

Bladon House School

Newton Solney, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 0TA

Inspection dates

5 to 7 March 2019

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

- Senior leaders are committed to ensuring that the school provides pupils with effective opportunities to prepare well for their future.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development due to the effective support that they receive, particularly in managing their own additional needs.
- Teachers plan learning well, ensuring that the tasks pupils complete are at the right level. Pupils make good progress as a result.
- The subject-based curriculum is highly effective in ensuring that pupils study a broad range of subjects and can make good progress, including in English and mathematics.
- Staff ensure that all pupils, including non-verbal pupils, develop their communication skills well.
- Leaders provide well for staff's needs, including those related to training and well-being.
- Work to keep pupils safe is rigorous, ensuring that pupils are safe and know how to be safe.
- Attendance is above national levels.
- Well-targeted support helps most pupils to manage their anxiety. For many pupils, this helps them to manage their behaviour well.
- Staff work well with parents, carers and referring authorities to ensure that the school's provision meets pupils' needs well.
- Pupils receive regular opportunities to undertake enrichment and extracurricular activities, including in the local community.
- Staff work closely to ensure that pupils move successfully on to their next steps when they leave the school.
- The proprietor knows the school well. He provides effective challenge and support.
- Occasionally, teachers do not consider pupils' prior knowledge when planning new learning.
- Until recently, pupils have not made as much progress as they should in computing.
- The recently adopted curriculum for pupils who have severe learning needs has yet to embed fully to ensure that these pupils make consistently strong progress.

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?

- Ensure that pupils and students make consistently strong progress across all areas of their learning by:
 - embedding recent curriculum developments, including in computing and in the curriculum that pupils and students who have severe learning needs study
 - making sure that all teachers provide effective opportunities to build on pupils' and students' prior knowledge when introducing new learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Senior leaders have created an inclusive culture that celebrates the success of pupils and staff. They have ensured that the school caters well for pupils' additional needs, so enabling them to prepare well for their next steps, including preparing for adulthood.
- Staff respond well to senior leaders' high expectations. They fully share leaders' commitment to the pupils, for whom they provide high levels of care and support.
- The consideration that senior leaders have paid to staff's well-being has contributed to the high morale and enthusiasm that staff demonstrate. Senior leaders understand the importance of ensuring that staff are confident in their role and feel valued in the work that they undertake to support the pupils.
- Senior leaders have a precise understanding of the quality of the school's provision. They have identified correctly those aspects that require further improvement. They provide challenge to ensure that the provision fully meets the pupils' needs.
- The work to promote pupils' personal development is outstanding. All staff, including therapy staff, thoroughly support pupils to help them understand and manage their additional needs. In particular, staff ensure that pupils learn how to manage situations that may lead to them feeling anxious. This prepares pupils well for the daily challenges that they face, as well as the challenges that they will face when they leave the school.
- Through their regular visits to lessons and to the outdoor learning area, senior leaders have a precise understanding of the quality of teaching. They know which aspects of teaching require further development so that all teaching is of the very highest quality.
- Regular training enables staff to reflect on the strategies that they use to support pupils in their learning, in managing their behaviour and in securing their personal development. This training includes opportunities to work with other staff and to share best practice. This has created a close-knit team who work well to support the pupils.
- Senior leaders provide staff with highly effective support to assist them in responding to any challenging behaviours that pupils may demonstrate. Through their regular checks on pupils' behaviour, senior leaders are quick to identify any patterns of behaviour that may cause concern. When this is the case, they ensure that staff receive appropriate support to enable them to manage these behaviours well.
- Senior leaders use information contained within pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans well to plan for pupils' learning and development. The regular review meetings that they host enable all present, including parents, representatives from local authorities and the pupil, to reflect on the pupil's progress. These reviews ensure that the support pupils receive caters for their current needs, interests and aspirations.
- The subject-based curriculum enables pupils to study towards qualifications at the appropriate level across the full range of subjects. Wide-ranging extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including regular visits to the local community, ensure that pupils develop their learning outside the classroom. Through this, they become secure in the skills they will need when they leave school, including skills for independent living.

