

Brewood Secondary School

86 London Road, Deal, Kent CT14 9TR

Inspection dates

18–20 October 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school well. Since his appointment, he has consolidated the school's strengths and gained a clear understanding of what needs to improve.
- Leaders at every level work well together and aspire to make the school outstanding. They are beginning to make the changes required for this to be the case, including refining the way pupil progress information is used.
- Staff at all levels work as a collegiate team. They care deeply about the welfare of the pupils in their care. Their individual and collective dedication is admirable.
- Because they understand the needs of pupils well, teachers and instructors plan and deliver good-quality lessons, both in and outside the classroom.
- The school's curriculum suits its pupils well. Because of this, the majority of pupils engage well with their learning and enjoy coming to school.
- Senior leaders and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Despite many pupils having suffered very serious disruption to their education prior to joining the school, most settle to make good or better progress after joining Brewood.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well because staff understand their complex needs and work hard to provide the support and care required.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from other vulnerable groups do well here.
- The school's sixth form provision is good and improving.
- The manner in which the board of directors monitor and challenge school leaders to improve the school is effective, but evolving to introduce a more local element to governance.
- Despite their severe social and emotional needs, most pupils behave well. However, some pupils struggle to conduct themselves well all of the time, leading to some instances of disruptions to learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine the school's system to track pupil progress so that:
 - teachers are able to use it more effectively to identify gaps in learning and plan for accelerated progress, leading to outstanding outcomes for pupils
 - leaders are more readily able to identify where progress is not as good as it should be in order for pupil outcomes to become outstanding.
- Increase the impact that middle leaders have on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that outcomes for pupils improve to become outstanding.
- Accelerate the planned changes in governance so that school leaders can benefit from a more localised element of support and challenge in order to improve the school further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since being appointed in March 2016, the headteacher has wasted no time in identifying the school's strengths and acting on the areas that need developing further. He understands the varying and distinct needs of individual pupils very well, and leads with a calm, yet assured authority.
- The wider leadership team work well together. Under the guidance of the headteacher, they are becoming increasingly effective at leading their different areas of responsibility. However, their impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet as fully developed as it could be.
- Because of the strong example set by school leaders, the staff team as a whole are uncompromising in their approach to ensuring that the needs of pupils comes first. The headteacher was very clear with his message to the lead inspector: 'No one point-scores here. The welfare and emotional well-being of pupils are paramount.'
- Teaching staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic progress. They understand that most pupils have experienced poor outcomes in other schools and are determined that this will not be the case at Brewood. Because of this, most pupils succeed at the school and only leave when they move on to further education or employment.
- Staff, including support staff, benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their own skills in order to support pupils with their learning. Currently this necessarily focuses on behaviour management and ensuring the well-being of pupils. However, the headteacher has identified that there is a need for more professional development that focuses on improving teaching and learning, in order to further improve the outcomes of pupils.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do well here, although leaders ensure that every pupil, whatever their background, is given equal importance in this very small secondary school.
- The school's curriculum works well and is delivered in a way that stirs the interests of pupils. Trips out of school into the community, including to the school's recently acquired allotment, or a local motor cycle engineering workshop, help pupils to better engage with the learning process and provide meaningful experiences based in real life.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education provided by the school is a strength. Visits, such as a recent visit to Auschwitz, enable pupils to make connections between recent history and the impact it has on our lives today. Other trips, such as the one to a Buddhist temple, greatly enrich the curriculum and teach pupils about the different cultures and religions of the world.
- Leaders recognise the pressing need for pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. A bespoke programme that teaches pupils about the role of government, democracy and the rule of law, helps pupils to understand their rights and responsibilities as members of society. Racism is not tolerated here. Other opportunities that celebrate diversity and promote equality are woven throughout the curriculum.

- The school has recently developed a new system to track pupil progress. School leaders recognise that this system could be further refined so that they are better placed to understand the small steps of progress pupils are making, as well as it becoming a more useful tool for teachers to plan next steps in learning.
- School leaders and managers work effectively to ensure that the independent school standards are met.

