

# Brown's School

Hawstead Lane, Chelsfield, Orpington, Kent BR6 7PH

**Inspection date**

22 September 2022

**Overall outcome**

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)(h), 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e) and 3(g)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the school's curriculum was well planned or sequenced. It was not clear how pupils would develop knowledge in all year groups or every subject. Leaders had not prioritised staff training to enable staff to plan and deliver an effective curriculum, or to assess pupils' learning effectively. Leaders did not ensure that teachers had the opportunity to develop their subject knowledge. There was no phonics programme in place to help teach pupils at an early stage of reading to read fluently.
- This inspection found that leaders have thoroughly reviewed the curriculum. In every subject, curriculum plans have been rewritten to ensure teaching is well planned and sequenced. The school's curriculum aims, known as the 'golden thread' (to develop pupils' confidence, independence, empowerment, well-being and achievement), underpin these plans. Opportunities to assess pupils are now more sophisticated and rely on a range of evidence rather than end-of-unit tests. Plans are sequenced so that all teachers know what they want pupils to learn from Year 6 through to Year 13. These new plans, following a comprehensive package of staff training, have been implemented well since April 2022.
- The school's new team of middle leaders are working with teachers to strengthen the quality of education. Those teachers in need of support to develop their subject knowledge are now completing bespoke training, visiting other schools and receiving coaching from middle leaders. A new governor responsible for the quality of education has joined the governing body. They have begun monitoring visits to support and challenge leaders to maintain the momentum of improving the curriculum. Though there is still work to do, the impact of leaders' actions has been positive.
- A suitable phonics programme has been chosen and all staff have been trained to implement it. There is an ongoing programme of training in place to ensure staff are ready to support any pupils who may arrive at the school at an early stage of learning to read.

- Leaders have ensured that these requirements are now met.

*Paragraph 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(f) and 2A(2)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not fulfilled the statutory requirements to consult parents and carers on the school's relationships and sex education (RSE) programme. Parents had not been given the opportunity to withdraw their children from sex education.
- This inspection confirmed that leaders have consulted parents and updated their RSE policy in light of feedback received. The policy includes clear guidance on the withdrawal of pupils from sex education. Therefore, the school's RSE policy is now compliant with these requirements.
- The independent school standards checked in this part are now met.

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

*Paragraphs 7 and 12*

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not fulfilled the statutory requirements to ensure pupils' welfare and safety. This included a lack of rigour in the staff recruitment process. Leaders had also not ensured that all the required fire safety checks had been completed. Documentation was disorganised.
- This progress monitoring inspection found the safer recruitment process to have been overhauled. Suitable application forms and interview and reference templates have been put in place. Though no new staff members have been appointed since the previous inspection, the recruitment process is now likely to reflect the statutory requirements.
- All the required fire safety checks are now completed and documented. Checks, logs and certificates are now organised appropriately. Leaders have ensured that the actions identified in an external fire risk assessment undertaken in March 2022 have been completed.
- The inspection's routine checks on safeguarding confirmed that leaders maintain a culture of care and safety. They have ensured that the school's policy and procedures reflect the latest statutory requirements. All staff have been trained in light of the latest guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2022). Designated safeguarding leads make effective use of the school's online safeguarding system to follow up on concerns, referrals and actions taken. Staff have a secure understanding of the risks pupils face. Pupils spoken to, including a group of Year 7 pupils new to the school, said they feel safe at Brown's. They spoke especially positively about the school's 'trusted adult' system.
- These independent school standards are now met.

*Paragraphs 11, 14 and 16*

- The material change part of this inspection considered the school's arrangements for health and safety, supervision of pupils and risk assessment.
- The school's health and safety and risk assessment policies are suitable and implemented well. With the support and scrutiny of external professionals, leaders prioritise pupils' health and safety. They ensure the premises are safe, secure and well

looked after. Risk assessments appropriately consider the potential risks to pupils and outline suitable actions to minimise them.