- There are many opportunities for pupils to become secure in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through their programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and assemblies, pupils learn about how people are different, including differences in belief and culture. Pupils learn about the difference between right and wrong and making good choices, including through learning 'The Bladon Way', which is the set of expectations about pupils' behaviour at the school. The student council enables pupils to understand the democratic process and to take on positions of responsibility.
- Leaders have recognised that the subject-based curriculum is not appropriate for pupils who have severe learning needs. Leaders have recently introduced a curriculum that focuses on developing the core skills these pupils require to prepare for adulthood. This is a recent development. More time is needed to embed this curriculum, to ensure that it fully serves pupils' needs and enables them to make consistently strong progress.
- Leaders regularly review pupils' progress, to ensure that pupils receive the right level of support. Leaders have identified that, until recently, pupils have not made the progress they should in computing. They have taken action that has begun to bring about the necessary improvement to pupils' progress in this subject.

Governance

- The proprietor is clear in his intent that the school should support pupils to manage their additional needs and to prepare well for their next steps. This includes ensuring pupils move on to places of education, including at mainstream settings, where appropriate.
- The proprietor has a precise understanding of the quality of the school's provision due to the detailed, monthly checks that he receives from the headteacher. The proprietor checks the accuracy of these reports by commissioning further reports, including from professionals who are external to the group of schools of which the school is a member.
- The proprietor provides appropriate levels of challenge and support. He regularly meets with the school's leaders to discuss their plans, for example. He also encourages the leaders to engage with other local organisations that work with pupils who have similar additional needs in order to learn from their best practice.
- The proprietor maintains open communication with the local authorities that have placed pupils at the school, to ensure that they know how the school is meeting pupils' needs.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leaders have created a culture of vigilance in which all staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff know the signs to look for that may indicate a welfare concern. They know to report any concerns that they may have immediately.
- The comprehensive safeguarding policy, which is available on the school's website, reflects the latest national guidance and reinforces the fact that keeping pupils safe is every member of staff's responsibility.
- Safeguarding leaders are quick to act when they have a concern about pupils' welfare. They communicate well with parents and carers and, where it is appropriate, work closely with external agencies, to ensure that pupils receive the right level of support.

- Safeguarding leaders maintain comprehensive records of their work to keep pupils safe. These records ensure that all leaders have a detailed knowledge of each pupil about whom there is a welfare concern.
- Safeguarding leaders regularly check staff's understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They also check the quality of the information that staff provide when they pass on a welfare concern. Leaders provide timely, focused training and support to any members of staff who demonstrate any signs of weaker safeguarding practice.
- Safeguarding leaders are highly sensitive to any circumstances that may lead to their pupils feeling or being unsafe, particularly when they are online. They ensure that pupils receive appropriate support so that they know how to stay safe in such circumstances. Through their regular checks on pupils' welfare, safeguarding leaders are quick to identify when pupils may require further support or guidance.
- Staff's assessment of risk is thorough. They take appropriate action to reduce the risks that they identify, including when teaching pupils in the outdoor area and when taking pupils off-site.
- Through their regular safety walks with pupils around the school site, safeguarding leaders identify quickly any areas of the school about which pupils may feel anxious. They take timely action to resolve these concerns, to ensure that pupils feel safe.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. They say that they have adults to whom they can speak if they are upset. They know that these members of staff will support them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers carefully plan lessons to ensure that pupils complete work at the right level. This ensures that pupils make at least good progress.
- Teachers work well with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils receive the right level of support to enable them to engage well with their learning.
- Staff are adept at reducing the support that they provide when it is clear that pupils can complete work independently. This is effective in helping pupils to grow in confidence.
- Staff use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. When they identify misconceptions, they provide further support so that pupils' understanding is secure.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, including subjects in which they are not specialists.
- Pupils receive regular and timely feedback, including verbally, to help them to correct their mistakes and build on their learning. Pupils' books show that they can follow guidance well to improve their work to deepen their understanding.
- In group-work situations, staff encourage pupils to listen to each other and to contribute their own ideas. This is effective in helping to develop pupils' communication skills.
- All staff manage pupils' behaviour and welfare well. When they identify that a pupil is struggling to maintain their concentration, staff provide pupils with alternative work or structured social time, whichever of the two is most appropriate to the circumstances. This ensures that the atmosphere in the classroom remains calm and purposeful.
- All staff use praise and encouragement well to ensure that pupils remain focused on their work and engage well with their learning.

