

Brown's School

Hawstead Lane, Chelsfield, Orpington, Kent BR6 7PH

Inspection dates

31 October–2 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school's work to keep pupils as safe as possible is now effective. Pupils love coming to Brown's, feel safe and are well cared for.
- The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school to others and speak extremely positively about the impact of the school's work.
- The curriculum appropriately meets pupils' complex needs. It is well balanced, developing pupils' academic knowledge and skills alongside their social, independent living and communication skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils attend well, listen, work hard, respect each other and are eager to be successful.
- Staff are truly committed. They form a united, energetic team who balance a deeply caring and nurturing approach with high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength. Pupils engage in a range of community activities and learn about British values on a daily basis.
- The school's sharp focus on developing pupils' social skills and emotional well-being and the provision of a range of therapies contribute to pupils' outstanding personal development.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes are good. Teachers are increasingly using the school's new assessment system to good effect; and leaders now know how much progress pupils are making in all subjects.
- Leaders have begun some effective work, through monitoring, modelling and internal training, to secure consistently high-quality teaching.
- Governance is now strong. Together, the proprietor, governors and leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes, by:
 - using the new assessment system both to plan consistently well-pitched lessons and to provide an accurate measure of pupils' academic and personal progress over time
 - sharing the most effective teaching practice as part of teachers' professional development to secure consistently high-quality teaching across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have taken effective action since the previous full standard inspection. As a result, the school is a safe place and all the independent school standards are met.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. It is effectively planned, personalised, and especially well integrated with a range of therapies (including occupational, speech and language, art and canine therapy) and activities to develop pupils' social skills. Pupils in key stages 2 and 3 follow an adapted national curriculum and attend 'forest school', while pupils at key stage 4 have a number of options, including qualifications in English, mathematics and science, food technology, physical education, art and design and computing. The quality of careers education for secondary-aged pupils, especially for those in Year 11, is strong. Leaders are working to accredit more learning, and to introduce new therapies, as the curriculum develops.
- The school offers a range of additional activities and events. These include visits abroad, annual 'community days', baking for the local homeless shelter, a peer mentoring programme and a democratically elected school council. Pupils also visit art galleries, museums and theatres. These have a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are extremely positive about their children's experiences at Brown's. They say that one of the many strengths of the school is the staff's ability to truly understand their children's complex needs.
- The school is well staffed by a positive, energetic and determined team. Teachers, therapists and learning support assistants work together effectively as one united group. Pupils speak very positively about the adults in the school.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong and improving further under new leadership. A programme of 'learning walks', lesson observations and checks on teachers' planning ensures that leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Leaders acknowledge that the highly effective practice in the school could be usefully shared more widely and often, through peer observation and the school's internal training programme.
- The school's commitment to teaching pupils about equality and preparing them for life in modern Britain is very strong. Pupils are taught to be open-minded and respectful. They are generally very kind to each other. Bullying is exceptionally rare, and dealt with rapidly and effectively when it arises.
- This inspection included consideration of the school's request to increase its number on roll to 90. The premises have been adapted and additional space created, including a new classroom, kitchen, and additional rooms for individual or small-group learning. The school can therefore safely accommodate up to 90 pupils. It is likely that the independent school standards will continue to be met if this material change is implemented.

Governance

- Governance, which was embryonic at the previous full standard inspection, is now an increasingly effective aspect of the school's leadership and management.
- The governing body draws upon members' wide-ranging experiences and expertise, including parental representation, to hold leaders to account and to provide appropriate support, advice and challenge.
- Governors were instrumental in ensuring that the concerns raised at the previous full inspection were dealt with quickly and robustly.
- Governors now regularly visit the school to check compliance with the independent school standards, to listen to pupils' views and to work with leaders on implementing the school's ambitious development plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's leaders facilitate a vigilant safeguarding culture. There is no complacency; staff are pro-active and have a solid understanding of the most pertinent risks which the pupils at Brown's face. This is because staff are well trained, regularly and in line with the latest statutory guidance, to recognise signs that pupils may be at risk. Staff know when to refer concerns, following the guidance in the school's robust policies and procedures, and leaders follow them up tenaciously.
- Almost all parents say they trust leaders and staff to keep their children safe; and the pupils themselves say they feel safe in their school.
- The school's safeguarding policy is compliant with the latest statutory guidance, and is available on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers effectively balance care, nurture and patience with high expectations. As a result, pupils work hard, learn well and typically make good progress.
- Teachers' thoughtful planning and collaboration with therapists ensure that pupils are well supported, appropriately challenged and generally fully engaged in learning. Where teaching is especially effective, such as in English, teachers' questioning is sharply focused, no learning time is wasted and pupils make very strong progress.
- Pupils enjoy very positive relationships with the adults who support them. This enables them to feel increasingly confident to seek guidance, to ask questions and to contribute to discussion. The deployment of learning support assistants is generally highly effective; pupils receive an appropriate balance of support but are also challenged to work independently.
- The school prioritises the development of pupils' reading skills especially well. Daily whole-school reading sessions are well organised and effective.
- A new evidence-based assessment system was introduced in September 2017.

