Inspection of Beech Grove School

Forest Drive, Nonington, Dover, Kent CT15 4FB

Inspection dates:	30 April to 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Sixth-form provision	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	**Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at their happy, inclusive and welcoming school. They are extremely polite and considerate towards others. Pupils' exemplary attitudes toward their education are reflected in their extremely high rates of attendance. Across all phases, they make the most of their experiences in school and achieve well. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is shown by the high levels of engagement seen in every classroom. Younger children love exploring the extensive outside spaces. They talk animatedly about their work as they play in the exciting environment.

The school places a high importance on pupils' leadership skills. Younger pupils enjoy being mentored by their sixth-form peers. Pupils revel taking part in a rich variety of activities, such as culinary skills, orchestra, robotics and the ever-popular pigeon racing club.

Pupils have a strong sense of social justice and equality. They collect donations for the different causes they support. For example, they organised the recent 'ultra-relay' to raise funds for disadvantaged children in other parts of the world. Pupils understand fundamental British values, including the mutual respect and democratic principles. They know that discrimination of any kind is wrong. Pupils told inspectors that people should not be treated differently because of what they look like or believe in.

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

Pupils are fluent and independent readers. Sharing and reading books is an important part of the school's culture. Pupils talk passionately about the diverse and interesting range of books they enjoy. The curriculum creates opportunities for pupils to read and interpret various authors and genres. Children in the younger years wholeheartedly join in the songs, poems and rhymes which form part of everyday routines. Older students look forward to reading aloud and holding insightful discussions about the texts they encounter in the different subjects they study. Staff expertly provide extra support for any pupils who struggle. This helps these pupils to improve their reading skills quickly and effectively. One pupil said, 'Reading gives us a great feeling of independence.'

Pupils' excellent attitudes towards their school and others begin in the early years. Here, children demonstrate high levels of respect and consideration. They learn to share resources, take turns and play amicably. Further up the school, pupils told inspectors that unkindness is incredibly rare. This is because pupils value and understand the importance of being excellent role models. They describe their school as a 'peaceful and responsible community'.

The school's work to promote pupils' character is exceptional. Pupils have an excellent understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of life. For example, they learn to appreciate differences in the world because of the rich and extensive experiences provided by the school. These include visits to different places

of worship and learning about other cultures, festivals and religions. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They are taught how to stay safe online, and to understand what factors contribute to a positive relationship. Pupils think nothing of volunteering their support for the different causes they choose. For instance, welding and assembling benches for play areas in Ukraine, catering for refugees in Calais and helping to repair a church in Birmingham. As one younger pupil said, 'It makes us happy to know that we are making a difference by supporting others.'

The school's curriculum is interesting and engaging in all areas. It provides teachers with clear information about the precise knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject and the order in which it should be taught. Staff receive the training that they need to adapt resources and equipment to meet the needs of any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). If a pupil is having difficulties with aspects of English or mathematics, they are identified quickly and given appropriate support. As a result, pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers.

The curriculum is brought to life by an interesting range of trips, visits and experiences. For example, in history, older pupils visit war graves in France and Belgium. Younger pupils visit places such as Battle Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral to learn about their locality. Pupils' learning is further enriched by visitors and experts from an array of specialist fields, including science, engineering, the arts and music. Older pupils receive excellent careers guidance through personalised sessions. They are also extremely well supported to make their choices through visits to colleges, universities and employers beyond the community.

Staff in the sixth form provide excellent opportunities for pupils to discuss and develop their secure subject-specific knowledge and technical vocabulary. They skilfully help students to make links in their work and deepen their knowledge about the different subjects they study. Staff review students' progress continuously and are always on hand to provide highly effective support when needed. However, for younger pupils, this is not as strong. This is because, in some subjects, teachers do not make sure that pupils embed the important knowledge they need to learn well. They do not check and help pupils make links with what they have learned previously. Where this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Staff are unwaveringly committed to their roles. They receive well-considered opportunities to develop their careers, undertake research and collaborate with their international colleagues in the Bruderhof community. They are proud of the positive difference they make in pupils' lives. Parents are full of praise for the school. They recognise and prize how staff help their children achieve their goals and wider aspirations. As one parent said, 'We are happy that we as parents can work with the staff as a team for the benefit of our children.'

The proprietor body ensures that the school and boarding premises are well maintained and consistently meets the required health and safety standards. They use their extensive experience and knowledge of the school's specialist curriculum to

hold leaders to account for the quality of education pupils receive. Together with the education committee, the proprietor body ensures that the school meets the independent school standards, including the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 securely.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Sometimes, teachers do not help younger pupils make links between what they have learned previously and what they are learning currently. Where this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff have strong curriculum pedagogy and effectively support pupils to remember long term the content they have been taught by making links in their knowledge.

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	131181
DfE registration number	886/6073
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10322064
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Church Communities UK
Chair	Bernard Hibbs
Headteacher	Jeffrey Maendel (executive headteacher)
Annual fees	£4,000 to £10,000 (external day pupils)
Telephone number	01304 842 980
Website	beechgroveschool.co.uk
Email address	SchoolBGR@ccimail.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 to 6 December 2019

Information about this school

- Beech Grove School is situated within the Beech Grove Bruderhof Christian Community on a 140-acre site in rural Kent. Established in 1996, the school provides education for children aged from four to 19 years.
- The majority of pupils who attend are part of the community. Where this is the case, parents are not required to pay a fee. However, the school also admits a number of external pupils whose parents pay tuition.
- Children aged four to six attend kindergarten. Pupils aged six years and upwards attend the Junior School, which is for 1st Grade to 8th Grade, equivalent to Years 2 to 9. Older pupils attend the Senior School, which is for 9th Grade to 12th Grade, equivalent to Years 10 to 13.
- The school is one of two schools in England which are owned and run by Church Communities UK, a registered charity run by a board of trustees.
- An education committee is responsible to the board of trustees for governance of the school.
- The school's executive headteacher is also responsible for the proprietor's other school in Robertsbridge, East Sussex.
- The school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The school currently provides boarding for 25 pupils aged 14 to 18 living in the boarding provision.
- The school does not currently use alternative 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the boarding provision.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the chair of the proprietor body, a member of the education committee, the executive headteacher, senior leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed in Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The lead inspector spoke to some parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors also considered the views of staff during meetings with them.
- The lead inspector reviewed and scrutinised a range of documents and policies linked to the standards before and during the inspection. This included the school's curriculum policy, careers programme policy, health and safety policies, the annual school board report and minutes of the senior school strategy meetings.
- 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.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kate Fripp	His Majesty's Inspector

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