- On occasions, teachers do not use information about pupils' prior knowledge well enough when planning new learning. Where this is the case, pupils do not always develop a secure understanding of the new topic or concept as quickly as they might. This is because they have not received enough opportunities to link this new learning to what they already know.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The strong relationships that exist between staff and pupils ensure that pupils enjoy coming to school and adopt very positive attitudes to their learning. For most pupils, this represents outstanding progress, as their previous experience of education has been fractured and less positive before joining the school.
- The pupils trust the staff who work with them. This enables pupils to grow in confidence.
- Pupils' positive attitudes towards education are evident in the way pupils engage with their work. In lessons, pupils work well on the tasks that teachers set and complete their work with pride. They show pleasure when they have completed a task successfully.
- High-quality therapy supports pupils effectively to understand their additional needs and to recognise when they are becoming anxious. This allows pupils to learn how to manage their anxieties. This, in turn, helps to reduce the frequency with which pupils demonstrate challenging behaviours.
- Members of the therapy team closely check the impact of the therapeutic work on pupils' well-being. They act swiftly to adapt the support they provide, when necessary.
- Pupils learn the importance of making good choices. They understand the importance of eating healthily and maintaining personal hygiene.
- Pupils learn how to be safe, including when online and when out in the local community, for example when crossing the road.
- Through their visits to the local community, pupils learn the skills that they will need to become effective citizens. Visits to local shops and the library enable them to understand about local services and how to use them. Visits to a local church, gurdwara and mosque help pupils to understand that people have different beliefs. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils understand that it is important to be kind to each other. The safeguarding leaders have worked with pupils to design a pupil-friendly information booklet to explain what bullying is and how to report any bullying concerns that they may have. School records demonstrate that bullying is rare at the school.
- Pupils receive effective advice and guidance to help them to understand the opportunities that are available to them when they leave school. Where it is appropriate, pupils undertake work experience to allow them to explore their interests.
- Staff prepare carefully for when pupils are to leave the school, to ensure that their next steps are appropriate. This support often continues for some time after the pupils have left the school. This reflects staff's determination that, in leaving the school, pupils move

to their next steps should be smooth and successful.

- Staff accompany those pupils who receive some of their education away from the school site. In so doing, they check that the pupils are safe, receive effective support and make good progress in the activities that they undertake.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Above-national attendance is due to the effective support that staff provide to ensure that pupils attend regularly.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the school site. They are polite to each other and to adults, including visitors. On many occasions during the inspection, pupils independently came over to the inspector to introduce themselves.
- Over time, the frequency with which most pupils engage in challenging behaviour reduces. This is due to the work that staff undertake to enable pupils to manage their anxieties and so self-regulate their behaviour.
- For some pupils, however, while they are managing their anxieties more effectively, this is yet to have a rapid-enough effect on reducing the occasions when they demonstrate challenging behaviours.
- Some pupils receive fixed-term exclusions from school due to their behaviour. A very small number receive more than one exclusion, for repeated, challenging behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- When they join the school, most pupils are well below the standard expected for their age and stage of education, both academically and in terms of their personal development. Well-targeted support enables pupils to make rapid progress to catch up where they have previously fallen behind, including in their communication and numeracy skills.
- Pupils in both the primary and secondary provisions make strong progress in English and mathematics, particularly those who study the subject-based curriculum.
- Pupils who studied the subject-based curriculum last academic year attained appropriate qualifications in a number of subjects, including in English, mathematics and personal development. Current pupils are attaining similar standards.
- Pupils receive regular opportunities to develop their understanding of science and their practice of creative and technical skills. They make good progress in these subjects.
- Through their food technology lessons, pupils develop their skills in preparing food for themselves. During the inspection, for example, pupils successfully baked cakes, an achievement of which they were rightly proud.
- Through their regular outdoor learning, pupils learn about how to interact with the local environment. In this, they learn how to keep themselves safe.
- All pupils who leave the school move on to appropriate places of education, including in mainstream settings, or to community-based support projects, including supported living.
- Until recently, pupils have not made as much progress as they should in computing. Leaders have acted to improve the provision in this subject. The work that pupils are now

completing is beginning to allow them to make more rapid progress.

