

# Brentwood School

Brentwood Avenue, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 1SR

**Inspection dates** 28–29 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- All pupils, whatever their special educational need, make the progress expected in communication, literacy and numeracy. However, a high proportion of pupils makes more progress than expected in most areas of learning.
- Sixth-form students are very well-prepared before leaving school. They make excellent progress in learning about working life and applying what they know and can do to managing adult responsibilities independently.
- Teachers and all of the staff who support them know pupils exceedingly well and assess learning thoroughly. Extremely well-planned lessons ensure that each pupil's work secures their knowledge and skills and builds upon these logically step by step.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed with exceptional skill and great sensitivity. This leads to excellent behaviour across the school at all times of the day. Pupils enjoy school extremely well and look forward to each day. They make friends and thoroughly enjoy each other's company.
- Pupils feel very safe and the school's tight safety measures keep them safe.
- The school has a long established and high reputation among parents and in the local authority as a result of its outstanding teaching, care and support for pupils.
- Leaders and governors are highly effective in maintaining the school's outstanding qualities. They are constantly ambitious and continue to build with great effectiveness upon the school's many strengths.
- First and foremost for leaders and governors is keeping a close check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and always searching for ways in which both can be improved.
- Over many years leaders and governors have succeeded in recruiting well-qualified and experienced teachers. They have acted relentlessly to develop the knowledge and skills of teachers and all of the staff so that they are expert in meeting the needs of all the pupils.
- New middle leaders taking charge of strong areas of the school's provision are beginning to introduce new and effective improvements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed nine of the school's 15 teachers. The headteacher joined inspectors in observing two lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and the school's improvement partner.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils and samples of pupils' work and records were checked.
- The school documentation scrutinised included data on pupils' progress, the school development plan, policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils and the school's own evaluation of its work.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 13 parents who completed Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, Parent View, the school's survey of parents' views and comments made to inspectors by parents. Forty-three questionnaires completed by staff were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs which fall into one of three main categories: severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and autistic spectrum conditions. In addition to these special educational needs, a significant proportion of pupils also has challenging behaviour.
- In recent years the school has also received an increasing number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportions of pupils of minority ethnic heritages and who speak English as an additional language are broadly average.
- There are 30 students in the sixth form, a few of whom joined the sixth form from another special school.
- Students attend courses at Trafford College and they gain a variety of work experience with a number of local businesses and service providers.

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

- Ensure that the good start being made by the leaders of the sixth form and the provision for pupils with autism spectrum conditions is checked and nurtured by senior leaders, thereby guaranteeing their success.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Often from very low starting points, pupils rapidly improve their ability to communicate and, according to the capabilities of each, they speak and listen very effectively. Very frequent opportunities to talk or communicate using gestures, signs and symbols throughout the school day drive progress at a fast rate. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties develop responses and increase their interaction exceptionally well.
- Pupils are increasingly confident over time to speak up and say what is on their minds and to answer questions. Early on, a symbol is used to denote a choice or an answer; later, many pupils combine symbols so that they form a sentence showing that their language skills are being thoroughly developed.
- Regular practice and repetition help many pupils to recognise and write the letters of the alphabet, starting with the letters of their name. They learn the sounds letters make, match 'd' with a picture of a dog or 'l' with a ladybird and from this stage begin to read and spell simple words.
- Many of the most-able pupils across the school, those with moderate learning difficulties or autism spectrum conditions, read independently and tackle stories such as the Harry Potter novels. They write clearly using good sentences which are legible and grammatical, and words are usually spelled correctly.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' mathematical language, knowledge and skills. At morning break pupils have to buy their drink and snack and they are expected to hand over the correct amounts of money brought from home. This reinforces to an exceptional extent what they learn in lessons about coins and their values. Pupils name two-dimensional shapes and colours and many know the days of the week and the times of day.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority who get extra support through the pupil-premium funding make the same very good progress as that of other pupils across the school. The slight differences between the performances of these groups of pupils seen in past years have been narrowed with support for learning at home.
- Outstanding sixth-form provision means students continue to develop literacy and numeracy skills. They make excellent progress by learning to apply these skills to work-related tasks, cookery and travelling independently.
- By the end of Key Stage 4 and the end of the sixth form most students have gained recognised accreditation and awards for their work and achievements. These count towards their choice of college courses and ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to cope with the demands of the next stage of education and training.
- Outstanding achievement over the time pupils spend in this school leads to a successful move to college or other appropriate settings very effectively. This fulfils the school's policy of promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers, their classroom assistants and support staff, such as therapists, combine their expertise and deep knowledge of each pupil to plan lessons and many opportunities for learning outside of lessons comprehensively.
- The distinct ways in which the learning of all pupils is handled ensure that the conditions are absolutely right for them to make fast progress. The most-able pupils throughout the school are appropriately challenged by their work. Autistic pupils are given clearly defined routines and these are carefully explained to them throughout the day. Symbols representing the work to be done and the break times provide pupils with clear direction and they are able, therefore, to cooperate extremely well and sustain concentration when at work.
- Communication between staff and pupils is outstanding and this paves the way to pupils' strong

interest and engagement in lessons as well as their confidence to tackle the demands being made of them.

