

Inspection of Bramfield House School

Walpole Road, Bramfield, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9AB

Inspection dates: 30 January to 1 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
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 benefit enormously from their time at Bramfield House. They are guided and supported to get back on track, many having had a tough time in the past. For many pupils, this is the first time they have felt settled. Pupils have found a school where they are happy, can be themselves and succeed.

The social buzz at breakfast each morning creates a relaxed atmosphere to ready pupils for the day ahead. Warm and respectful relationships shine through. Adults expect pupils to behave well and try hard in lessons. Because pupils feel respected and valued by adults, they step up to these expectations. Many gain qualifications which set them up well for when they leave the school at the end of Year 11.

Equally important are traits such as 'grit', 'spark' and 'adventure' that help pupils navigate the world. Whether tending the sheep in the farm area, learning circus skills or setting up a small business, pupils are expertly guided to build their resilience and interpersonal skills. Through the 'Bramfield Boy' programme, pupils benefit greatly, developing into well rounded young men as they move through the school. If things do go wrong, and pupils become dysregulated, staff are highly skilled to help pupils put things right.

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

Pupils learn a rich and broad curriculum. The carefully designed pathways ensure that pupils follow the most appropriate journey through the curriculum to meet their individual needs. Many pupils follow an academic pathway, providing them with opportunity to gain GCSEs and other recognised qualifications. The curriculum is designed to ensure pupils build on what they know already. Teachers use assessment well to check what pupils know, designing lessons that build sequentially so that pupils have a good grasp of what they are learning.

Academic pathways are complemented by a rich vocational offering. Pupils can undertake learning in areas such as construction, vehicle maintenance and catering, to name but a few. These subjects are taught by experts in their field. Pupils build detailed knowledge and skills, such as the concepts of 'aeration' and 'lamination' in catering. They apply this theoretical knowledge to their work in the kitchen producing restaurant quality food, such as pasta dishes and desserts.

Pupils who find reading tricky are well supported. Regular checks on what they know and can do ensure they are moved on promptly when they improve. Pupils read books that are well matched to their reading ability, while adults teach the phonics scheme consistently well. Adults are consistent in their approach to listening to pupils read. They model effectively and wait patiently so that the pupil masters it themselves.

Adults take into account pupils' academic and social needs that are identified in their education, health and care plan (EHC plan). The systems used to break EHC plan

outcomes into smaller, manageable steps is in transition. Staff have received useful training in developing small, measurable targets for pupils' individual learning plans, but this is still in the early stages. This means they do not always exactly identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to develop.

Pupils' personal development is catered for extremely well. They benefit enormously from a carefully designed programme that helps them develop the social and emotional skills needed for their future. Much of this is targeted specifically to the needs of individual pupils, helping them learn and develop important life skills. Pupils have a well-rounded understanding of how they are all different, celebrating these differences regularly. The 'Bramfield Boy' programme provides rich opportunities for pupils to not only develop important personal attributes, but to also make a difference in school and the local community. Gifts are often made and given to people in the local community, along with pupils supporting 'Halesworth in Bloom' with litter picking and weeding.

Staff have warm and respectful relationships with pupils, and this promotes the orderly feel to the school. This leads to a calm atmosphere with productive free time, helping pupils focus and have a physical or creative outlet. Pupils take ownership of their self-regulation and use whatever means to keep calm. The much-loved school dog, Lotte, is always on hand to offer comfort to those who need it. Pupils attend well. If a pupil's attendance drops too low, the school do all they can to find out why this is and turn things around.

The school has well-established systems and procedures to make sure the site is safe for pupils and staff. Regular and rigorous health and safety checks are made. The school identifies relevant risks that may be faced by pupils and staff, such as when using tools, machinery or when travelling. Sensible mitigations are in place to reduce these risks.

The proprietor and local governors work in a strategic way. They keep a close eye on the provision, ensuring that leaders are challenged to make the school even better. They balance this with the right levels of support. The strong oversight ensures that the school meets all the independent school standards. The buildings and extensive school grounds are well kept and safe. They provide pupils with a rich environment in which to thrive. The proprietor ensures that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some cases, the individual targets pupils are working towards are broad and do not exactly identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to

develop. This means that, at times, some intervention activities do not always match the intended learning. Leaders should ensure that they fully implement their planned changes to make sure individual targets precisely set out what pupils need to know, remember and be able to do.

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	124879
DfE registration number	935/6036
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10299172
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Leigh Bailey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000 to £151,000
Telephone number	01986 784 235
Website	www.bramfieldhouse.co.uk
Email address	info@bramfieldhouse.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 to 30 January 2020

Information about this school

- Bramfield House is a special school for boys aged seven to 16 years who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils have often been out of full-time education for long periods prior to admission.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Each pupil is funded by their local authority.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection in January 2020, the school received a material change inspection in July 2022. This was as a result of the school requesting an increase in the number of pupils on roll from 83 to 112. This was approved by the DfE.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023, having previously been the deputy headteacher. The school appointed a principal in September 2023 to oversee the wider school provision.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design and catering (design and technology). For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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 met with the principal, headteacher, assistant headteachers and a range of staff. The lead inspector held a meeting with regional director, operations director and two governors, along with holding telephone conversations with the

chair of the proprietor body. The lead inspector also held telephone conversations with representatives of two local authorities.

- Inspectors toured the premises to review the suitability of school buildings. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

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