

# Browns School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	305/6078
Unique Reference Number	131395
Inspection number	330396
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Browns School caters for primary aged pupils between the ages of 6 and 12 years with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, social communication difficulties and Asperger's syndrome. It opened in 1997 with five pupils and now has 32 pupils on roll. There are many more boys than girls. Most pupils are placed at the school by their parents, although two of the eight pupils with statements of special educational need are placed here by their local authorities. The school aims to 'provide a programme of lessons to alleviate literacy and numeracy difficulties; to promote enquiring minds and an eagerness to be involved in the world around them; and to give the opportunity to develop successful learning strategies and acquire essential skills to last for a lifetime'.

## Evaluation of the school

The school meets its aims and provides a good quality of education. A particular strength is the curriculum, which is outstanding in its breadth and quality. In addition to all that the pupils might expect from a mainstream primary school, specialist provision meets their specific needs well. Teaching is consistently good and there are examples of outstanding practice. As a result, pupils make good progress, particularly in reading, spelling and art, and they achieve the challenging targets in their individual education plans. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils gain immensely in confidence and self-esteem, most having struggled to succeed in their previous schools, and they behave well. The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The headteacher and staff are committed to the care and achievement of all pupils in this inclusive school. Regulations not met at the time of the last inspection now meet the requirements, so all regulations are met.

## Quality of education

While the overall quality of education is good, the curriculum is outstanding. It covers all subjects in the National Curriculum, religious education and French. In addition, specialist staff are brought in to provide information and communication technology, sport, music, drama, yoga, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy. The breadth of the curriculum is evident in the high quality of displays of pupils' work, including displays on the Chinese New Year, Ancient Greece and world faiths. Teachers' detailed half-termly lesson plans are based on

appropriate schemes of work. They are monitored by the headteacher to ensure they provide for appropriate progression. All pupils have individual education plans and some have statements of special need. The curriculum meets pupils' special needs exceptionally well by focusing on developing their skills in literacy and in organising their own work. In addition, pupils learn to manage their own behaviour and social interactions. The performing arts are particularly strong and develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. All pupils participate in the annual musical production and summer concert, and displays of their art work show they reach high standards. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is delivered appropriately across subjects, but pupils would like more emphasis on health issues. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors, including visits to the Tower of London and Globe Theatre, and a visiting medieval history group. However, some pupils and parents would like more visits. Many pupils enjoy the various extra-curricular activities and the football team was justly proud of its recent victory over a local primary school team. As one parent comments about the curriculum, it is 'amazing when you consider the size of the school'.

Teaching is consistently good, and there are examples of outstanding practice, Staff attend regular and relevant training. Lessons are structured well to lead pupils in a step by step approach to the learning objective. This results in a good pace that sustains pupils' interest. At the start of lessons, teachers explain what the pupils will learn and why, and they engage pupils in assessing their own progress at the end of the lesson. Particularly effective teaching strategies seen were the use of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to engage pupils in the lesson, modelling the skills required to support pupils' independent work, and questioning to extend their understanding. Teachers make good use of pupils' individual education plans to match literacy lessons to individual needs. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support individuals and groups. As a result, pupils make good progress towards the challenging targets in their plans. Use of assessment to match work to the range of ability in other subjects is inconsistent. Teachers include encouraging comments when marking pupils' work, but they do not always identify what the pupils need to do next to improve it.

The effective teaching leads to pupils making good progress in lessons, particularly in reading and spelling. Pupils say their reading has improved and they can now write for themselves, which many could not do prior to joining the school. This gives them the confidence to move on to secondary school. Most pupils reach levels expected for their age in science and many do so in mathematics. Staff carry out a range of detailed assessments and they are beginning to track progress in reading and writing each term. However, they are not yet analysing the range of available information to measure pupils' overall progress from their starting points, including tracking progress in mathematics.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