Governance

- The proprietor has ensured that governance of the school is effective, with a board of directors who are responsible for different aspects of the school's strategic direction. An internally appointed head of education who works across all Horizon Care schools, as well as an external school improvement consultant, ensure that school leaders are held properly to account for their work to improve the school and that statutory requirements are fully met.
- Since taking up his position, the headteacher has benefited from a range of support to enable him to be more effective in his role. Meetings to share good practice with other headteachers from Horizon Care partner schools, and regular meetings with members of the board, including those to discuss progress against the school's development plan, all help to ensure that the school improves.
- The proprietor and other school leaders have recently identified that the school might benefit from a layer of governance that is based more locally. While the present model of governance is effective, the stated rationale to move to a local governing board appears sensible in this case. Clear lines of delegated responsibility should be drawn up and all changes put in place quickly and efficiently to ensure that this important change has maximum benefit.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school complies with all the elements of the independent school standards regarding the safety of pupils, including publishing a suitable safeguarding policy on its website. Other policies and procedures to keep pupils safe are implemented well.
- Staff work hard to ensure pupils are safe both in and outside school. The culture of the school is firmly grounded on making sure the welfare of pupils is the number one priority. This is especially important in light of the complex needs of many of the school's pupils. Pupils and staff alike are able to explain with confidence why they feel safe in the school. Carers also feel pupils are safe in the school and recognise that staff work hard to ensure this is the case.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good, most pupils make good or better progress over time. Teaching and learning support staff know their pupils well and plan and deliver lessons that are well matched to the abilities of each individual.
- Due to the complex needs of many pupils, most teaching is delivered on a one-to-one basis or to small groups. This arrangement works well and allows staff to pitch the learning at the right level in most cases.

- The need to present pupils with opportunities to be successful learners is understood well here. Staff constantly strive to deliver the right balance between providing appropriate levels of support and adding extra challenge when required, so that pupils are able to sustain positive attitudes in the classroom.
- Teachers and instructors provide appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils, no matter what their age or academic ability. The most able pupils have activities tailored to their specific strengths and interests, for example 3D computer modelling of bugs. Teachers' good subject knowledge also helps extend pupils in a range of other subjects, including science.
- During a classroom visit, one group of pupils read through a play script. The most able were challenged with more complex parts and expected to read with expression and sensitivity. Less able readers were supported and encouraged well, leading to a successful read-through of a scene, before well-pitched questioning from the teacher allowed pupils' understanding of the plot to develop further.
- Staff are successful when supporting reluctant learners. During the inspection, a visit to the local shops to cost up parts and plan renovations to a scooter was effective in developing a pupil's mathematics skills. This approach also helped alleviate the high levels of anxiety experienced by the pupil when sitting in a classroom for extended periods.
- Most staff track pupil progress effectively and are using the school's relatively new systems to record progress and plan next steps in learning with increasing confidence. However, school leaders are aware that this aspect of teaching, learning and assessment will need to be further developed and refined in order to improve pupil outcomes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff ensure that pupils are afforded the highest degree of care, and are skilled at identifying and minimising the triggers that cause pupils' anxieties to rise.
- Most pupils enjoy coming to school most of the time. In doing so, they are learning how to become successful learners again.
- Due to high levels of knowledge and understanding, and the total dedication of all staff, the pastoral care of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is developed through the curriculum and through carefully developed strategies to ensure that individual pupils' needs are understood and met.
- Good communication between staff and the parents and carers of pupils ensures that staff are aware of potential incidents before they arise. This ensures that problems such as bullying, or those created by the normal pressures of day-to-day school life, are dealt with in a timely manner.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school and were very direct when explaining why this is the case, identifying the way staff deal with problems as the principal evidence for this. This includes when they are out of school on visits, or when attending sessions at the off-site provision that the school uses for some pupils.

