

Inspection of Three Bridges

Kea Downs Road, Blackwater, Truro, Cornwall, TR4 8EG

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 June 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 Inadequate

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Three Bridges School. Many have missed a lot of schooling prior to joining the school. Through the carefully planned transition sessions, pupils adapt well. All pupils have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with some associated behavioural issues. However, through bespoke adaptations to the curriculum, pupils learn how to regulate their emotions well. As a result, the school is a calm, welcoming place in which to learn.

Each pupil's social, emotional and learning needs are prioritised. Staff and pupils develop very strong relationships which are both nurturing and supportive. Through these relationships, pupils learn how to behave with respect, empathy and kindness. Pupils are well prepared for the world beyond school.

Pupils have many opportunities to interact with people in a range of settings alongside learning a breadth of skills. For example, pupils learn how to sail and about the wildlife at a local lake. They learn life skills through visiting local shops and cafes. Pupils learn to value their local heritage through visiting places of folklore importance and mining heritage sites. Pupils learn how to make independent decisions in a carefully structured way. Consequently, pupils develop the knowledge and skills to care for their emotional and physical well-being.

Pupils learn about the importance of free speech, democracy and inclusion through the curriculum. All pupils are members of the school council and learn how to discuss issues about the school calmly and thoughtfully. Through the school council, pupils were able to make changes to the school dinners.

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

The school's vision for pupils to achieve emotional, social and academic success is explicit. The school assesses what pupils know and do not know effectively on entry. The school uses this information to construct bespoke curriculum pathways for every pupil. Pupils have a breadth of SEND needs which inform the highly personalised curriculums. However, the focus on developing all pupils' communication skills lies at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils learn to articulate their knowledge about the world around them well.

All pupils study a phonics programme that is suitably adapted to meet their needs. Many pupils who arrive at the school as struggling readers learn to read well. Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Pupils listen to a breadth of texts throughout the day. Texts are used for manifold purposes such as to support pupils in learning about different faiths and cultures. Staff engage pupils in texts successfully enabling pupils to extend their vocabulary and knowledge about the world around them.

The school has designed many areas of the curriculum with careful consideration for the learning needs and interests of pupils. However, in some areas of the curriculum, the school has not sequenced the knowledge that pupils learn with clarity. Additionally, the school has not established an assessment system in some areas that identifies what pupils learn so that they can incrementally build pupils' knowledge over time. Consequently, in some subjects, pupils do not learn as well as in other areas of the curriculum.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is skilfully structured. Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and emotionally safe. They learn about the risks associated with the internet. Pupils learn how to cook nutritious meals. From engaging in team sports at the local leisure centre to playing 'hide and seek' in the school grounds, pupils develop their physical fitness well. Pupils learn about the worlds of work, apprenticeships, and further education through a comprehensive programme. For example, pupils visit places of work such as the police and fire stations. Pupils' personal development is given the highest priority. Pupils visit places of worship in the region and engage with events of cultural and moral significance.

Pupils' attendance is tracked closely. The school addresses pupils' absences in a bespoke way through the building of strong relationships to engage pupils in learning. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved. Through the establishment of strong relationships and personalised curriculums, pupils' behaviour is managed very well. Consequently, the proportion of suspensions is minimal.

Leaders ensure full compliance with the independent school standards. Staff are unanimously positive about leaders' support for their well-being and workload. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a few subject areas, the knowledge that pupils should learn is not as clearly sequenced as in other areas. Consequently, pupils do not build on their knowledge well. The school should ensure that the knowledge that pupils learn in all areas of the curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils can deepen their understanding and articulate it with coherence.
- In a few areas, the assessment of pupils' knowledge is not as precise as in other areas. Consequently, staff do not have the most accurate information with which to adapt their teaching of some areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not

build their knowledge as well. The school should ensure that the assessment of pupils' knowledge is precise in all areas of the curriculum so that pupils can learn well in all areas.

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	129252
DfE registration number	908/6095
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10321515
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Three Bridges Education Limited
Chair	Tracey Storey
Headteacher	Lisa Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£44,000 to £89,000
Telephone number	01872561173
Website	https://threebridgesschool.com
Email address	tracey@melroseeducation.com
Date of previous inspection	29 November–1 December 2022

Information about this school

- The proprietor of the school is Three Bridges Education Ltd. In June 2023, Melrose Education Ltd acquired the school. Melrose Education owns nine other special needs independent school settings.
- The school is a specialist provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils on roll have education, health and care plans. All placements are funded by Cornwall local authority.
- The school does not use 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the proprietor and the chief executive officer of Melrose Education Ltd. An inspector also held discussions with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, early reading, mathematics and physical education. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gill Hickling

Ofsted Inspector

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