

Brentwood School

Cherry Lane, Sale, Cheshire M33 4GY

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- This is an exceptional school where pupils and students are thriving. Independence and skills for life underpin every aspect of the school. Pupils love their school, and love the wide range of experiences they have and are happy, motivated learners.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers and support staff know the unique individual needs of each pupil and student. They plan meticulously so that everyone is challenged to reach their potential. Small steps of progress are captured, which show that pupils and students are making outstanding progress over time.
- The curriculum is ambitious and creative. Leaders have a clear rationale that enables pupils and students to develop the skills they need to be independent, happy and productive members of the community. The curriculum will be further strengthened through the imaginative expansion of the outdoor learning environment.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly pleased with the education their children receive at the school. One comment summed up the voice of many: 'Brentwood School is a lovely, welcoming friendly school where my child has flourished.'
- The headteacher, governors and leaders at all levels are ambitious in their vision and direction for the school. They have created a climate of continuous improvement where everyone strives for excellence. Staff are overwhelmingly happy and appreciate the support and guidance they receive from leaders.
- Students in the sixth form are prepared well for their next steps in life. They undertake work experience that develops their communication, confidence and independence. All students make substantial progress and some achieve nationally recognised qualifications.
- Governors are a strength of the school. They know the school well as they visit often, work with leaders and speak to pupils and staff. Governors have a clear vision shared by leaders. They are continuously striving for further improvements so that all pupils receive the best possible education.
- This is an inclusive school where every member is respected and valued. Pupils, staff and parents talk about being part of the Brentwood School family. Older pupils buddy up with younger pupils. Most-able pupils help the less able. Staff work together to improve their practice. There is a strong culture of equality and support where everyone works together as a team to be the best they can be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement the plans to expand the use of the outdoor spaces so that these widen the outdoor learning experiences for pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and her leadership team have created an outward-looking, open and aspirational school. Pupils, parents, staff and the local authority all agree that Brentwood School has changed lives. Pupils are thriving because staff know and meet the needs of each individual pupil or student extremely well.
- Leaders have sustained the excellent provision since the previous inspection. They keep a sharp focus on all key aspects of the school. Leaders constantly review their practice and know their strengths and priorities for further improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, roles and responsibilities of middle leaders have been developed. This has widened and strengthened the expertise of the leadership team. Middle leaders have implemented systems and procedures that are having a positive impact across the school. For example, closer monitoring of any behavioural concerns has resulted in a targeted approach to identifying and implementing the right support for pupils.
- A robust system of induction to the school and professional development is appreciated by the staff team. For example, some staff reported that phonics training, alongside support from the speech and language therapist, is having a very strong impact on pupils' language, communication and reading skills. They feel supported and empowered to try new teaching methods and ideas that will benefit pupils. Staff said that leaders look after their well-being and they feel valued. They appreciate that they are listened to and contribute to school improvement. Staff are proud to work in the school.
- Leaders use additional funding most effectively. The literacy and numeracy catch-up premium funding has been spent wisely to close the specific gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge. Staff have been provided with regular and good-quality training in order to implement a consistent approach to targeting resources to where they will be most effective. The vast majority of pupils are now making expected progress in writing, reading and number skills.
- The school's use of the funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals has been used very successfully. Leaders are clear that funding has to support pupils so that they can participate and engage fully in school life. Leaders have invested in supportive technology so that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are able to communicate and make choices. Funding for additional support such as music therapy and speech and language therapy has worked to support pupils' language, communication and engagement with learning. The school's own assessment system shows that disadvantaged pupils make very strong progress in line with their peers.
- The curriculum across all key stages links together seamlessly and supports the development of skills for life. Pupils experience a wide range of national curriculum subjects alongside a rich menu of enrichment activities. The curriculum opens pupils' eyes and minds to cultural, physical, creative and work experiences that they may not have experienced before. For example, music introduces pupils to other cultures, and students in the sixth form plan, prepare and eat their lunch together. Leaders have

recently created an impressive outdoor classroom where pupils take responsibility for caring for the school's hens. This area of the curriculum is ready for further development so that pupils and students can benefit even more from their outdoor spaces.

