

Inspection of Brunel College

Brunel House, Mitchell Road, Salisbury SP2 7PY

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 November 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) related to their social, emotional and mental health. Most pupils attend this school part time as part of a bespoke education package. Pupils' emotional needs are well met. As a result, they enjoy school and feel safe. Many pupils have not attended school for lengthy periods prior to joining Brunel College. Most improve their attendance significantly and rapidly once they start at Brunel College.

Pupils are typically keen to do well. They respond positively to the many rewards and acknowledgements they receive when they behave well. This means that the school is typically calm and purposeful.

Opportunities for pupils to explore new interests and develop their talents are broad and well considered. Pupils go fishing, make and edit music, learn photography and bike maintenance. They visit local leisure centres and gyms. This enriches their experience at school and prepares them well for later life.

Pupils relish taking responsibility for cooking lunch for the school community. Staff and pupils share family style meals daily. They make group visits within the local area. These opportunities are an invaluable part of pupils' social development.

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

Pupils gain an extensive range of qualifications and accreditations. For many, this is the first time in many years they have experienced success in education. Pupils are ready to take their next steps in education, training or employment. Some move successfully back to mainstream schools, while others go on to colleges or apprenticeships that are well suited to their needs and future aspirations.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. It makes clear precisely what knowledge pupils need to acquire at each stage and in every subject. Teachers have the subject expertise they need to explain new knowledge clearly. Lessons ensure that pupils re-visit previous learning so that they remember more and build on what they know. Although teachers check what pupils have learned, sometimes teaching does not make sure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are closed before moving on.

The school identifies how confident and fluent pupils' reading is. It uses this information to make sure that reading materials in lessons are suitable for the reading ages of pupils. However, pupils who are at an early stage of reading do not get the precise help they need and so they do not become fluent, confident readers as quickly as they could.

Pupils benefit from bespoke support to manage their own feelings and behaviour. They trust staff and know that they will get help if they need it. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted. However, sometimes pupils are unwilling to take part in learning,

do not persist when they are finding work challenging or do not attend well enough. When this is the case, those pupils do not learn as well as they could.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for adult life. The school nurtures individual pupils' sporting interests so that they are keen to continue with physical activities once they leave. Pupils receive helpful information and guidance about careers and further education. As a result, they are successful in maintaining their education, training or employment after they leave the school.

Topics for pupils' personal development such as healthy relationships and understanding consent are delivered sensitively. The school's work to develop and support pupils' understanding of mental health is a particular strength. Pupils take part in the student council and volunteer in the local community. This helps them to understand that they have a valuable contribution to make.

Staff help pupils to understand the importance of tolerance and respect. They teach pupils how to show these in the way that they interact with others. Derogatory language and intolerant attitudes are not tolerated. The school educates pupils to understand why these are not acceptable.

The proprietor body has clear structures and processes that enable them to have accurate oversight of the school. All those involved in leading the school understand their roles and have the expertise they need to perform them. The proprietor body have identified sensible priorities for school improvement and acted promptly on these.

Excellent communication between staff and leaders underpins the strong support for all. The training that staff receive means that they can fulfil their roles with confidence and expertise.

There is very strong communication with pupils' parents and carers. This helps ensure that the daily transition for pupils is smooth.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Policies are up to date and reflect the latest statutory guidance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Pupils at an early stage of reading do not get precise enough support to develop their phonics knowledge. Consequently, they do not learn to read fluently as quickly as they could. The school needs to ensure that all pupils learn to read well enough to be ready for their next steps in education, training or employment.

- Some pupils do not attend well enough or are reluctant to engage in learning when they are in school. As a result, they have gaps in their knowledge and do not achieve as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that all pupils' attendance and attitudes to learning enable them to make the best possible progress through the curriculum.

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	144514
DfE registration number	865/6046
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10342125
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Number of part-time pupils	20
Proprietor	The Wessex Partnership Trust
Chair	Fiona Richards
Headteacher	Craig Noble
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,200 to £43,600
Telephone number	01722 786138
Website	www.brunelcollege.co.uk
Email address	admin@brunelcollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 October 2021

Information about this school

- The school uses nine unregistered alternative providers and two registered alternative providers.
- All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Most pupils attend this school part time, as part of an education package.

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 judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and food technology.
- 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 discussed the reading curriculum and looked at documents relating to the personal development and science curriculum.
- 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.
- An inspector met with members of the proprietor body and with representatives of those who commission places at the school.
- An inspector contacted one of the unregistered alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and from pupils to Ofsted's online surveys. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and on both school sites.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Lee

Ofsted Inspector

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