

Inspection of The Beeches School

Aurora Boveridge College, Cranborne, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 5RT

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 January 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

Staff treat everyone as an individual. This develops pupils' character and personal confidence. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans. Staff understand their needs and provide effective pastoral support. Pupils and staff form respectful relationships. This ensures that the vast majority of pupils show commitment to learning and work hard. Typically, pupils demonstrate great manners. The longer pupils are at the school the better their attendance becomes.

Pupils experience a broad curriculum. Staff help pupils deepen their reading, writing, mathematics and science knowledge. Beyond this, pupils learn other subjects such as history, philosophy and ethics, bushcraft and car mechanics. Cooking is a favourite for many pupils. Others enjoy enterprise projects to raise money for charity or plan offsite activities. Staff structure lunchtimes to support pupils' individual needs. Many enjoy board games, including chess, or clubs such as art and craft or music. Pupils benefit from the wide-ranging sports facilities and expansive grounds of Boveridge College, in which the school's two sites are located.

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

The proprietor body ensures that the school is well led. It conducts regular checks on the school's effectiveness and takes action to address any relative weaknesses when they arise. The buildings are in good order. The school meets the independent school standards in full and complies with Section 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Over the last year, leaders' work to increase the ambition of subject curriculums is proving highly effective. For example, pupils are learning much more in English and history as a result. Pupils remember what they learn and apply this knowledge well. This helps them to master new learning effectively. There are consistent systems in place to assess what pupils know and can do. Typically, staff use this information to ensure that pupils learn the essential knowledge that they need to know next. This is particularly the case in the academic curriculum. However, there are other educational programmes where the implementation of the curriculum is less secure, for example in what the school calls 'life skills' and 'key skills'.

Reading underpins every subject curriculum. The teaching of phonics ensures that pupils at the early stages of reading get the support they need to read accurately. Across the school, pupils learn how to interpret the texts they read. This ensures that they can study successfully for their GCSEs and functional skills qualifications at key stage 4. Recent work to further develop pupils' writing is making a positive difference. A range of vocational curriculums are being developed, such as animal care.

Notably, there has been substantial change in recent months, including new staffing and a new site with additional classrooms for key stage 4 pupils. The proprietor is managing these changes effectively. However, it has been a lot for pupils and parents and carers to take on board. Typically, on both school sites pupils learn very

well. However, a minority of parents and carers report that there are occasions where the implementation of parts of pupils' individualised learning plans and therapies are less effective. Others say that the effectiveness of the school's communication to parents has dipped. The proprietor is taking action to address these things, but also recognises that there is more to do to put this right.

Specialist staff check that the planned approaches to foster positive behaviour are in place. As a result, staff routinely model and support pupils to regulate their behaviour well. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced considerably over time. Suspensions are rare. There are robust systems and processes in place to monitor pupils' attendance. Most pupils attend well. When new pupils arrive, there are detailed arrangements to ensure that their induction into school is smooth. However, there are occasions when pupils could progress to full-time education more quickly.

Pupils benefit from impartial careers advice. They are well prepared for their next stage of education or employment. Most pupils move on to their first-choice college placements. There are many strands to the school's work to develop pupils personally. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships, sex and health education curriculums include everything they should. Pupils learn a lot about fundamental British values, law, equalities, different faiths, keeping safe and managing finances. However, the school's work to bring all these aspects of the curriculum together in a more cohesive and coordinated curriculum is at an early stage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- There are some weaknesses in the organisation of the curriculum, including in PSHE education. On occasion, teaching does not build on what pupils need to know next or it does not provide pupils with the precise specialist approach they need. This slows a minority of pupils' learning down. The proprietor must ensure that the school is consistently successful in providing all pupils with a high-quality education, so that pupils' individual needs are routinely met across every aspect of the school's 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	146790
DfE registration number	838/6042
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10299249
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Aurora FE Limited
Chair	Sharon Pearson
Headteacher	Adele Henson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,961
Telephone number	01725 551247
Website	www.the-aurora-group.com/thebeeches
Email address	boveridgecollege@the-aurora-group.com
Date of previous inspection	21–23 January 2020

Information about this school

- The Beeches School is on two sites within the 50-acre grounds of Aurora Boveridge College. The key stage 3 building is in the centre of the College. Key stage 4 pupils learn at what the school calls 'The Cottages', a 15-minute walk or short mini-bus drive away.
- The principal of Boveridge College oversees the work of the headteacher of The Beeches school. The chair of governors and a number of centrally employed staff within the Aurora group also quality assure the work of the school.
- The school's first standard inspection took place in January 2020, when it was judged to be good, with all independent school standards met. There have been a number of significant staffing changes since. The current headteacher started her post in September 2022. A new deputy headteacher started post in January 2024. Some teachers are relatively new to the school.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. Pupils are placed at the school by their representative local authorities.
- The school caters for pupils with diagnoses of autism and/or social, emotional and mental health needs. There is on-site professional therapy support.
- The school uses one unregistered 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 judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal of Boveridge College, the headteacher of The Beeches school and a range of school staff to discuss aspects of the school's work. An inspector also met with the chair of the proprietor body and the chair of governors and held telephone conversations with representatives from Dorset, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authorities and a designated officer for safeguarding in Dorset.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English (including reading), mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector also examined the scope of the history curriculum by looking at curriculum plans and pupils' work, and speaking to leaders.
- An inspector listened to pupils from key stage 3 read to an adult.
- 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 conducted a range of activities to confirm whether the independent school standards were met in full. This included health and safety checks of the premises, risk assessments, record-keeping for behaviour management, attendance and supervision during social times.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses from to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gill Hickling

Ofsted Inspector

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