- Staff are very confident of what they can achieve for pupils and their expectations are high. From the start to the end of the school day, staff and pupils have a clear sense of purpose and a sharp focus on work, learning and making progress. Pupils are constantly shown how to improve their work.
- The very thorough assessment of what pupils learn during a lesson and over time determines in a very effective way if pupils need to continue practising and repeating their work and when they are ready to move on.
- When they plan lessons, teachers think very carefully what work is appropriate for each pupil and the point they have reached in learning. More-able Year 10 pupils worked on improving their writing by using correct punctuation and adding detail. Two pupils competed to see who could make up the longest list of words from a pile of random letters. Less-able pupils in the class matched letters and the sounds they make to the names of animals they knew.
- The pace at which lessons move is matched very well to the speed at which pupils learn best. The most-able pupils enjoy the lively pace of their work while other pupils have the time to build their concentration and understand what is being asked of them.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively especially for the few who, as a result of their severe learning difficulties and autism, have challenging behaviour. The calm and well-ordered atmosphere pervading the school contributes significantly to the outstanding quality of learning throughout the day.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the warmth of the interactions they experience. Parents acknowledge that one of the school's key strengths is the happy and secure community staff have created.
- Overall attendance is average but figures are adversely affected by absences caused by medical conditions, recurring appointments and hospitalisation.
- Friendships and good relationships flourish among pupils and these encourage their communication and social skills. Pupils who start school with low confidence quickly find the will to join in and make their contributions, formally in lessons and informally elsewhere.
- Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations staff place on them. They are determined and work hard at meeting expectations for their best behaviour and treating everyone with respect and positive regard.
- The pupils who need extra support with behaving well benefit from consistent handling by staff, sharply focused on early intervention which succeeds in avoiding sudden disruptive behaviour.
- Very good opportunities throughout the day for pupils to make choices and take charge develop independence. They choose what to eat and where to sit at lunchtime. The most-able pupils know that the things which they are offered to eat are healthy options.
- Older pupils are encouraged to help younger ones. Staff and older pupils are good role models. Sixth-form students worked with pupils practising physical skills such as balance, handling, throwing and catching.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The detailed arrangements made for students undertaking work experience or attending college ensure that they are kept very safe when away from school.
- Pupils spoken to understood the nature of bullying and said it was not something they had experienced at school. They were very assured that staff would deal with any concerns they had. Sixth-form students studying social interactions saw how one person in a group can dominate conversation and intimidate. They learnt to be sensitive about how they related to others and not be overbearing.

- Very well-defined arrangements for understanding and reducing risks and keeping pupils safe are firmly established. Clear routines are followed thoroughly by staff and pupils. A system of rewards and sanctions is consistently applied and understood well by pupils. The medical and physical needs of pupils are dealt with very effectively.

## **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher and her deputy maintain the school's high standards very effectively. They sustain rapid and continual improvement of the school. This achieves their own and the governors' ambitious vision, thereby ensuring that the school's effectiveness remains outstanding in meeting pupils' needs.
- The exceptional level of knowledge and skills built up over many years around teaching and supporting pupils is the product of leaders driving professional development and innovation.
- The local authority stays closely involved with the school and its development while it provides light-touch support for this outstanding school.
- Wider leadership roles are being developed. This is the result of a restructuring of leadership roles and responsibilities and also because of newly appointed staff coming into leadership.
- The excellent provision for the ever-increasing numbers of autistic pupils has been the result of very clear leadership and highly effective management. This has ensured that there is a team of staff with a common sense of purpose, a consistent way of working using a set of skills to support pupils and help them learn. New leadership is bringing further improvements to the ways pupils learn and are helped to make progress.
- The well-qualified leader of the sixth form who is very new to the post rightly recognises the high expectations and high quality of provision in her department. The focus is on developing a very good curriculum to intensify further learning related to work, life skills and independence. There is also good consideration being given to a curriculum for more-able pupils currently coming up through the school.
- Thorough checks are kept on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and both are rigorously analysed for strengths and weaknesses which points the way to improvement priorities. These priorities find their way into detailed development plans and the objectives teachers are given to improve their performance.
- A policy covering teachers' performance has been updated to the government's current standards. The policy makes a clear link between effective performance and pay progression.
- The curriculum is adapted extremely well to pupils' special educational needs. It also reflects their interests and talents by providing a wide and rich range of experiences in school and beyond. Pupils' work and activities promote to an excellent extent their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have the experience and expertise to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. They are deeply committed to the school's continued success and to high standards in all aspects of the school's work. To this end they are very well-organised into committees which focus sharply on the key aspects of the school's management. Their work is thorough and systematic. Reports from the school are checked carefully and governors visit school regularly and see for themselves that high standards are maintained. The school's analyses of pupils' progress and of the quality of teaching are thoroughly scrutinised and discussed. In particular, governors look for the evidence of how the pupil premium is improving the progress of pupils this extra money supports. Governors took a leading role in setting up the policy for teachers' performance and pay progression ensuring that teachers were fully briefed and agreed on changes to expectations.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106391
<b>Local authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	439640

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lezley Carlile
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hilary Moon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 928 8109
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 928 4548
<b>Email address</b>	brentwood.hmoon@traffordlearning.org



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