- Leaders' work to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils is exemplary. No opportunity is missed by teachers to plan and introduce learning that will further embed the SMSC and British values curriculum. The ethos of respect and equality is embedded throughout the school. Leaders plan cultural days where pupils immerse themselves in the music, food, language, art, religion and stories of a country. Pupils worked with the Greater Manchester community to design and create a three-dimensional model of a 'Manchester bee' that was displayed alongside many others across the city centre. The student council is proud of its achievements. Its members told inspectors how they are elected by their peers and how they represent their class. They explained that they had improved the cycle track by removing the gravel stones at the side of the path. They also explained that the new outdoor swings were a student council decision.
- Through the school's bespoke assessment system, leaders are now able to look at individual pupils' progress as well as the progress of different groups of pupils over time. They now have an accurate and reliable view of the progress that pupils make from their starting points.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school exceptionally well. They have clear roles and responsibilities that link to key areas of school improvement. Governors work very closely with middle and senior leaders to ensure that key areas such as health and safety, safeguarding, behaviour, teaching and learning, and the sixth form are effective and compliant with all statutory guidelines.
- Governors know that the school is outstanding but refuse to take their 'foot off the gas'. They continue to look for ways to improve the school so that pupils' education, life chances and experiences are enhanced. They talk enthusiastically about the further development of the outdoor curriculum.
- Governors receive detailed reports that allow them to drill down and unpick data around progress, outcomes, additional funding, safeguarding, and attendance and behaviour. Minutes of meetings show how governors have used this information to challenge leaders and request further information and clarification on agenda items.
- Training has been used effectively so that governors understand their responsibilities and have the skills and confidence to hold leaders to account for their actions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are most effective. The work that the school undertakes to keep all its pupils and students safe is of a very high standard.
- The safeguarding team includes a family support worker and a health and well-being worker. They work together to support families, going above and beyond to ensure

that families have all the support and help they need.

- All referrals to the safeguarding team, including the designated safeguarding lead, are followed up quickly. Actions and outcomes are recorded in detail, including referrals to the local authority. The safeguarding team is persistent in its pursuit of support for pupils and families.
- The governors with responsibility for safeguarding meet regularly with the safeguarding team. They ensure that all procedures are extremely robust and records are up to date, including the required checks on members of staff.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They shared with inspectors their knowledge about staying safe, especially online, repeating the phrase, 'don't make friends with someone you don't know'. Pupils talked about road safety, including how to look left and right. They also talked about learning to use public transport and were proud of their achievements in learning to travel on public transport independently.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Across all key stages, teaching is outstanding. Teachers use assessment information extremely effectively to plan the next steps in learning. Targets are precise and personalised. Activities are creatively planned to meet the learning and the special educational needs (SEN) of each pupil. This personalised approach is having a very positive impact as pupils are making excellent progress towards their individual targets.
- Throughout the school, staff continuously promote independence and life skills. They encourage pupils to make choices and support them in solving problems. For example, one pupil explained that he had no hay for the hens' hut, so he had used sawdust instead. Students in the sixth form explained that during their recent Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme expedition, they had planned a barbeque. However, when they checked the weather forecast and it looked as if it might rain, they decided to take ingredients for a pasta bake instead.
- Staff use resources creatively to develop pupils' communication, reading, writing and number skills. For example, pupils were enjoying the use of music, movement and drama while exploring the story, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The variety of techniques, alongside detailed attention to each pupils' sensory needs, allowed all pupils to engage in the learning.
- Pupils' reading skills are developed through the use of phonics. Pupils are learning in a fun and exciting way. For example, skills were being developed through an engaging interactive game alongside singing and movement. Pupils were trying really hard to articulate the sounds and were very proud of their efforts.
- Teachers and support staff have a natural collaborative and supportive approach. The relationship staff have with pupils is a particular strength of the school. They encourage pupils and students to try new things. Their patient approach successfully challenges pupils to move them on in their learning and personal development.
- Staff are skilled in knowing what particular techniques or strategies will be successful in removing barriers to learning. They are adept at trying different approaches until they find the 'hook' or the resource that will work. For some pupils, this is the use of

technology, while for others it might be time in the garden or on the trampoline.

