

# Belle Vue School

Jockey Lane, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3JN

**Inspection date**

21 February 2024

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 11, 13, 16 and 32(1)(c)*

- Aspects of safety and safeguarding considered during this inspection are currently managed well. Leaders have responded quickly to recent advice regarding recording of referrals and information to help keep pupils safe. This is all in one place and leaders use it to take appropriate action, including involving external services.
- The school updated the safeguarding policy just before the inspection and again following discussion during the inspection. It meets requirements and is published on the school's website.
- Staff have secure knowledge of their safeguarding and welfare responsibilities. They know what to be alert to and they report any worries clearly and promptly. All staff are trained in how to use physical intervention. There have been few uses of this since the last inspection and these are recorded correctly. The school keeps a log of follow-up actions and learning points. School records indicate that pupils have settled well after such an event, attending and learning well.
- Risk assessments are well-considered and cover key actions to take to mitigate risk. These are created for individuals as well as events and specific locations, for example outside spaces. Potential risks are managed in proportionate and reasonable ways. Staff understand how to use these assessments and why they are important.
- The school's first aid and health and safety policies both meet requirements. Staff follow the routines set out in these policies. For example, first aid kits are checked carefully, and accidents recorded clearly.

*Paragraphs 9 and 14*

- The behaviour policy is suitable and includes all the required aspects. It is published on the school website and known well by staff. Suitable supervision is in place for pupils, with staff working well together to adapt things as needed. They stay calm and explain decisions and plans well to pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff observed during this inspection were positive and constructive.

- Any concerns about pupils' behaviour are shared quickly with other staff who need to know and added to a pupil's chronological record. Staff consider dysregulation as part of the whole understanding of pupils, particularly how this might link to a pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The standards checked in this part are met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)*

- Leadership at the school is currently in a state of change. The proprietors have moved away from the day-to-day running of the school. This change is supported by a plan for succession, but, currently, leadership as a whole does not demonstrate the secure knowledge of the independent school standards that is required.
- During the inspection, leaders did not have required information readily to hand. It was all provided by the end of the inspection, but leaders took time and needed to ask for support from each other to access relevant documents and files. Additionally, there was a lack of clarity about who will be the leader on site at the school each day as the new head of school will only be there three days a week. While this does not put pupils at risk, it does demonstrate the fragility of leadership as a whole at the time of the inspection.
- Leaders have responded quickly to external advice. This advice and feedback have helped leaders to strengthen some of their processes, particularly around safeguarding and reporting. They also responded well to conversations during the inspection, making clarifications to policies, including updating dates, following these discussions. These external challenges have helped leaders to meet the standards in Part 3. However, the leaders do not currently know the school well enough to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- The standards in these paragraphs are not met.

### *Paragraph 34(1)(c)*

- During the inspection, evidence showed that the well-being of pupils was a key consideration of leaders' work. They demonstrated how they promote this through the school.
- This paragraph is met. However, overall, the part is not met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet 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, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	148062
DfE registration number	886/6161
Inspection number	10332130

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	Secondary special
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Keefields Limited
Chair	Mary McKeeman
Headteacher	Mary McKeeman (Executive Headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,500 to £54,800
Telephone number	01580 854 641
Website	<a href="http://www.bellevue.kent.sch.uk">www.bellevue.kent.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@bellevue.kent.sch.uk">office@bellevue.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	26 to 28 April 2022

## Information about this school

- The proprietors have stepped back from the operational aspect of the school. The executive headteacher has handed over on-site leadership to a new head of school who started on the day of the inspection and will be on site three days a week. It is

not clear who will be the on-site leader for the other two days, although the executive headteacher will provide off-site support and guidance as needed in the short term.

- The joint proprietor who is operations manager provides administrative and technical advice and support.
- This was the first inspection since the school was judged to be outstanding in April 2022.
- The school caters for pupils with SEND, all of whom have education, health and care plans. These cover the following areas of SEND:
  - cognitive learning needs
  - specific learning difficulties
  - moderate learning difficulties
  - behavioural, emotional and social development needs and difficulties
  - communication and interaction needs
  - speech, language and communication needs
  - autism
  - sensory and/or physical needs.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The inspector was aware during the inspection that a serious incident that occurred at the setting since the previous inspection is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the provider in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgements.

## Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) because of concerns raised with the DfE about the safety and well-being of pupils and the leadership of the school.
- The inspection was carried out with no notice and lasted one day.
- The inspection was carried out at the same time that an emergency inspection was undertaken at the other school run by the proprietor body, Cornfields School. Parts of these inspections were conducted jointly by the inspectors with the proprietor and a governor. The purpose was to reduce the burden of inspection activity for these school leaders. The aspects to explore were the same at both schools.
- The inspection focused on two parts of the independent school standards: those about the welfare, health and safety of pupils and those about the quality of leadership and management of the school.
- The inspector met with the head of school, the proprietor who is currently executive headteacher and a governor. Additionally, she met with four members of staff on a one-to-one basis and spoke with other staff around the school. She had a tour of the school site and spoke with pupils in classes. She examined school policies, records, safeguarding information and the single central register of pre-employment checks. She also considered the responses to the confidential online staff survey. Alongside the inspector carrying out the inspection at Belle Vue School, she spoke with an independent educational consultant and representatives of Kent local authority.
- Before the inspection, the inspector checked the school's website and considered all relevant information about the school.
- The inspector considered a wide range of documentation provided by the school after the on-site visit.

## Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

**The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

### **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.

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