

# The Beechfield School

The Caretaker's Bungalow, The Nest, Birches Head Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST2 8DD

**Inspection date**

17 May 2022

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(f), 2A(2)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, learning in some subjects was better than in others. The order of learning is now clear and pupils' knowledge and skills build well over time in most subjects. The proprietors and leaders are now providing pupils with a sequenced and well-planned curriculum in all subjects.
- Leaders have developed curriculum plans and schemes of work to meet the needs of existing pupils in key stage 3 and the proposed pupils in key stage 4. In this way, it is likely that the needs of older pupils will be met. Leaders have integrated the school's wider curriculum offer into the plans, offering flexibility to meet the specific needs of pupils admitted to the school. There is an awareness of links with earlier learning and learning that follows key stage 4.
- Appropriate long-term and medium-term plans are in place. The plans show the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. The plans sequence learning over time, and are relevant to individual learning needs, so that pupils build on prior learning.
- The school actively promotes fundamental British values. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum helps pupils develop understanding of respect and tolerance, as well as how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are encouraged to fulfil their potential and to make informed choices about future careers. Impartial careers advice is provided, and pupils have opportunities to undertake work experience. After having consulted parents and carers, the proprietors ensure that all pupils are provided with age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE).

- The school is likely to meet the independent school standards (the standards) in these paragraphs if the material change is implemented.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4*

- Focused and well-planned teaching is provided for pupils, based on their carefully assessed individual learning needs. Using their knowledge of pupils' prior learning experiences, teachers spend time building positive working relationships with pupils, developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school plans to build on this practice to meet the needs of pupils in key stage 4.
- Leaders demonstrate the necessary knowledge and expertise in how to support older pupils to flourish and be successful. They have developed a staff team that understands how to work with pupils across the proposed age range. An ongoing programme of professional development is provided for all staff. It includes specific curriculum training, such as the planning of sequenced learning that builds on pupils' prior learning. Staff have high expectations that are appropriate to pupils' ages and aptitudes.
- Leaders have a framework in place to assess pupils' needs. Assessment is undertaken as pupils start at the school. Staff liaise well with parents to keep them informed of progress. Staff make checks on pupils' social, emotional and mental health, any behavioural difficulties and their academic attainment. Information is used to inform individual learning programmes.
- The school uses a comprehensive assessment system to track pupils' performance and progress. It enables teachers to recognise pupils who may have gaps in their learning and to adapt teaching accordingly. Leaders are confident that it will help teachers working with older pupils to identify any gaps in what pupils know and can do.
- Existing staff have the expertise to meet the learning needs of older pupils in key stage 4.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

## Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

*Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)*

- Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable spiritual, moral, social and cultural policy and PSHE programme of work in place. Pupils learn about equality and diversity and gain an understanding of different faiths and cultures, for example through visits to local sites of cultural interest.
- Pupils, including the oldest, are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to understand how they can contribute to the school community. They learn the difference between right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. There are plans for older pupils to act as mentors for younger pupils.
- Leaders monitor pupils' mental well-being and their social and emotional development, as well as their academic progress and achievements. The school pays

particular regard to the protected characteristics, developing understanding and building respect and tolerance.

- The school precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject and while pupils take part in extra-curricular activities.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

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

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1), 32(1)(c) (Part 6. Provision of information)*

- The school has a well-informed safeguarding and child protection policy in place. The policy is in line with current guidance, including acknowledgment of 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2021). The school does not currently have a website but makes available a hard copy of the policy. In addition, leaders spend time with parents talking through the policy and procedures when pupils join the school.
- The proprietors have ensured that leaders and teachers are trained in safeguarding. There is a designated senior leader and a deputy leader for safeguarding. Staff understand how any safeguarding issues can be raised. Curriculum plans show that pupils learn about possible risks to themselves and others, and how to keep themselves safe.
- Records indicate that any safeguarding concerns are dealt with promptly. Leaders work with external agencies when necessary to support pupils and their families.
- These standards are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

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

#### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietors have a clear vision and rationale for extending the age range of the school to include older pupils. Careful thought has been given to the adjustments that will be needed to the curriculum. The proprietors and leaders demonstrate a good understanding of how best to support the social and emotional needs of key stage 4 pupils while ensuring that they make progress academically.
- The proprietors meet regularly with leaders and teachers to check what is happening in the school and to hold them to account. The school has a clear management structure, with well-defined roles that help to support quality assurance. Following its full inspection, the school is working effectively towards clear improvement targets and measurable milestones in its action plan.
- The proprietors and leaders work together to ensure that the independent school standards are met. They put pupils' welfare, health and safety first and demonstrate a strong commitment to helping pupils achieve as well as possible academically.
- The school is likely to meet these standards if the material change is implemented.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders' plans identify actions to ensure that the school's physical environment, curriculum and written information continue to be as accessible as possible.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

## School details

Unique reference number	148131
DfE registration number	861/6026
Inspection number	10233241

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Beechfield Education Ltd
Chair	Howard Rowley
Headteacher	Joanne Talbot-Beech
Annual fees (day pupils)	Up to £270 per day
Telephone number	01782 864826
Website	None
Email address	jo@beechfield-education.com
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 June 2021

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 14	7 to 16	7 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	10	10	10

## Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	10	10
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	10
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	8	10
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	8	10

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	7	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	2

## Information about this school

- The Beechfield School, known locally as The Nest, first opened as a provider of alternative provision in January 2020 and is now registered as an independent special school.
- The school is based in a bungalow in the grounds of Birches Head Academy. The school also rents a space at The Bridge Centre, which is a nearby conference and community centre.
- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in relation to their social, emotional and mental health. Most pupils have been excluded, or have been at risk of exclusion, from mainstream schools and are in receipt of an education, health and care plan.
- The school occasionally uses three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school does not have a religious character.

- The school's most recent full inspection was in June 2021. Overall effectiveness was judged to be requires improvement.



## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to establish whether the school would be likely to meet all the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change, to change the age range of pupils from seven to 14 years to seven to 16 years, were implemented.
- The inspector focused on the standards in part 1 (Quality of education provided), part 2 (Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils), and part 8 (Quality of leadership in and the management of schools). In addition, the inspector considered part 3 of the standards, which relates to the arrangements made to safeguard pupils in the school, and part 7, related to the information available to parents.
- The proprietors plan to enable current key stage 3 pupils to continue their learning at the school into key stage 4.
- This was the school's first material change inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher of the school (who is one of the two proprietors), the other proprietor and the curriculum leader.
- The inspection included a visit to both the main accommodation and The Bridge Centre.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including the school's safeguarding policy, planning and schemes of work associated with the curriculum, and with teaching, PSHE and RSE programmes, behaviour management and information related to pupil performance.
- The single central record was checked.

## Inspection team

Mike Onyon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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