chair of the local governing body. She spoke to a representative of the West Sussex local authority SEND team and both alternative providers by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the DSL to examine his knowledge, records and actions. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those related to the safer recruitment of staff. Case files were sampled to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the accompanying free-text comments. They also considered emails sent to the school. They considered staff views by talking to them individually, in groups and through the staff online questionnaire. They spoke to pupils formally and informally, in class and around the school.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hogarth

Ofsted Inspector

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