

# Brookfield School

Grandstand Road, Hereford, HR4 9NG.

**Inspection dates** 29–30 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.

- Students start at Brookfield with low attainment and histories of broken education. Their progress is rapid and sustained and, by the time they leave, many are reaching average standards.
- There are high expectations that students will either take academic courses, gaining passes at GCSE (two ex-students having gone on to university in recent years), or following work-related routes and gaining qualifications such as the BTEC in construction or sport.
- Teachers have very high expectations and use the information they have on how each pupil is doing to support their rapid progress.
- The behaviour of students is exemplary and in lessons it is hard to realise that all the students were admitted to the school because of previously extremely challenging behaviour.
- Students say they are safe and their parents share this view strongly.
- In every classroom the excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants creates a positive learning atmosphere in which all students are given strong encouragement to succeed.
- Support for staff is strong and they are encouraged to develop their expertise. As a result, the high professional standards found at the previous inspection have been sustained.
- It is very rare for students to leave at the end of Year 11 and not go on to college, an apprenticeship or some form of employment.
- The students' low self-esteem when they start at the school is transformed and they grow in confidence and self-belief.
- This is supported by the very strong relationships that are built up between staff and students.
- There is barely a wall that is not used for some kind of high quality display. This includes a lot of work produced by students themselves, in which they take pride.
- The headteacher is highly experienced and her expertise is used within the local authority and further afield. She is well supported by other senior leaders.
- The governing body has a detailed knowledge of what is going on in the school. Governors are therefore able to fulfil their role very effectively and hold the school to account.

## Information about this inspection

- A total of 12 lessons were observed and every teacher seen, three of the observations being undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The work in students' books was looked at during lessons, and a detailed scrutiny was made of a sample of books from each class. Inspectors listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, other staff who have specific responsibilities, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were gathered from the 12 responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire and the school's own questionnaire undertaken in July 2013.
- Student views were gathered from a meeting with the school council and from discussions during lessons.
- The views of staff were gathered from discussions throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including information on students' progress, teachers' planning and marking, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Brookfield is a school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many have additional, often complex, learning needs that include autistic spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- The proportion who qualify for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups such as those known to be entitled to free school meals, or who are in the care of the local authority) is well above average.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs apart from a small group of primary-aged pupils who are dual-registered with their local school, who attend Brookfield for short-term intervention programmes when they are at risk of exclusion from their own school.
- Most of the students are of White British background.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education. She is also head of the local authority's behaviour support team, and jointly leads the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy. She represents education on the county's safeguarding strategic board and is executive headteacher of the local authority's three pupil referral units.
- The school is a National Support School and provides help and advice to schools locally and across the country.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature had been investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

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

- Work in close partnership with local colleges, employers and trainers in order to support the well-being of students in the period after they have left Brookfield, so that they receive continuing support into adulthood.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The attainment of students on entry is low because they had failed to make expected progress as a result of their wider difficulties. The school assesses standards in reading, writing and mathematics when they first start, so that progress can be measured accurately. Challenging targets are set and monitored termly to ensure that the pressure to improve is constant.
- There are high expectations that progress will be rapid and because students quickly become engaged and effective learners they start to make up lost ground straight away. For those who have been in the school for any length of time the expectation is that they will leave school with attainment around that found nationally, which reflects outstanding achievement.
- The focus on individual challenge is unrelenting but as students begin to experience success in learning, sometimes for the first time, they respond positively. There is no difference in the performance of any identified groups of students and the focus on meeting individual needs reflects the school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity.
- Within the broad curriculum there is an emphasis on developing skills in English, communication and mathematics. Those students following a primarily work-related programme still receive specialist teaching in these other areas so they are able to catch up. It also enables students to develop the key skills they will need in order to make the successful transition to college or employment when they leave school, which they do very effectively.
- There are equally high expectations for the smaller number of primary-aged pupils, whose progress in learning and in coming to terms with their wider behavioural, social and emotional needs enable a large majority to return to mainstream schools for their secondary education.
- A high proportion of students receive additional funding from the pupil premium and the resources are allocated specifically, targeting individual's needs. This includes one-to-one and small-group support, but it also funds a range of other activities, such as working with animals on a farm where students develop their emotional skills. The progress of students supported by the pupil premium far exceeds that made by similar students in other schools and is in line with the progress of other Brookfield students.
- Other sources of funding, such as the Year 7 catch-up premium, are also targeted quite specifically to meet identified needs and measured very carefully to make sure that students achieve the best possible outcomes. For primary-aged pupils the sport funding has been used to train teaching assistants to promote a range of games that will promote dexterity and skills but also develop pupils' ability to collaborate and play harmoniously together.
- As students grow in confidence and start to realise their potential there is an expectation that they will gain qualifications. Sometimes they are entered for examinations, including GCSE, earlier than normal if they have a good chance of success. Success helps them realise that they have the potential to go on to do well in a range of other subjects.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- A very high proportion of teaching is outstanding because it helps students to transform their attitudes and to go on to be successful as they move from year to year. A Year 11 group of students discussed their potential grades in GCSE history and what they would have to do to

improve in exactly the same way as any other ambitious group would do in a mainstream school.

