

The Beech House School

413 Walton Road, West Molesey, Surrey KT8 2EJ

Inspection dates

9–10 July 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the school opened in October 2018 leaders have successfully established a provision that ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Leaders drive the school forward with enthusiasm and total dedication. Staff are fully engaged and supportive of the vision and ethos of the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. Staff demonstrate in-depth subject knowledge across the curriculum and skilfully question pupils to gauge their understanding. However, staff do not consistently use assessment information effectively to inform their planning.
- Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Staff understand pupils' vulnerabilities and work hard to break down the barriers to learning that many of them have.
- Behaviour across the school is good. Despite their complex needs, pupils are punctual for lessons and conduct themselves well.
- Safeguarding is effective and is given a high priority by all staff at the school. Pupils are protected from harm.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. They make particularly strong progress in history and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).
- Well-trained staff provide effective support for pupils. However, the deployment of support staff does not consistently help pupils to make academic progress.
- The proprietor has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and uses this information to plan for future improvement. Recently, a new governing body has been introduced to add further rigour to governance arrangements. As yet, it is too early to see the impact of this initiative.
- Pupils' attendance has improved since joining the school. However, leaders are aware that their attendance rates need to continue to improve.

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?

- Continue to improve the effectiveness of the school's governing body so that leaders are held stringently to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- Refine assessment systems so that information about what pupils already know and understand is used consistently well to plan activities that precisely match their starting points.
- Ensure that levels of attendance for pupils continue to improve.
- Deploy support staff more effectively than currently to promote pupils' learning as well as their behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are totally committed to the school and to improving the life chances of its pupils. They understand well the school's strengths and weaknesses and have well-developed plans in place for its ongoing improvement. They are rightly proud of the work that has taken place since the school opened.
- Staff morale is high. At all levels, staff are united in the school's aims and ethos. They are motivated and enthusiastic about their work and feel well supported by leaders. Staff demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the individual needs of pupils in their care. They have a genuine desire to see pupils succeed.
- When designing the curriculum, pupils' future destinations are at the forefront of leaders' minds. There is a balance between the core curriculum of English and mathematics and wider curriculum opportunities. As a result, pupils develop their personal, social and emotional skills well and are prepared for the next stage of their education and/or employment.
- Staff appreciate the support that they receive from leaders to continue their professional development. They talk positively about the depth and breadth of training opportunities that they are given. Staff are suitably equipped to support the pupils in their care.
- Pupils enjoy the school's extra-curricular trips and activities, which are linked explicitly to the learning that takes place in the classroom. Pupils appreciate the thought that staff put into providing them with opportunities to pursue their individual interests. For example, pupils talked to the inspector excitedly about visiting Buckingham Palace and a local riding centre.
- Daily discussions about international news articles enable pupils to consider the world around them. Tolerance of the views of others is also seen as a key aspect of the development of pupils' sense of belonging at the school. Learning about equality first hand helps pupils to understand the different backgrounds and cultures in the world around them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Planned enrichment events enable pupils to work together as a team, developing their social skills and understanding. Trips to local places of interest allow pupils to gain an understanding of the historical context within their local community. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Governance

- The proprietor has worked hard to ensure that all necessary policies and procedures are in place. Her careful work and determination has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietor provides effective leadership. She has an accurate view of the key strengths and weaknesses of the school and uses this information to inform plans for the development of the provision.

- The proprietor has recently appointed a governing body to oversee the work of the school. This is beginning to increase the level of support and challenge that leaders receive. However, it is too soon to see the impact that this has had on driving forward school improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a clear culture of vigilance within the school and staff understand fully their duties to keep pupils safe. Staff are in no doubt about how to deal with disclosures and child-protection concerns.
- Staff receive a wealth of relevant informative safeguarding training. This training helps staff to understand the potential risks that pupils face. Staff are alert to a wide range of signs that a pupil is being exploited.
- Leaders carry out a range of well-documented health and safety checks across the school. For example, fire-safety checks are carried out at regular intervals to ensure that systems can always be relied upon. The school meets the requirements of the Fire Safety Order 2005.
- The school's risk assessment policy is implemented effectively across the school. Risk assessments are detailed and reviewed frequently. They refer to relevant information in pupils' files and are updated when circumstances change.
- Staff ensure that information is shared with professionals and external agencies in a timely manner. They communicate regularly with social workers to update them about any changes in a pupil's behaviour or well-being.
- The single central record of recruitment checks meets requirements, is kept up to date and is checked by the proprietor.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the website and adheres to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff know their pupils well. They work hard to provide pupils with interesting and motivating learning opportunities. During the inspection, there were many instances when the inspector witnessed staff spark pupils' interests. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and make good progress at the school.
- Staff understand that pupils have experienced turbulence in their educational careers. They waste no time in determining pupils' strengths and personal interests and use this information to design personalised learning programmes for each pupil.
- Staff demonstrate strong subject knowledge across the curriculum. They skilfully question pupils, listening carefully to pupils' responses and probing for deeper thinking, or guiding them for better understanding. Teachers successfully engage pupils when they may be initially reluctant to contribute.
- Praise is used consistently well in lessons to motivate pupils when they struggle. Staff use a variety of strategies to reward pupils and to inspire them to learn. Staff share pupils' successes through displays across the school.

