

K-BIS Theatre School

Clermont Hall, Cumberland Road, Brighton, BN1 6SL

Inspection dates 13–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points from a balanced curriculum of performing arts lessons and an appropriate range of academic subjects.
- Good teaching fosters pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort so that they develop good communication, personal and social skills and excellent performance skills which inspire them to achieve well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils work well together and show consideration for each other. They develop a good sense of community awareness and understanding of others.
- Provision in the sixth form is good. The curriculum is flexible, ensuring pupils have a range of subjects which suit their personal choice and include involvement in the performing arts, dance and musical sessions.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety, both in and out of the classroom are good. This small school provides a nurturing family environment where pupils are willing to help and look after each other and those who are younger. They show good levels of respect and are keen to learn.
- The principal, who is the proprietor, ensures that all the standards for independent schools are met. She is skilful in identifying ways to improve the school further. Pupils' well-being and safety are a high priority.
- Pupils report that they feel safe. Parents are satisfied with the provision for their children and say that they make good progress in their personal development and in their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not always checked rigorously enough. The principal observes teaching informally, but this process does not include clear target setting or follow-on checks to help staff improve their teaching to be consistently outstanding.
- Pupils, particularly younger pupils, have too few opportunities to be outdoors or to play outside to extend their learning.
- Teachers know their pupils well, give individual support and check pupils' progress in lessons. However, there is no systematic recording of progress and attainment for staff and pupils to use to develop teaching and learning further.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed the impact of 16 lessons and performance arts sessions taught by the principal and specialist teaching staff, looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with the principal, specialist performing arts and academic teaching staff, parents and pupils.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included the school's website, information about pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its work, and the pupils' workbooks. Records relating to behaviour, attendance, and safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- There were no staff questionnaires completed.
- There were too few responses to the online Parent View questionnaire for the information to be published.

