

# Briarwood School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109410
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bristol City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	356536
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen McShane HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	79
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	26
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Shovelton
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Hussey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Briar Way Fishponds Bristol BS16 4EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01173532651
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 16 lessons led by 14 teachers. They met with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils, and looked at a range of other evidence, including data on pupils' progress, teachers' planning, curriculum documents and minutes of meetings. The responses to questionnaires by 20 parents and carers, 35 pupils and 53 staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The learning and progress of different groups of pupils.
- The school's evidence for the judgement in its self-evaluation of outstanding outcomes in aspects of personal development.
- The impact of management, self-evaluation and school improvement on outcomes since the last inspection.

## Information about the school

Briarwood School admits pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). A number of the pupils have additional needs related to complex medical difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder or challenging behaviour. It serves the diverse community of East Central Bristol; just under half of the pupils are from different minority ethnic groups, with approximately a third being at an early stage of learning to speak English.

The school is on two sites; the early years, primary and sixth form departments on one and the secondary department, in new and refurbished accommodation, on the other. There were well-developed plans to ensure the whole school had new accommodation but these have recently been abandoned. On the secondary site, the school runs an alternative provision for a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour who were at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from other schools. The school operates extended provision during the school holidays.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Briarwood is a good school. Pupils make good progress, whatever their starting points or disability, as a result of a good curriculum and outstanding care and support. Aspects of the school, including the sixth form, are outstanding. Respectful and caring relationships with a strong commitment to the progress of individual pupils are clearly evident in all of the school's work. Relationships with parents and carers and partnerships to improve provision for individuals, as well as curriculum opportunities, are outstanding. Parents and carers, staff and pupils are all very positive about Briarwood.

Pupils are very well prepared for their future lives and feel very safe. A wide variety of physical activities, physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and tailored physical programmes for groups or individuals ensure pupils can adopt very healthy lifestyles or manage their complex medical conditions well. Pupils contribute extremely well to the many different cultural, sporting and fundraising activities that the school organises including Briarfest, the annual music festival.

The school curriculum supports the development of key skills very well. The recent reorganisation is giving better opportunities to embed all different activities of the school so that there is more coherence and the curriculum is responsive to the diversity of the school community. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in some respects but is inconsistent. At times, the overall learning intentions of the lessons are not clear. Additional adults are not always used well enough to support learning and activities are sometimes not targeted or interesting enough to ensure that time is well used and pupils are consistently engaged.

The school, with the complexity of two sites, is managed well. Leaders are aware of the deficiencies of the current environments on aspects of the curriculum, as well as for individuals, and do their best to mitigate these. They know their school well and since the last inspection have demonstrated their good capacity for improvement through their improved data collection and analysis, and the review of the curriculum. Innovations such as the alternative provision for those with challenging behaviour and the further development of the sixth form have been successful. The monitoring of teaching is regular and satisfactory. Firm actions have been taken to address some previous inadequacies but actions are not systematic or robust enough to ensure ongoing improvements.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that, by December 2011, it is consistently good or better by ensuring:
  - the learning intentions of lessons are clear

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- additional adults are used well to support learning
- activities planned are challenging, interesting and well matched to the needs of individual pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of the monitoring of teaching by ensuring:
  - that there is a systematic and robust programme of observation with clear feedback
  - subsequent professional development opportunities lead to continuous improvement
  - regular reviews focus sufficiently on the impact on learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

The school's own data and its detailed knowledge of each pupil's development show that all groups of pupils make good progress. Pupils are making good progress in acquiring literacy, numeracy and communication skills. In some lessons observed, good progress was clearly evident, for example, when pupils with profound difficulties were learning to attend to objects or where pupils with different needs were using a range of information and communication technology (ICT) to communicate their needs, to recognise themselves in pictures and make a choice or to prepare presentations using software. Pupils leave the school with a range of Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards.

Pupils engage very successfully in enterprise activities and develop key skills including those of turn-taking and the ability to make choices and express preferences. Pupils' feedback on their learning is gathered regularly and is an important part of annual reviews. Many pupils carry out roles and responsibilities within school such as organising the recycling or producing the school certificates. There is high participation and considerable success in fundraising for various charities such as Shelterbox and Comic Relief. Pupils spoken to say that they feel very safe and are very clear that adults will sort out any difficulties they may have. Pupils who have communication difficulties can be observed trusting adults to hold and lift them. Even in the distress of challenging behaviour, pupils demonstrate that they feel safe and respond positively to calm words and careful prompting. Nutritious food, healthy snacks and careful feeding programmes mean that pupils know about and receive a balanced diet. Individuals are supported to enjoy new foods and textures or learn to chew and swallow. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are welcoming and inquisitive. Positive handling programmes and the detailed and intensive work of the alternative provision means that pupils with the most significant behaviour difficulties are making good progress in managing their behaviour. There is clear evidence of the decrease in the number of negative incidents involving these pupils.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

In all lessons, there are strong relationships between staff and pupils. There is an atmosphere of continual support whatever the needs or challenges. Individual targets are clear and tracked well. In the best lessons, clear lesson objectives and interesting activities provide an effective vehicle for learning. The particular learning targets that have been identified for each pupil are incorporated well. Knowledgeable adults are employed successfully to support learning and lessons proceed at a pace that is calm and purposeful. Disruptions, due to the behaviour of individuals, are managed effectively. In less successful lessons, activities are not well matched to the needs of the pupils. There is too much teacher direction and too much time is spent in large groups. The learning objective is unclear and pupils have to wait too long for their turn. This means their attention wanders and behaviour deteriorates and becomes more challenging.