- Highly successful learning is promoted by teaching assistants, who form strong teams alongside the teacher in every classroom. Adults work side-by-side with students in an atmosphere of mutual respect and high expectation. This is an important element in promoting students' self-belief that encourages their rapidly rising standards.
- In every lesson a range of tasks enables every student to be fully challenged. There are always extension tasks for those who complete tasks early but equally there is effective support for those who find a task difficult, enabling all to be successful.
- Teachers use a range of approaches to make lessons enjoyable and to engage students. Homework to reinforce the day's learning is a regular feature and it is made clear to parents and carers that there is an expectation that this will be completed, with parental support where necessary.
- Pupils learn to take a pride in their work. Books are beautifully presented and teachers' marking, which is detailed and supports further improvement, does not detract from well-presented work. Pupils become active participants in learning, reflected by the Year 6 students who asked if they could read the poems they had written in English out loud to one of the inspectors. For students who entered with low self-esteem the wider social and emotional gains are clear and always encouraged.
- Reading is a strong focus and every day starts with students reading quietly for 10 minutes before lessons get underway. For primary-aged pupils, or weak readers in Key Stage 3, there is very good use made of phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) to develop reading skills.
- Teachers ask effective questions to get a clear picture of the level of students' understanding, but this also help students to develop their own ideas and to discuss them. In many lessons students show themselves able to listen carefully and sensibly to the ideas of others.
- They also show maturity in the way in which they regularly assess the quality of their own work and that of their classmates. The school places such assessments with its own information to create a very full picture of students' progress.
- The school's high quality support for mainstream schools is reflected in the intervention class, which provides short-term very effective teaching for primary-aged pupils referred by the authority's behaviour support unit because of the risk of exclusion. The skilled staff engage the pupils in learning and also work closely with staff from the pupils' schools, sharing ways of promoting positive behaviour and learning.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They first join the school because their extremely challenging behaviour had been too much for their mainstream schools to cope with but at Brookfield they learn to behave well, act in a collaborative and supportive way, and make rapid progress as they start to enjoy learning. The management of challenging behaviour is extremely effective and over time students are able to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- In lessons little time is lost to learning and when incidents do occur the behaviour policy is

followed effectively so that they are dealt with quickly and calmly. On occasions when individual behaviour becomes challenging all staff are trained in the use of restraint, although there is a much greater focus on calming things down. When restraint is used there are clear procedures for logging and following up each incident, focussing on supporting the student.

- Generally, students come to take a pride in their school and develop positive attitudes to learning. Their work is displayed and celebrated throughout the school, and they respect it.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. They are encouraged to develop attitudes of care and consideration towards each other and to 'do the right thing'.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students say they are safe, a view shared by every parent and guardian who responded to Parent View or the school's own questionnaire. Every respondent also felt that students behave well and that bullying is not an issue. Students understand what bullying is in its different forms, including cyber-bullying, and it is covered effectively in lessons. However, they insist that because people get on well together it is not an issue within school.
- Safeguarding procedures are detailed and effective, all staff being well trained and having a good and up-to-date understanding of their role in child protection. Governors too have been trained and overall practice is robust and supportive. The school works closely with other agencies who are concerned with the welfare of young people.
- Since the last inspection the improving attendance has been maintained, in large part because students enjoy school where they feel valued and respected. It is now well above the average for special schools.

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

- The headteacher has a very clear vision that is shared by other senior leaders and which inspires the whole school community. Everyone, including staff and students, is proud of their school and wants it to be the best.
- In such a small school every teacher is expected to take responsibility for the leadership of a subject or other aspect of the school's work and they take pride in doing this. They are also given strong support to help them develop their expertise successfully and lead their subject confidently.
- Systems for checking teaching, planning and marking are thorough. They form part of effective arrangements for managing the professional development of teachers and teaching assistants. Challenging objectives for improvement are set every year that help meet the school's priorities for improvement as well as supporting staffs' professional development.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of the links between their performance and pay. Those on the upper pay scale accept higher responsibilities, always based on raising standards.
- The school's view of its own effectiveness is thorough and enables it to establish clear priorities for development. The needs of students are at the heart of everything the school does and the broad curriculum enables all of them to engage in learning, gain success and develop their self-awareness and confidence.

- Safeguarding arrangements are very effective, including a full role for governors. Links with other agencies who work to keep young people safe are very effective, as are wider links to support students, including a range of therapy and medical professionals.
  - Local authority support is light-touch and it works closely with school leaders to make the most of their expertise in supporting other schools and staff who work with challenging young people.
  - The school is anxious to develop strong links with organisations and individuals who will be sustaining care and provision in the years after students have left school to ensure its detailed knowledge of its students is not lost as they move on. This is seen as an extension to the already effective transition arrangements.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors are centrally involved in the life of the school, attending staff meetings and training. Individual governors are paired with subject leaders and work closely with them, so that the governing body has a detailed understanding of teaching and learning, and of students' overall achievement. They monitor the budget carefully and have a detailed analysis of the spending of specific funding such as the pupil premium, monitoring the impact carefully. They set challenging annual objectives for the headteacher and oversee the arrangements for monitoring the performance of teachers, appreciating the links between pay and performance, and arrangements for dealing with inadequate teaching. All legal duties are carried out with rigour, including the arrangements for safeguarding, where there is specific professional expertise on the governing body. The governors are aware of how the school compares with other similar schools and they are absolutely committed to its continuing success. When necessary they receive training and other support from the local authority.

## 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>	131817
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440635

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	67
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	June Poole
<b>Headteacher</b>	Oremi Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21–22 June 2010
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