Inspection team

Flora Bean, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- K-Bis is a small, independent day school specialising in the performing arts.
- It is located in Brighton and is registered to take pupils between the ages of five and 18 years.
- The school was opened by the proprietor, who is also the principal, in 1997 and occupies former church buildings.
- The proprietor has sole responsibility for governance of the school.
- The school aims to offer pupils specialist education in the performing arts, a range of professional performance opportunities and an appropriate age-related academic curriculum.
- The principal runs a theatrical agency from the school to provide opportunities for pupils to experience real live theatre and dance work. The school organises chaperones for all performing arts assignments so that pupils are accompanied at all times in line with the local safeguarding board guidance.
- There are currently 21 boys and girls aged six to 17 years on roll.
- There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The curriculum has a clear focus on the performing arts, as expected in a performing arts school. Most afternoon sessions are devoted to rehearsals for plays and concerts and to the specialist studies taken by the pupils.
- The performing arts curriculum includes drama, improvisation, voice, speech, 'stage combat' and audition techniques. Dance sessions include modern, jazz, tap, ballet, contemporary and choreography. Music sessions include music theory, musical theatre and singing, augmented by individual singing tuition.
- The school provides sixth form tuition in a range of A-level subjects for those wishing to pursue their interest in the performing arts together with academic study for A levels.
- The range of post-16 courses is flexible to suit individual choices and includes English language and literature, Spanish, speech and drama, media studies, psychology, art and design, performing arts and dance.
- The school was last inspected in June 2008.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - using the informal discussions with staff and checks on the school's work, including the quality of teaching, to develop targets for staff which are followed up to improve staff performance further
 - establishing a more formal cycle of appraisals to enhance the quality of teaching further
 - working more closely with the staff as a whole to check pupils' progress, and establishing a whole-school evaluation system to aid improvements to pupils' learning.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be outdoors and for younger pupils to play outside more often to extend their learning or social times.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal ensures that all the independent school standards are met.
- The principal continues to sustain good quality teaching and high standards of behaviour. Pupils make good progress in their academic and performing arts work and personal development.
- The quality of teaching is good. The principal supports the teaching staff well through informal observations. However, there is no clear target setting with follow up for staff to help develop their teaching further.
- The principal runs a performing arts agency. This promotes good opportunities for pupils to gain experience in stage performance and in the wider world of show business. These opportunities contribute well to pupils' overall performing arts experience.
- The school's professional approach ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted well. All pupils take part in a wide variety of theatrical and musical performances. All staff foster good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. They tackle the slightest hint of any reported discriminatory behaviour immediately. Pupils learn to accept success and disappointment with dignity and maturity and work well together.
- Teaching staff, most of who work part time, take full responsibility for the subjects and classes they teach. They are effective in planning and teaching a broad curriculum so that pupils are challenged at the appropriate level. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress in literacy and numeracy and across the wider curriculum. However, there is no systematic recording of pupils' progress and attainment.
- The school provides many valuable opportunities for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Teaching promotes regular discussion in citizenship lessons of pupils' own and others' cultural experiences both at home and abroad. In this way, pupils actively learn about British values.
- The principal and teaching staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The small school and family atmosphere enable pupils to develop self-esteem and confidence. Pupils show high levels of independence and responsibility.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are well supported in lessons and in the performing arts with help from experienced staff. Work is matched to their needs with thought and care.
- The school provides clear academic and careers guidance for pupils who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Safeguarding procedures, pertaining to performing arts schools, are in line with those of the local safeguarding board and are carefully adhered to and implemented effectively. Arrangements for pupils to participate in any out-of-school assignments ensure that pupils are accompanied at all times.
- The school's arrangements for the safety and security of pupils are good. Pupils are taught how to remain safe both in and out of school and online. They discuss how to consider risk and to keep safe. The principal is available for pupils to talk to. Pupils talk highly of her support for them.
- Sixth form provision is effective. Pupils who wish to remain in the school have clear guidance from staff and a good choice of academic subjects with full involvement in the performing arts programme.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The principal is committed in her role of responsibility and duty of care for all pupils. She sustains highly professional standards in all aspects of school life including behaviour, attendance and punctuality.
 - She knows the performing arts section of her school well but teaching and checking of progress are insufficiently overseen to become outstanding.
 - She has recently appointed an administration officer to help improve the overall running of the school. The guidelines for the welfare and safeguarding of pupils are clear and implemented effectively by all staff.
 - Parents are given clear guidelines on the expectations for their children to attend the school. They receive termly reports on their children's progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good****Behaviour:**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy the rich variety of performing arts and academic subjects they study. They are motivated and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to achieve well.
- The pupils rise to the high expectations set by the school. They are polite, courteous and well mannered.
- There is no disruption in lessons or in rehearsals, including the youngest children who demonstrate exceptionally high levels of self-control in their behaviour. Pupils say, 'we are like a family and we look after each other.' The older children show initiative quite spontaneously in looking after the younger ones. They, in turn, enjoy participating in rehearsals, always under the watchful eye of the principal.
- The older pupils help to look after the younger ones developing a clear sense of social responsibility. In turn, the younger pupils observe good role models, are well supported and enjoy being part of whole-school productions and performing arts events. While pupils enjoy their indoor activities, not enough opportunities are provided for outdoor activities or play to extend their learning and social times, particularly for younger pupils.
- Pupils say that there is little bullying. On occasion, if pupils have a disagreement, there is always someone to talk to and issues are quickly resolved. The principal has an open-door policy. This encourages pupils' trust and willingness to share any concerns, which promotes understanding and tolerance within a close school community.
- Pupils enjoy the challenges set for them, and develop well as individuals. This helps them strive to achieve their best. They celebrate each other's successes and learn to accept disappointments and through this process become mature and responsible young people.

Safety:

