

Inspection of Break Through School

121 Nuxley Road, Belvedere DA17 5JX

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Break Through School belong to a true community, one which is inclusive and aspirational for all. Leaders have created a positive and welcoming environment. They give pupils opportunities to achieve. Pupils are safe here. They know that they can turn to any member of staff for help. Staff know, understand and care deeply for the pupils.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They work in partnership with parents and carers to help pupils meet these expectations. Leaders and staff build strong relationships with pupils. They help pupils to manage their individual needs. Pupils behave well. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, leaders deal with it effectively.

Pupils receive praise and reward for doing the right thing. There are trips to theme parks and pupils go bowling and trampolining. Leaders organise a range of activities to give pupils new experiences. For example, some pupils recently walked on the roof of a major London landmark building.

Staff here believe in the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants help them to learn the knowledge and skills they need to move on to the next stage of their education or training. Leaders ensure that every pupil secures a college place or apprenticeship.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of pupils. From Year 7 to Year 11, leaders prioritise the embedding of essential knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science. In Years 7 to 9, pupils study a broad range of subjects. These include history, geography, art and music. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can choose to study vocational subjects, such as construction, floristry, and hair and beauty. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum prepares pupils for the next stage of their education or training. Pupils receive appropriate careers information, education and guidance. They are successful in gaining places at local colleges to continue their studies.

Pupils join the school at different stages of their education. Leaders ensure that teachers check what pupils have learned in their previous schools. Teachers then adapt the curriculum to help pupils build up their knowledge, step by step. In some subjects, further curriculum thinking and training would help teachers to make these adaptations.

Teachers present new information and ideas well. They check pupils' understanding and revisit what pupils have learned before. This helps pupils to strengthen their knowledge and understanding over time. Teachers help pupils to work towards appropriate qualifications, such as functional skills. They make regular checks on pupils' work to identify individual areas for improvement. Pupils make significant progress at the school.

A large majority of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many pupils come to the school with an education, health and care (EHC) plan already in place. When pupils do not have an EHC plan, leaders use their expertise to identify any emerging needs. Leaders then secure the resources to support those needs. Teaching assistants provide effective individual support for pupils in lessons. Many pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Teaching assistants work in close collaboration with teachers to ensure that these needs are met.

Leaders encourage pupils to read. They have plenty of books and magazines available in social areas of the school. Pupils at an early stage of reading receive extra help. This includes some phonics teaching. However, further development of phonics teaching would ensure that pupils learned to read with fluency as quickly as possible.

Leaders have established a consistent approach to behaviour. This approach supports pupils in identifying their feelings and managing their own behaviour. Pupils take positive actions before their behaviour escalates. For example, pupils might ask a teaching assistant for a break from their work. Pupils receive praise and rewards for making the right choices. Staff know the pupils very well. They help pupils to manage their behaviour. In these ways, leaders minimise any disruption to learning.

Pupils learn about a wide range of topics that support their personal development. For example, they learn about equality and diversity, and citizenship. Leaders have implemented the statutory guidance on relationships and sex education. They also provide pupils with health education. Pupils learn about relationships in an age-appropriate way. Leaders also provide opportunities for pupils to visit London galleries and museums.

The proprietor body carries out its statutory obligations. It fulfils its role of setting strategy and holding school leaders to account well. The directors work in collaboration with school leaders to improve the school's provision. They have made significant impact in many areas since taking on their responsibilities. The curriculum is now much broader and they have improved staff welfare.

School leaders show an absolute determination to give pupils the best possible education. They are making a positive difference to pupils' lives. They have equipped staff with the knowledge and skills they need to meet pupils' complex needs. Staff enjoy working at the school. They say that it is like being part of a family. They feel well supported by leaders.

The school meets all the independent school standards and fulfils the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders show that they have both the capability and capacity to meet the independent school standards over time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have an acute awareness of the safeguarding risks to pupils. They have in-school counsellors to provide pupils at risk with ongoing support. Staff receive regular training and daily updates on individual pupils' circumstances. Staff are alert to the signs of concern in pupils. They report their concerns immediately. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to secure the help pupils need. They hold such agencies to account over their responsibilities.

Leaders complete all relevant pre-recruitment checks on staff. They publish the school safeguarding policy on the school website. The policy reflects current government guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils at an early stage of reading are not taught to read using a systematic phonics programme. This means that these pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that they train staff in the systematic teaching of phonics. They should ensure that pupils at an early stage of reading receive consistent phonics teaching so that these pupils learn to read fluently, as quickly as possible.
- Some foundation subjects are not led or taught by subject specialists. This means that teachers of those subjects do not routinely have the depth of subject knowledge and understanding to make the most appropriate adaptations to the curriculum for individual pupils. Leaders should ensure that they provide subject-specific training for leaders and teachers of foundation subjects.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	140039
DfE registration number	303/6001
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10242779
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	I E Informal Education Ltd
Chair	Tracey Storey
Headteacher	Henrietta Jordan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,525 to £59,340
Telephone number	01322 440049
Website	www.breakthroughschool.co.uk
Email address	info@breakthroughschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 to 21 June 2018

Information about this school

- The school is an alternative provision independent school.
- On 30 November 2021, the membership of the proprietor body, I.E. Informal Education Ltd, changed. The previous directors resigned and two new directors were appointed. The school is now a member of the Melrose Education Limited group of schools.
- There have been two additional inspections since the school's previous standard inspection in June 2018. In January 2019, a material change inspection took place to enable a change in premises and to increase the maximum number of pupils. In July 2019, a progress monitoring inspection took place.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school operates from two sites: 121 Nuxley Road, Belvedere DA17 5JX and 44 Nuxley Road, Belvedere DA17 5JG.
- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs, particularly pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, and speech, language and communication needs.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 one member of the proprietor body, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at documentation and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.

- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s surveys for pupils and staff. They also considered responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey for parents.
- Inspectors toured the school site and scrutinised a wide range of documentary evidence to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstone, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Alison Colenso

His Majesty’s Inspector

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