- Leaders have a suitable plan to employ three further teaching assistants in order to accommodate a further nine pupils.
- These independent school standards are likely to continue to be met if the school's number on roll increases from 90 to 99 pupils.

#### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

##### *All paragraphs*

- The material change part of this inspection considered the school's single central record (SCR) of vetting checks on the adults working at the school. The SCR is fully compliant. It includes the dates of all the required checks completed on the proprietors, governors, staff and volunteers.
- The independent school standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the school's number on roll increases from 90 to 99 pupils.

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

##### *All paragraphs*

- The material change part of this inspection considered the capacity and safety of the school's premises.
- The buildings continue to be clean, safe and well maintained.
- The medical room facility meets all the requirements. There is plentiful outdoor space. Hot water is safely regulated, and drinking water supplies are labelled as such. There are no concerns about indoor and outdoor lighting, the building's acoustics or the toilet and washing facilities. There are changing and shower facilities available to secondary-age pupils.
- An additional classroom, previously created and used for COVID-19 testing, is now available to be used for the teaching of additional pupils.
- The independent school standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the school's number on roll increases from 90 to 99 pupils.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

##### *Paragraph 32(1)(c)*

- The school's safeguarding policy is available online.
- This requirement continues to be met.

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

##### *Paragraph 34*

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met. Governors did not have effective systems in place to check the impact of leaders' actions.
- Leaders and governors have taken decisive and effective action to remedy the weaknesses identified in December 2021.

- Changes to the governing body are proving effective, as governors have sharpened their focus on both checking compliance with the independent school standards and monitoring the quality of education.
- Leaders have made positive links with external organisations and other schools. They have also worked closely and productively with colleagues in placing authorities.
- Arrangements to train staff, and to monitor and evaluate the school's work, are much improved and have had a demonstrably positive impact.
- As a result, leaders have ensured that all the requirements previously judged to be not met are now met. Moreover, leaders have secured improvements that mean all the independent school standards are now likely to be met consistently, including if the material change to increase the number of pupils to 99 is approved.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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. 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.

### The school now meets the following independent school standards

#### Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
  - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
  - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools
  - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).
- 2A(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil's parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;

- 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
- 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

### **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
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

### **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.

## School details

Unique reference number	131395
DfE registration number	305/6078
Inspection number	10246918

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	Day school for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	14
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Empowering Tomorrow's People
Chair	Elaine Lovett
Headteacher	George Mitchell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,000
Telephone number	01689 876 816
Website	<a href="http://www.brownsschool.co.uk">www.brownsschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@brownsschool.co.uk">info@brownsschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	7 to 9 December 2021

## Information about this school

- Brown's School is an independent special day school for pupils with education, health and care plans. Pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder and specific learning difficulties.
- The school caters for pupils aged nine to 18. There is no separate sixth-form provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the chair of the governing body has changed and two new governors have been appointed.

- The school's most recent inspection was a standard inspection in December 2021.
- The school does not make use of 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.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection since its last full inspection in December 2021. Following the full inspection, the school was asked to submit an action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted as 'not acceptable' in April 2022 and was subsequently rejected by the Department for Education (DfE). This progress monitoring inspection was unannounced.
- The focus of the inspection was to check whether the school complied with particular requirements within parts 1, 3, 6 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The inspection considered a range of evidence to consider leaders' work to improve the curriculum. The inspector visited lessons and met with a group of teachers.
- The inspector met with the headteacher regularly throughout the inspection. He also met with the chair of the proprietor body, who is also the school's principal. The inspector held discussions with two groups of pupils, including those in the sixth form.
- The inspector considered information relating to safeguarding and fire safety. He checked the school's compliance with the relationships and sex education requirements.
- The inspector was also asked to consider some concerns arising from complaints received by the DfE.
- There were no recent responses on Ofsted Parent View to consider.

## The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- The material change part of the inspection focused on checking whether the school is likely to comply with particular requirements within parts 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the independent school standards. The inspector toured the premises, checked the school's SCR of vetting checks on adults and considered evidence relating to health and safety and risk assessment.

## Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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