Sixth-form provision

Good

- The leader of the sixth-form provision ensures that the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the level of support are all appropriate to students' individual needs.
- Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that students complete work at the right level. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support that helps students to engage well with their learning. Students adopt positive attitudes to their learning as a result.
- Students make at least good progress, both in their subject studies and in their development of the skills they will require when they leave the school.
- Students who study the subject-based curriculum attain qualifications at an appropriate level in English, mathematics and in personal development.
- Attendance is high due to the effective support that students receive to attend regularly.
- Students learn how to be safe and live healthy lives.
- Through learning about 'The Bladon Way', students understand the importance of showing respect to each other and of making good choices.
- Staff work well with students to help them to manage their anxieties. This ensures that, over time, students can manage their behaviour more effectively.
- Students receive effective opportunities to consider their next steps for when they leave the school. They receive appropriate careers advice and guidance and can explore any work interests that they may have through completing suitable work experience.
- Senior leaders carefully plan for when students leave the school, to ensure that their next steps are appropriate. Leaders provide effective support to ensure that these next steps are successful and sustained.
- All students who leave the school move on either to appropriate places of education, including in specialist colleges, or to community-based programmes that enable them to live and work in the community, independently or in a semi-supported setting.
- The recently-adopted curriculum for students who have severe learning needs requires time to embed to ensure that these students make consistently strong progress.

School details

Unique reference number	113019
DfE registration number	830/6009
Inspection number	10078658

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	22
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Brian Jones
Headteacher	Shally Saleri-Palmer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000–£99,000
Telephone number	01283 563 787
Website	www.bladonhouse.com
Email address	info@bladonhouse.com
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 May 2016

Information about this school

- Bladon House is a part of the Senad group of schools.
- The school is an independent special school for boys and girls with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils have an EHC plan.
- All pupils have complex needs, including: a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and Aperger's syndrome; speech, language and communication needs; moderate or severe learning difficulties; and social, emotional and mental health mental issues. The

majority of pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour, resulting from their complex needs.

- Some pupils and students are residents of the children's homes located on the school site. These children's homes are part of the Senad group. Ofsted inspects these homes separately to the school.
- The school is registered to provide education for up to 100 pupils aged between five and 19 years. There are currently 45 pupils on roll.
- The school works with three alternative providers to provide pupils with some of their education off-site. These are Baby People in Derby, Padley Centre in Derby and Scropton Riding for Disabled in Scropton.
- The school has four aims, which are that pupils should find a way of life that suits them, achieve a sense of physical and emotional well-being, self-manage behaviour and have maximum opportunities for inclusion and independence.
- The school's last standard inspection took place on 4 to 6 May 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with no notice. This was in line with the commission from the registration authority, the Department for Education.
- The inspector observed learning in all classes and in the outdoor area. All visits to lessons took place jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector checked the school's facilities against Part 5 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books across a range of subjects.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, safeguarding leaders, a senior leader from Senad and a selection of the teaching and support staff.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with the proprietor.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime, during which time he spoke with pupils. He also met formally with a selection of pupils.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with representatives of two local authorities who place pupils at the school. He also spoke with representatives of two of the alternative providers that provide pupils with education away from the school site.
- There were too few responses to the online parents' survey, Parent View, and to the free-text service, for the inspector to consider. The inspector met with a parent.
- There were no responses to the pupils' survey.
- The inspector considered the 19 responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning; curriculum and lesson planning; behaviour and attendance; achievement; governance and safeguarding.
- The inspector checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all the independent school standards.

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