

Inspection of Bricklehurst Manor School

Bardown Road, Stonegate, Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 7EL

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 February 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

This is a warm and welcoming school. Staff build positive and supportive relationships with pupils. This is because staff take the time to get to know pupils' interests and past experiences in detail. Pupils are well cared for. They rightly know that they can talk to staff if they have any worries and will always be helped.

All pupils at this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many have experienced disrupted education before joining the school. The school prioritises making positive connections, so that pupils want to come to school to learn. There is an extensive transition and induction process which allows pupils to settle in well. The school's vision is captured in its ambition for pupils to 'feel, think and do'. This means that many pupils are being prepared well in terms of their academic and social skills.

The school sets clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is a calm and nurturing atmosphere. Pupils understand that staff are there to support them. When pupils' behaviour does not meet these high expectations, staff help them to reflect on the impact of their actions. Staff do so with patience and understanding.

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

The school is ambitious for its pupils. There is an unrelenting focus on preparing pupils for their future by equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need. Individual curriculum pathways allow pupils to work towards accredited qualifications. There is flexibility in this offer, which allows pupils to build on their strengths and interests.

Each pupil has an individual education, health and care (EHC) plan. Staff use these to create personalised well-being plans which include valued pupil contributions. This means that staff know individual pupils' needs well and support them with their social, emotional and mental well-being. Pupils benefit from the support they receive from the school's on-site clinical team. This also includes staff training so that a therapeutic approach is at the heart of all interactions.

The school has a well-managed transition process to check what pupils have learned before and therefore, what they need to learn next. This recognises that pupils have varying starting points when they join the school, and many have gaps in their learning. The curriculum design allows pupils to build their knowledge and skills from their starting points.

Teaching staff have the subject knowledge they need. They are skilled at using questioning to deepen and explore pupils' learning. Pupils have access to a wide range of resources to support their learning. These include appropriate communication aids. There are, however, times when there could be greater clarity about the steps needed for pupils to achieve their academic targets.

The school promotes a positive reading culture. Pupils select the books that will be read to them in class. They have the reading skills they need to be able to learn the curriculum. Many are supported to be confident to read aloud to others. Any pupils who need additional support with their reading receive it in a focused and effective way.

Pupils are supported with their communication and language development well. Central to this is the way pupils are helped to articulate and manage their feelings and emotions. This approach includes staff helping pupils to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. As a result, pupils can self-correct their own behaviour and show respect and tolerance towards others.

There is a well-structured personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils learn how to identify and manage risk in their lives. This includes how to access online materials safely and to be discerning about the information they find. Pupils learn about the characteristics of healthy relationships and about those in the community who can help to keep them safe.

The school offers pupils a bespoke personal development programme. Pupils have opportunities to develop their interests and build expertise through the in-school clubs and enrichment activities. These include singing, sports, cooking, tufting and crochet. Pupils take pride in their achievements. The school's outdoor learning programme allows pupils to develop their critical thinking skills and solve problems. Pupils are supported well to be able to work together and develop their teamwork skills.

Pupils are encouraged to hold aspirations for the future. Careers teaching allows pupils to consider what skills they possess and how they apply to different jobs. They benefit from personalised careers meetings with the school's 'futures team'. Pupils learn about potential employment opportunities through their off-site trips and visits.

The school's work to promote attendance is highly effective. Many pupils join the school with a history of poor attendance. Whole families are supported with any challenges they may have in ensuring their children attend school regularly. This personalised approach results in pupils' attendance significantly increasing over time.

The proprietor and governing body have strong oversight of the school. They ensure that the independent school standards are met. The premises are well maintained, and the school website includes useful information for parents and carers. The school adheres to schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Staff engage well with their extensive induction and professional development programme.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils' academic targets are sometimes too broad. This means that teaching staff do not know the small steps which pupils need to work through to achieve their overall targets consistently. The school should ensure that clear and appropriate targets are identified and understood so that pupils are supported with their learning appropriately.

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	150476
DfE registration number	845/6073
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10361102
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Jim Cameron
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,680 to £87,680
Telephone number	01580 857271
Website	www.bricklehurstmanor.co.uk
Email address	info@bricklehurstmanor.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school provides full-time education for pupils aged 7 to 16 years. At the time of the inspection, the pupils on roll were aged 11 to 15 years. Pupils are referred to the school by their local authority. All pupils have an EHC plan. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school does not use any 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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector had meetings with representatives from the governing body and the proprietary body.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited outdoor learning sessions and discussed with leaders how they adapt their curriculum for the needs of the pupils at the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to gather evidence about compliance with the standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including on the school's website.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Neave

Ofsted Inspector

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