

The Brighton Waldorf School

Roedean Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 5RA

Inspection dates

18 September 2019

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a) and 2(2)(h)

- During the previous standard inspection, weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning were identified. These affected pupils' abilities to learn and make progress across the curriculum. The school's curriculum was found to not meet the needs of pupils well enough and this led to inadequate outcomes. The school's action plan to make improvements in this area was judged to be acceptable.
- The curriculum has been re-evaluated so that teachers think more consciously about progress in specific subject areas. Timetables have been re-organised to make more time for subject-specific teaching. This is to help pupils to catch up in areas where they may not be achieving as well as other pupils nationally.
- Teachers in each class now have clear expectations about how the curriculum should build on previous learning. For example, their planning now clearly indicates which part of the curriculum should be covered in each class. The detailed breakdown of expectations in mathematics is particularly helpful.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(f), 3(g) and 3(h)

- The previous standard inspection report identified that teachers did not plan learning that met the needs of all pupils. Staff did not have an effective system to monitor the progress pupils were making. The action plan to rectify this was judged to be acceptable.
- There is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. However, school leaders have taken positive steps to make improvements that are welcomed by pupils, staff and trustees.
- Working with other schools and with external advisers, leaders have ensured that a new coherent plan for teaching, learning and assessment is in place.
- Progression in skills and knowledge is more carefully planned, and assessment information is starting to be used effectively to plan future learning. However, for some teachers this is still at an early stage.
- Additional adults are now supporting pupils, especially those with SEND, very well.

- Teachers are positive about the changes to curriculum organisation that means that English, mathematics and other subjects are now taught distinctly as well as through the main lesson.
- Teachers have welcomed the additional steps that leaders have taken to improve their training and professional development. Teachers now have the opportunity to work together as a team, weekly during the school day to discuss teaching, learning and assessment. Training in phonics has led to the earlier introduction of early phonics teaching, although writing by pupils is still delayed as required by the Steiner curriculum.
- All of the standards in Part 1 are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- Safeguarding was found to be effective at the previous inspection. However, the school was asked to work with families to improve attendance.
- Staff have read the latest statutory safeguarding guidance and receive regular training. They know when and how to report concerns to designated leads. They understand the main risks to pupils in the school and local community.
- The curriculum provides some positive opportunities to help keep pupils safe. A number of pupils are passionate about climate change and have joined recent protests. Leaders have worked with them to do this safely and helped pupils to understand the differences between legitimate protest and breaking the law.
- Pupils have learned about online safety and feel confident to talk to staff if they have concerns out of school. Expert organisations are used to enhance this aspect of the curriculum by presenting to pupils at least annually.
- Trustees are supporting and checking the work of leaders to strengthen safeguarding procedures even further. For example, some administrative changes are needed to strengthen record keeping and the security of documentation.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraph 9 and 9(b)

- During the last standard inspection, some pupils had poor attitudes to learning because teaching did not enthuse or inspire them. Inspectors also observed that staff were not consistent in their approach to dealing with poor behaviour.
- During this monitoring visit, behaviour in lessons and around the school was positive. Pupils told me that this is usually the case.
- Leaders have reviewed the behaviour policy and are ensuring that it is applied consistently in the school.
- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- When checked during the inspection, as required by the registration authority, the school's safeguarding policy was published on the school's website. The policy complies with the latest statutory guidance.
- This standard remains met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)

- At the time of the last inspection, it was found that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school were not demonstrating the good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role in ensuring that the independent school standards were being met consistently. Furthermore, leaders and trustees did not have a clear enough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, or of the quality of education that the school was providing.
- The action plan that was approved contained well-thought-out and appropriate actions to strengthen the work of leaders and trustees so that the independent school standards could be met.
- Trustees have used the outcome of the previous inspection as a catalyst for change. There is an increased focus on standards, the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Trustees' minutes show clear challenge and support for leaders. Trustees are strengthening their visits to the school to check for themselves the improvements being made.
- Leaders have used an external adviser and support within the wider Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship to support their improvements and help them to focus on the right things. There are now agreed systems and processes in place across the school to ensure that educational standards improve. Leaders must now ensure that these systems and processes are applied consistently.
- The standards in this part are now 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 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils, self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	114661
DfE registration number	846/6016
Inspection number	10122738

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Brighton Steiner (Waldorf) School Council of Trustees
Chair	Thais Bishop
Principal	Damian Mooncie
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,900 to £6,950
Telephone number	01273 386300
Website	www.brightonwaldorfschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@brightonwaldorfschool.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	5–7 March 2019

Information about this school

- Brighton Waldorf School is a co-educational, independent school for pupils aged two to 16. It adheres to the International Waldorf Steiner curriculum developed by the Austrian philosopher Dr Rudolf Steiner.
- The school has an approved exemption from some aspects of the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

- The school's last standard inspection took place in March 2019. At that inspection, the quality of education provided by the school was judged to be inadequate. A number of independent school standards were also not met.
- The Department for Education required the school to submit an action plan. This was accepted in August 2019.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspector met with the principal and other leaders. He held a discussion with a group of teachers and a telephone conversation with a trustee.
- The inspector visited a range of lessons, with senior leaders. He talked to pupils informally in lessons and on the playground at lunchtime.
- A range of school documentation relating to the curriculum, assessment, teaching and safeguarding was scrutinised.
- The inspection was conducted with no notice to the school.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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