- Support staff have very positive relationships with pupils. They play a significant role in motivating pupils or keeping them on task when needed. However, often the impact that they have on pupils' learning is limited.
- While teaching is good, staff do not consistently use assessment accurately to inform their planning. Some activities do not align to pupils' starting points and the progress that pupils make is limited at times.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have previously had negative experiences of education. For them, Beech House School is their first positive experience of being in school.
- Staff members' knowledge of pupils' needs is well informed. They successfully support pupils to develop a pride in their achievements, and strengthen their resilience to failure.
- Pupils show respect for each other's differing views and opinions. They are reflective about their own similarities and differences and have a broad knowledge of different beliefs and cultures.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain. There is a plethora of opportunities provided for pupils to study topics related to cultural diversity and democracy. Recently, pupils have explored the British political system and visited the Houses of Parliament.
- Pupils feel listened to by staff and are confident to voice any worries that they may have. Pupils state that there is no bullying or derogatory language at the school and that any unkind behaviour is dealt with quickly by staff.
- Many aspects of personal safety are embedded across the curriculum. Pupils are made aware of the potential dangers of the world they live in and are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils told the inspector about the importance of enabling privacy settings when using social media.
- The school supports pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps in education, training or employment. Pupils attend national careers and apprenticeship events, and engage in work-experience placements. Pupils are increasingly well equipped for life beyond the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Despite the complex social and emotional needs of pupils, they behave well in classrooms and around the school. School records show that there have only been a small number of behaviour incidents since the school opened.
- School rules and consistent expectations from staff remind pupils of the necessary skills required to be ready to learn. This ensures that pupils are punctual to lessons and display positive attitudes to learning.

- Pupils' behaviour plans are comprehensive and provide useful information for staff on how to respond to challenging incidents. These plans are used consistently by staff which, in turn, supports pupils to begin to manage their own behaviour responsibly.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend far more regularly than they did at their previous provisions. However, there is further work for leaders to do to ensure that overall attendance rates continue to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school after considerable disruption to their education. They join the school with gaps in their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. Despite this, pupils make strong progress from their starting points in a range of subjects.
- Leaders' expectation is that pupils will make steady progress across all aspects of the curriculum, even if the gains are small. The pupils rise to this and develop their functional English and mathematics skills, as well as learning well in a range of vocational subjects.
- Pupils make especially strong progress in English and PSHE. Staff work hard to break down the considerable barriers caused by pupils' past experiences. For example, difficulties with self-confidence do not prevent pupils from developing their reading and comprehension skills. Pupils read aloud in lessons and are developing their skills of inference and deduction when analysing newspaper articles.
- Pupils make sound progress in their social communication skills. Pupils share their views and opinions regularly with staff and each other. This helps them to practise and embed listening and responding to their peers effectively.
- Pupils make strong progress in history. Staff high expectations are evident through the extensive range of good-quality work in pupils' history folders. Pupils are able to research key historical facts and draw conclusions from a range of sources.
- Through the financial literacy programme, pupils demonstrate a secure grasp of income and expenditure and the importance of planning a budget. Pupils are aware of the consequences of having debt and understand the concept of interest rates.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education. Pupils who have left the school since it opened are considerably better placed to succeed in the future than they were when they arrived. Leaders have considered the entry requirements of local post-16 providers in planning the school's qualification offer.

School details

Unique reference number	145169
DfE registration number	936/6012
Inspection number	10080966

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cameron & Cooper Limited
Headteacher	Camilla McInnes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000
Telephone number	07884 063523
Website	www.thebeechhousesurrey.co.uk
Email address	camilla@thebeechhousesurrey.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Beech House School is an independent school for pupils who have complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school was registered with the Department for Education in August 2018.
- The school caters for a maximum of six pupils aged 10 to 18 years. There are currently two pupils on roll aged between 15 and 16 years. All pupils are children looked after and live in the children's home local to the school.
- The headteacher is also the sole director of Cameron and Cooper Limited, named as the proprietor. The core aim of the proprietor is for the school to provide an education programme that is integrated with a 24-hour therapeutic care plan.

- This is the first inspection since the school opened in October 2019. The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across the school.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the lead teacher, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils through both formal and informal discussions.
- The inspector toured the school site and scrutinised extensive documentary evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Emma Sanderson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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