This aspect of pupils' development, particularly their growth in confidence and self-esteem, is outstanding and a special feature of the school. Most pupils join the school from mainstream education where their specific needs have not been met. This often results in a sense of failure. One parent, whose son had suffered from low self-esteem due to the difficulties he experienced in his previous school, wrote, 'I cannot praise enough the huge difference [Browns School] has made to [her son's] life and in essence we have our son back'. In their questionnaires, pupils wrote about their appreciation of the help they are given in the school. One wrote, 'Browns is the best school I have ever been to'. Pupils say they enjoy school very much, particularly the many opportunities for practical work, and this is evident in their enthusiasm for learning, in the pride they take in their achievements and in their satisfactory attendance. Positive relationships with all staff, often enhanced by humour and always by praise, promote pupils' confidence and willingness to contribute to lessons and other activities. Pupils learn to speak articulately and confidently, and develop good social and organisational skills to support them in their future learning. Some pupils enter the school with complex needs which include asperger's syndrome. The school manages their behaviour well and enables them to develop self-control. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good and they learn to live by a strong moral code. Through assemblies, religious education and art, pupils develop respect for themselves and others, including those from other faiths and cultures. They learn about responsibility in public institutions and services, such as the health service, and willingly take responsibility as prefects and form captains. They contribute positively to their school, the environment, and to national and global charities.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school promotes the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, including child protection, well. Pupils thrive in the safe, secure and caring school environment. The headteacher and staff know the pupils and their needs well. However, a few pupils say they do not know who to talk to if they are worried. Pupils say that staff deal with any bullying or behavioural issues effectively. They learn to control their own behaviour well through the clear system of 'plus points' which lead to rewards, and 'red dots' which lead to sanctions. Consistent application of the behaviour policy by all staff results in a calm environment for learning. Since the last inspection, all issues relating to safeguarding and health and safety, including risk assessments and staff training, have been addressed, although the school does not routinely brief new staff on the procedures for safeguarding pupils. Any pupils at risk are identified early and effective arrangements are put in place to keep them engaged. There is a good level of staffing, including support staff, and pupils are supervised well in school and on visits. Pupils understand the need to keep safe and to engage in sport and healthy eating, although some packed lunches include chocolate bars, and a few pupils comment that they would welcome more health education.

The school meets all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Since the last inspection, the school has improved its procedures for checking the suitability of all staff to work with children. The procedures for confirming the suitability of the proprietor and staff meet regulations.

### School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively and safely. The school is situated on a very attractive site, with a large playing field. The single storey buildings, including a large sports hall, are clean, well maintained and adapted for wheelchair access. A new building is in progress which will provide additional classrooms, a medical room and toilet facilities for disabled people. There are sufficient facilities for current pupils, including appropriate temporary medical facilities until the new building has been completed. All required health and safety tests are carried out regularly and the premises and accommodation meet all statutory regulations.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents, carers and others, much of which is on the website or in the school prospectus. Parents receive an interim and a full report on their children's progress each year. These meet requirements, although they do not include next steps to aid improvement. The reports are issued and discussed with parents on two Saturday mornings. In addition, individual education plans are reviewed and new targets are shared with parents twice a year. A newsletter each term and a daily contact book, together with social events organised by the parents' association, successfully engage parents in the work of the school. Most families responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and the overwhelming majority are pleased with the school's work. A small minority of parents are concerned about their children's progress and preparation for secondary school. The school is beginning to make improvements in measuring the progress of individual pupils to share this information with parents. A similar number of parents expressed concern about the challenges posed by the behaviour of some pupils and this concern was shared by a few pupils. The playground incident log showed some boisterous behaviour but the school has addressed this appropriately. Some parents noted in the questionnaire that they did not understand the complaints procedure. The school prospectus states the policy is available on request, along with other school policies.

## Procedures for handling complaints

Since the last inspection, the school has improved its complaints procedure. The procedure now meets all regulations, including the setting of clear timescales and providing for the establishment of a hearing which parents may attend, before a panel that includes three people independent of the school, and for the panel to make its findings and recommendations known to all parties.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations").

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- analyse the wide range of assessment information available to measure the progress of each pupil from their starting points, including in mathematics
- ensure all pupils have a key person to talk to if they are worried
- brief all new staff in safeguarding procedures.

## Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	√			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils		√		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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## School details

Name of school	Browns School		
DCSF number	3056078		
Unique reference number	131395		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1997		
Age range of pupils	6 – 12		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 27	Girls: 5	Total: 32
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 7	Girls: 1	Total: 8
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14700		
Address of school	Cannock House Hawstead Lane Chelsfield Orpington Kent BR6 7PH		
Telephone number	01689 876816		
Fax number	01689 827118		
Email address	info@brownsschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr M Brown		
Proprietor	Mr & Mrs M Brown		
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater HMI		
Dates of inspection	4-5 March 2009		