The long-term curriculum plan ensures appropriate coverage and relevance to the pupils. Cultural and religious events, such as harvest, Black History month and Eid, are planned for well so that pupils' knowledge and key skills can be developed. The delivery of the curriculum develops so that age-appropriate challenge is built in; for example, pupils are taught by specialist teachers in the secondary department and develop more enterprise skills in the post-16 provision. Symbols are used well to support communication and the

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development of early literacy. Treatment and education of autistic and related communication handicapped children (TEACCH) techniques are used effectively to develop the learning skills of those with autistic spectrum disorder.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Staff know pupils' particular needs and circumstances very well. Individual education programmes, as well as approaches to toileting, eating or meeting medical and physical needs, are developed very effectively with health professionals. The school works with parents and carers very well. It is responsive to the needs of different groups, offering translation and support services and adapting its practice for reporting on progress and setting targets. The school's support for those pupils with the most challenging behaviour is very effective. This responsive provision has a very high ratio of well-trained staff and works on all aspects of the pupils' life, including transport, diet, home circumstances and medical needs. It is successful in supporting the pupil and the family. Support for pupils who have attendance difficulties due to medical or other issues is very effective.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers know all pupils very well and effectively model through their work their vision for the school and high aspirations for each individual. Governors are supportive and through their good knowledge and effective relationships hold the school to account and challenge when necessary. Partnerships with other agencies are outstanding. Links with other professionals, for example, the complex needs teams and paediatricians, mean that pupils receive the best advice available. Links with other schools mean pupils have opportunities to work alongside mainstream peers to generalise their skills or have new curriculum opportunities, for example, sports leadership. Partnerships with parents and carers are very effective and this is evident in efficient communication, very good participation in progress meetings, better multi-disciplinary support, including housing, and successful support regarding transitions.

Safeguarding procedures are good. The school takes the protection of its pupils very seriously and effective procedures are in place to keep them safe and to respond appropriately if there are any concerns.

Detailed knowledge of individuals ensures that no pupil underachieves, whatever their disability, age, culture or gender. The school has worked hard to ensure that it knows about and is responsive to the particular cultural and socio-economic context of its community. The school has been awarded the International Schools award and has

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established successful exchanges with schools in Uganda and Somalia and new links with Poland and Germany.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The school's evidence and detailed assessment show that children are making good progress across all the areas of learning. There are very good relationships with parents and carers ensuring a joined-up approach. Activities are well planned with a balance of child-initiated play and skills teaching, taking into account the child's individual behaviour and learning styles, and their next steps. Children's personal and health needs are well met by caring and knowledgeable adults. The leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage have taken successful action to improve provision. They are knowledgeable and have ensured that they have been informed by effective practice elsewhere.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



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## Sixth form

The well-established sixth form has developed exemplary partnerships with local and multinational organisations to enhance the curriculum, providing interesting learning opportunities, work experience and mini-enterprise to ensure that course work is vocationally based, productive and life enhancing. As well as developing skills in home management, music and performing arts, students are engaged in horticulture, bicycle repair, health-related fitness and producing high-quality printing products. Students learn to work well together in a supportive way with well-trained staff acting as effective models and promoting good behaviour. They make very good progress, developing very good independence skills and taking responsibility for their behaviour, possessions and well-being. They achieve very well in their ASDAN awards. Students are very well prepared for the future by the opportunities provided. The exemplary drive and determination of the leadership has been key to the development of these unique opportunities.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers spoken to were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and said that any difficulties were dealt with quickly and effectively with staff being approachable and supportive. Responses to the parental questionnaires were positive with all reporting that they were happy with their child's experience at school and comments praising the school's commitment, its management and staff.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Briarwood to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	75	4	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	65	6	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	45	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	60	6	30	2	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	65	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	40	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	60	6	30	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	45	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	60	7	35	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



27 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Briarwood School, Bristol, BS16 4EA**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you all and seeing you work and play together. We enjoyed hearing about all the interesting things you do like printing, sports leadership, Briarfest and your achievements' celebrations.

We found out that:

- Briarwood is a good school; post-16 is outstanding
- you are making good progress
- adults care for you very well and you feel very safe
- keeping healthy is very important to you
- you are prepared very well for becoming adults
- your school works very well with others, including your parents and carers.

To make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best. All of you can help by continuing to try your best.

It was a pleasure to meet you all.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane

Her Majesty's Inspector

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