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good, both within the school premises and out of school. In discussion, parents confirm that their children feel safe. Children themselves say that they feel safe at school.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are in place and are in line with the local safeguarding board guidelines for a performing arts school. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. Arrangements for the recruitment of staff and appropriate training are adhered to well.
- Pupils are accompanied at all times when out of school on any assignment and those accompanying them are fully aware of their responsibilities. This ensures that they feel safe.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The school ensures that teaching is typically good. Pupils expect to be challenged in lessons, respond well and work hard in response to the variety of tasks set for them.
- In Key Stage 2, teaching promotes pupils' literacy and numeracy understanding well so that pupils make good progress and develop secure skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are experienced. They ensure teaching suits individual pupils well with appropriate tasks so that pupils know what they have to do to make progress.
- The teaching of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is good and pupils make good progress. Pupils use ICT to learn to work both on their own and as a group.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4, teaching is well planned to ensure pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding, including of literacy and mathematics. Teaching helps develop pupils' thinking and keeps them fully engaged. Teachers develop discussion and debate well and pupils like presenting their ideas and then testing them in discussion with others.
- Teaching challenges the most able pupils' level of learning, with focused questioning and extended work. Pupils rise to the challenge well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and have good help in lessons and in the performing arts in response to their specific learning need.
- Performing arts lessons help pupils to develop excellent speaking and reading skills. The imaginative variety of dance lessons helps pupils to develop excellent creative, aesthetic and physical skills. As a result, pupils develop good levels of confidence, self-esteem and stamina.
- Assessment of pupils' work in lessons is accurate and progress is checked on a regular basis but this is not used centrally to bring about overall improvement. Pupils' work is marked well in Key Stage 2, but not always fully up to date in other year groups. However, discussion with pupils indicates that they know how well they are doing and how to improve in their work.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers work with pupils and give clear guidance so that pupils know

what they have to do and are able to learn well and work individually and independently.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is good because they are challenged to work hard, develop their key academic skills and to participate in all activities. They have good individual support when required.
- Pupils often arrive mid-term with below levels expected for their age in literacy and numeracy. With additional help they make rapid progress from their starting points.
- In the mixed-age junior class, literacy and numeracy are a key focus and pupils develop reading and writing skills rapidly. They also make good progress in numeracy and ICT and use computers regularly to support their learning. Pupils work at expected levels and above over time for their age and ability.
- Transition between years is smooth and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The most able pupils make good progress in their academic work as they are enabled to work at their own pace in lessons with additional support from teaching staff. The performing arts lessons provide additional challenge to develop pupils' skills.
- Performing arts lessons contribute well to all pupils' overall achievement in literacy. Pupils are exposed to a rich variety of story through fables, plays, spoken verse and improvisation and are confident readers and performers. For example, an imaginative devised piece on Pandora's Box involved all pupils who were developing excellent speaking, reading and listening skills.
- All pupils achieve well in singing as this is an integral part of the performing arts lessons. Speech and drama lessons ensure pupils are well prepared for examinations in the performing arts and for stage work both in and out of school.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make good progress from their starting points. They develop good skills in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics. For example, in English pupils were developing excellent analytical skills when studying 'Of Mice and Men'. They discussed racism and discrimination and linked ideas from their rehearsals of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and drama activities on Robert Louis Stevenson's poem 'To Minnie'.
- In mathematics, older pupils understand fractions, square roots, vectors or simultaneous equations and progress well to GCSE level.
- Pupils' scientific achievement is good and pupils research well using ICT and enjoy carrying out investigations.
- In History, Year 10 students made good progress in their understanding of discrimination and the changing role of women as they discussed the suffragette movement.
- GCSE results are good: 100% pass rate at grades A* to E in 2012 to 2014 and improving each year; and in 2014, a 60% pass rate at grades A* to C, including 100% at A*/A in drama. Pupils generally achieve their predicted grades in a good range of subjects.
- Pupils receive clear advice on choosing GCSE subjects and for the next stage of their education. Many have good opportunities to experience the performing arts world through the school's agency.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Sixth form provision is good. The principal manages the sixth form provision well and provides the appropriate specialist teaching for students to meet their individual choice of subjects as far as is possible.
- Sixth form provision is small and generally taken up by students who wish to continue to pursue the performing arts with related academic subjects.
- Students in the sixth form take part fully in the programme of performing arts.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers' knowledge of their subject areas is very secure. They inspire students to learn and to work independently when required.
- Students make good progress because they are given good support in small classes where their progress is regularly checked by teaching staff so they know the areas to work on to improve.
- Students are given clear guidance and help with future plans in pursuit of a university degree or a career in the performing arts.
- The most recent results for sixth form provision are from 2011 and students achieved good results to pursue the next stage of their education and life in modern Britain.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	131463
Inspection number	443475
DfE registration number	846/6022

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Marcia King
Chair	David Hill
Headteacher	Marcia King
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,747 – £5,940
Telephone number	01273 566739
Email address	k-bis@live.co.uk

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