- Lunchtime and after-school clubs give pupils opportunities to develop new skills. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the drama club. They were busy rehearsing for a whole-school production of 'Beauty and the Beast'. The switch club supports pupils to use assistive technology to make choices around music, videos and interactive games. The after-school football club allows pupils to enjoy being part of a team as well as improving their physical skills. Parents were very positive about the opportunities for their children and one comment typified many when talking about the football club: 'It is an amazing thing to watch such a diverse group of young people truly come together, overcome or disregard their disabilities and just play football for pure enjoyment. The joy it brings them is plain to see.'
- Leaders have implemented an assessment system that is personalised to the school. Teachers use this system most successfully to assess pupils' progress against a range of skills. This includes reading, writing and number, alongside wider skills such as work skills, communication, friendship, life skills and physical skills. Teachers now assess the small steps of progress that the previous assessment system was unable to capture. This leads to very precise teaching focusing on small steps that ensure pupils achieve success and feel confident to move to more challenging work.
- Teachers make effective use of the new assessment system to intervene early if pupils are not making the expected progress, as well as further challenging the most able pupils.
- Leaders have implemented a culture of learning with high expectations and aspirations. Teachers and support staff grasp every opportunity to focus on the development of skills for life and independence. This support is pivotal in preparing pupils and students to take their next steps in life.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils and students are confident, self-assured learners. Pupils of all abilities play a full and active part in school life. There is an ethos and culture of inclusivity and all staff work to ensure that all pupils and students are enjoying and achieving during their time in school.
- Students in the sixth form explained that they support the younger pupils through the 'buddying' system. Students have the responsibility of choosing whom they want to support. They were able to explain how they help each other. For example, one student explained how he helps a pupil in the drama production by moving their wheelchair into position.
- Students in the sixth form had just returned from their expedition as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. They talked enthusiastically about their adventure and how they had walked 15 miles over several days. They described working together in the kitchen and how they all had different responsibilities. They used problem-solving skills as the kitchen utensils and equipment were not very good and they had to use

small spoons instead of server spoons. They talked about compromise and having to share space and bedrooms with each other. Students had demonstrated how they were able to work with others to overcome and manage problems.

- Pupils, students and parents receive independent careers information, advice and guidance. Work to support transition into sixth form or college is carefully planned and initiated early so that parents and students are able to make informed choices. Supported visits to possible college placements are undertaken early in the transition process so that students are well prepared for their next steps in education and life.
- The school has a caring and supportive ethos. Pupils know whom they can go to if they need to talk or they need some help. Staff know the individual needs of each pupil and consequently they are alert to any signs in behaviour or appearance that may indicate a cause for concern. Home–school communication books are used effectively so that there is open dialogue between school and home. Pupils said that there is no bullying in school and were quick to talk about how they help and support one another. Pupils also talked about listening to each other and understanding the points of view of others.
- The vast majority of parents are happy with all aspects of the school’s work. They feel that staff go ‘over and above’ to provide the very best opportunities for their children in all areas of their development. One comment typified many: ‘My child’s happiness, confidence and rapid development is testament to the superb teaching skills and pastoral support of the staff. A fantastic school.’
- Leaders have implemented a skills-based curriculum with a strong emphasis on life and work skills. The use of internal and external work experience placements has resulted in the gradual development of skills. This ensures that pupils and students have the confidence, communication skills and experience they need by the time they access an external work experience opportunity. For example, the school café allows pupils and students to make food, serve customers and learn about working with equipment in a safe way.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. A robust system is in place to record any behavioural issues. These are regularly reviewed to show up any patterns for individual pupils so that support can be implemented quickly.
- Staff know the individual needs of pupils extremely well. They plan carefully to ensure that pupils’ special educational needs are fully supported so that they happily settle to learning. A range of strategies and resources is used within class to meet pupils’ sensory needs, reduce anxiety and ensure that pupils can access their learning. As a result of the staff knowing the individual needs of pupils so well, behavioural problems are rare and there are no exclusions.
- Leaders have detailed analysis on attendance. They monitor individual pupils carefully as well as looking for trends and differences between groups. The pastoral team is quick to intervene and support families so that barriers to attendance are removed and pupils’ attendance improves. These strong systems, alongside sensitive support, ensure that the attendance of pupils is above average when compared with that of similar