- School leaders are currently reviewing the use of parts of the school site, so that pupils have better access to facilities that are under-utilised, especially during breaktimes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, although pupils and staff have to work hard to ensure this is the case. Expectations are high. Pupils understand what constitutes good behaviour and are dealt with proportionately when their behaviour falls short of expectations.
- In most lessons, the majority of pupils show good attitudes to learning. This is especially the case with older pupils, who have had time to settle into Brewwood after what in many instances were largely negative experiences in education.
- Some pupils take longer to come to terms with expectations of behaviour, but staff are skilled at de-escalating situations that might lead to more serious disruptions to learning. Consequently, transitions into the school are handled well and successfully accomplished.
- The school tracks pupils' attendance meticulously, intervening when absence is unexplained, or when levels of absence become unacceptable. The pastoral manager and other support staff are effective in ensuring that pupils attend school on a regular basis.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Because the majority of pupils make good or better progress, outcomes are good. Expectations of pupil progress are high because staff understand that many pupils have underachieved in the past and need to make accelerated progress to catch up.
- Assessments on entry show that most pupils have large gaps in their knowledge and understanding in mathematics and English when they join the school. This is also the case in other subjects, where the impact of sporadic attendance or dysfunctional engagement with previous schools has taken its toll on achievement and attainment.
- Because the school is so small, it is not meaningful or wise to compare the progress of different groups of pupils to national averages. However, school leaders ensure that the progress of every pupil is monitored closely so that staff can offer the correct support required to maximise progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well because of the bespoke nature of provision for all pupils. This is also the case for the most able pupils, including academically capable pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are offered individualised learning packages to cater for their diverse interests and talents.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do very well here because of the quality of provision provided by the school. The very large majority of pupils have education, health and care plans, which staff use to good effect to ensure that pupils make good progress in all aspects of their education. This includes ensuring that their social and emotional needs are well met.
- Because of the high expectations of school leaders and dedication of staff, most pupils leave Brewwood and move on to further education, including places at college or university at the end of the sixth form.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Pupils thrive in the sixth form because school leaders have ensured that the provision is good and outcomes are improving year on year. By the time they enter Year 12, most pupils have settled well into Brewood, and staff have had time to identify their individual needs and requirements, leading to sensible and appropriate paths of study.
- Staff ensure that pupils' strengths and interests are given the highest priority when deciding on different subject options. All pupils study mathematics and English at a level appropriate to their ability.
- Pupils have access to independent, impartial careers advice which is arranged by the school. Staff also support pupils by accompanying them on visits to local colleges or, in some cases, universities. All pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 13 went on to college or university last year.
- The school places great importance on preparing pupils for their eventual transition into further education, training or employment. Work experience is arranged in a way which is sensitive to pupils' needs, so that it doesn't overwhelm them, or lead to undue stress or anxieties. Currently, a local restaurant, theatre, farm and two different engineering workshops are all examples of a range of options available to give pupils experience of the workplace.
- Pupils in the sixth form conduct themselves well. They generally set a good example and are keen to offer advice and guidance in situations when younger pupils find different aspects of life at school difficult. When talking to the inspector, two pupils in the sixth form were very clear that the school had provided them with a stable and safe environment to re-engage with education and felt that staff were 'totally with them' every step of the way.

School details

Unique reference number	119021
DfE registration number	886/6070
Inspection number	10008524

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	Independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Horizon Care
Chair	Paul Callander
Headteacher	Christopher Owen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,500
Telephone number	01304 363 000
Website	www.horizoncare.co.uk
Email address	brewood@horizoncare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2012

Information about this school

- Brewood School is a special school in Deal, Kent. It originally opened in 2005 and came under the ownership of Horizon Care in December 2009. The company owns four other schools, although none of the others are located in the south of England. The company also owns a number of children's homes.

- The school caters for young people who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties, and associated learning needs. Many of them have been excluded from mainstream and special school provision and have experienced multiple and lengthy disruptions to their education and home lives. The majority have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is registered to provide education for up to 30 pupils. There are currently 28 pupils on roll. Around half of those who attend the school are looked after and live with foster families or in various children's homes in Kent.
- The school's last full inspection was in December 2012, when it was judged to be a good school. The school underwent an unannounced emergency inspection in October 2014, when the school was found to meet all the independent school standards that were checked at that time.
- The current headteacher took up his position in March 2016, when the previous headteacher left to become the head of education for Horizon Care.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school and looked at samples of pupils' work across a number of subjects and year groups. The inspector also observed pupils who were visiting a local motor engineering workshop.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed at the start and finish of the school day, during breaks, and as pupils moved around the school at different stages of the day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and other middle leaders. Additional meetings were also held with members of teaching and support staff.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils and discussed with them their views of the school.
- The inspector met with a representative of the proprietor on a number of occasions.
- The inspector considered the views of parents by analysing Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View. He also held telephone conversations with two carers.
- The inspector considered a number of documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation document, school development plan, and the school's own pupil progress information.
- The inspector scrutinised policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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