Assessments are now undertaken to identify pupils' starting points, and the progress they make in all subjects. Teachers are therefore in a position to plan more effectively for pupils to make at least good progress; and pupils are more aware of what they need to do to achieve at the level of which they are capable. However, the system is not yet applied consistently by all staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Provision includes integrated therapeutic input from a clinical psychologist, speech and language and occupational therapists and an art therapist, which help to meet some of the needs identified in pupils' education, health and care plans. The curriculum's strong focus on personal development enables pupils to rapidly develop their social and communication skills, self-confidence and emotional well-being.
- All pupils have named 'trusted adults' they can go to for support. Pupils say they know there are always adults around to help them.
- Pupils confirm that bullying is not a problem at Brown's.
- Pupils leave Brown's very well prepared for their next steps, and to lead safe and productive lives.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils make excellent progress in managing their emotions and understanding their own needs. Pupils' behaviour in class and around their school is usually excellent.
- Staff are patient, calm, positive and know pupils very well. As a result, they are able to de-escalate potentially challenging situations before they arise.
- Pupils know and follow the school's expectations. They understand the clear consequences of poor behaviour and enjoy the 'Brown's bonus' rewards given during Friday assemblies for when they 'get it right'. Pupils were proud to show the inspector their positive scores on their daily behaviour sheets.
- Attendance and punctuality are excellent overall.
- Incidents of serious misbehaviour and physical interventions, which are exceptionally rare, are thoroughly documented and analysed well by leaders to avoid repetition.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's new assessment system is starting to provide leaders with information to analyse pupils' progress across the school, by different pupil groups, and by subjects. This shows that, so far this term, pupils of all ages are making typically good progress across the curriculum. Pupils make especially strong progress in English and art.
- Pupils make good progress in writing and especially in reading. This is partly due to

effective phonics teaching and the school's consistent approach to the daily teaching of reading. Pupils are also making good progress in mathematics.

- Pupils achieve good outcomes at GCSE, in their functional skills assessments and in some vocational qualifications. This prepares them well for their next steps. For example, all Year 11 leavers in July 2018 are now successfully learning in further education colleges.
- Pupils make very significant personal progress, especially in their social and communication skills, and in their self-confidence and emotional well-being. However, this is not yet consistently recorded.

School details

Unique reference number	131395
DfE registration number	305/6078
Inspection number	10055476

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 special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Elaine Lovett
Chair	Sarah Mortiboys
Headteacher	Elaine Lovett
Annual fees (day pupils)	From £25,000
Telephone number	01689 876816
Website	www.brownsschool.co.uk
Email address	info@brownsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–13 July 2017

Information about this school

- Brown's School is an independent special day school for pupils who have education, health and care plans related to their autism spectrum disorder and/or specific learning difficulties. Some pupils also have additional needs such as social, emotional and mental health difficulties and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Pupils are placed and funded by a range of local authorities.

- The school's most recent inspection was a progress monitoring inspection in January 2018

which also considered and recommended the school's application to make a material change to its registration. As a result, the school is now registered to admit up to 70 pupils aged six to 18.

- The school is currently operating beyond its registered capacity, as there are 72 pupils on roll. However, leaders have requested an increase in capacity to 90 pupils.
- Though there are a very few pupils aged over 16, there is no separate sixth form provision.
- The school's previous full standard inspection was in July 2017.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector jointly observed teaching with senior leaders. He met with two groups of pupils, heard pupils read, and spoke with staff and pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress and their attendance and behaviour. He also looked at a range of pupils' work.
- The inspector had several meetings, including with the proprietor, leaders and all available teaching, therapy and support staff. The inspection also considered the 21 surveys completed by staff.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two members of the governing body. He also scrutinised the minutes of governance meetings.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including school policies, logs, evidence of staff training and information related to safeguarding and health and safety.
- The inspection considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also spoke with two parents by telephone.
- The inspector toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.
- The inspector also considered the school's request to make a material change to its registration, which proposes an increase in capacity to 90 pupils.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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