schools nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- From often very low starting points, pupils and students are making excellent progress towards their individual targets.
- The focus on personal, communication, life, work and independence skills is allowing teachers to assess the small steps of progress. Consequently, progress is captured for all pupils in the school. The school's own data shows that a significant majority of pupils and students have made expected or better than expected progress over the last two terms. Progress was particularly strong in number and communication.
- The school's own data shows that disadvantaged pupils make the same progress across personal and academic measures as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils in key stage 4 are gaining national qualifications, including ASDAN personal progress, that recognise their progress in life and personal skills.
- Students in the sixth form are achieving ASDAN personal and social development awards. Some students have also achieved the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at bronze and silver level. Other students have also achieved the City & Guilds community participation award.
- Pupils' and students' engagement with work experience both internally and externally has increased over the last two years. For example, pupils have worked in charity shops, local cafes, garden centres, offices and supermarkets.
- Pupils' and students' engagement with in-house programmes such as buddying have developed the personal skills of responsibility, as well as improving their self-esteem and confidence.
- By the end of key stage 4, all pupils progress into the sixth form. At the end of the sixth form, 100% of pupils move on to college or a supported placement.
- Leaders are now capturing the progression data of past pupils. This information will allow them to measure the long-term impact of pupils' education at Brentwood School. Data shows that of the pupils who left school in 2016, all had sustained their college placements and a few had progressed from college into internships and then on to paid employment.
- The school curriculum equips pupils and students extremely well for their next steps in education and life.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leadership is most effective and has created a sixth form where students are supported in developing into confident adults ready to take their next steps in life. The curriculum builds on the skills developed in key stages 3 and 4 and enriches this with so many wider experiences that students are thriving, happy, confident and independent learners.
- There is a distinct difference within the sixth form. This is an adult environment where

students relate to the staff and each other in a more adult and mature manner. There are high expectations of students. Staff are quick to ensure that students are doing more for themselves so that they will grow in understanding and where possible, become responsible adults.

- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has enabled the wider skills of problem solving, responsibility, planning and working with others to be evidenced. As well as achieving bronze and silver awards, students are also having 'loads of fun' and enjoying their adventures.
- Students value their work experience and were able to explain the skills they have learned in serving customers, managing money, shampooing hair, cleaning and completing their work experience logbook. Leaders work with external partners to quality assure all work experience placements. They also work with the employers to plan the work schedule and which specific skills will be developed. Consequently, students learn valuable, transferable skills.
- The sixth-form cafe is used by students to help them to plan and cook healthy meals. Students worked together to make a quiche and various salads for lunch. Students then sat and chatted and enjoyed their lunch together. The cafe is also opened to invited members of the public and guests at certain times during the week. Students enjoy preparing the food and cakes, taking orders, managing money and cleaning up. Literacy and numeracy skills are being developed and embedded in a real work environment. Students have recipes personalised to their communication and literacy needs that they follow independently. They use number skills for weighing and measuring ingredients, calculating time and handling money.
- Training in travel is used to support students to gain the necessary skills to travel independently if possible. Students talked about how they have travelled on buses and trams with an obvious pride in their achievement.
- Leaders work closely with the local authority's independent careers, information, advice and guidance worker to support students and families to make an informed decision for post-19 provision. This work is started early so that students have opportunities to visit a number of providers to ensure the right choice is made. Students are then supported throughout the transition phase so that the move does not cause any anxiety and students make the transition with confidence.

School details

Unique reference number	106391
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10091027

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rex Beech
Headteacher	Judith Lomas
Telephone number	0161 905 2371
Website	www.brentwoodschool-trafford.co.uk
Email address	head@brentwood.trafford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 December 2018

Information about this school

- Since the last full inspection, the school has moved to its current site.
- The school is co-located with Brentwood College, a specialist SEN provision for 19- to 25-year-olds.
- All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Pupils' special educational needs vary and include autism spectrum disorder, speech and language difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.

- Boys considerably outnumber girls.
- A third of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school at break- and lunchtimes. Inspectors also assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' progress files, their EHC plans, evidence captured by photographs and videos of pupils' progress, as well as work in books and the school's own assessment information.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. Inspectors spoke to safeguarding leads, curriculum leads, and attendance and behaviour leads.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector also met with a group of parents.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. However, inspectors met formally with pupils and students and also talked informally to pupils and students throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 48 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, met formally with a group of staff and spoke to staff throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan, behaviour and attendance records, and information relating to safeguarding, including the single central record.

Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Ofsted Inspector

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