

Inspection of a good school: Brookfield School

Fouldrey Avenue, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 7HE

Inspection dates:

13–14 November 2019

Outcome

Brookfield School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

For many pupils, this school is their first taste of success for a long time. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They get on well with their teachers and each other. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Almost all pupils improve their attendance and behaviour over time. By the end of Year 11, more pupils gain qualifications, including in English and mathematics, than in the past.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in this school. This is because the curriculum is not well planned and expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not high enough. Pupils are not always taught the most important things, at the right time, and in the right order. This means that pupils struggle to remember some key facts that they have been taught. For example, some older pupils find it difficult to solve mathematical problems because they do not know their times tables. Also, pupils are not taught the wider subject knowledge required to help them make sense of new learning. For example, pupils do not learn about life in the early 19th century before reading 'A Christmas Carol' in English literature. This makes learning hard. It hampers pupils' progress across the subject. Despite these weaknesses, pupils find most of their lessons interesting. Pupils listen to their teachers and complete the work set for them.

Staff provide pupils with the support that they need to help them deal with some of the challenges that they face. For instance, effective support helps pupils settle in when they join the school. Those pupils who have high levels of anxiety grow in confidence over time. However, many pupils remain reliant on adult support. This dependence does not prepare them well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

Over the past two years, the number of pupils in the school has more than doubled. Leaders have opened three new sites. Leaders have used this expansion to reorganise the

school. Reorganisation has helped the school better meet the different needs of pupils, such as those with autism spectrum disorder. Nonetheless, this rapid expansion has taken leaders' attention from other pressing issues.

Leaders, including governors, do not pay enough attention to the quality of education that pupils receive. For example, they do not consider, plan and evaluate curriculum plans well enough. Leaders leave teachers to their own devices. Teachers teach what they think is the important knowledge across the different subjects and key stages. However, this means that pupils do not learn the most essential knowledge and in the right order. Moreover, some teachers struggle to explain the rationale for what they are teaching and when. This hampers pupils' ability to know and remember more.

Teachers check on how well pupils are learning across subjects. They use this information to identify gaps in pupils' learning, to challenge misconceptions and to plan their next lessons. However, leaders, including governors, do not know how well pupils are achieving across the curriculum.

Since the previous inspection, almost all staff are new to the school. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued and respected by their leaders and managers. However, leaders have not made sure that subject leads and teaching staff have had the training and support needed to help them to plan and deliver the curriculum effectively enough.

Leaders have not made sure that all staff are familiar with all policies and procedures. This has led to some inconsistent practice across the sites. Lack of checks by leaders means that these issues have not been picked up and resolved. This makes it tricky for staff and pupils who move between sites, as expectations differ. For example, rules, rewards and consequences differ between sites and do not match what is set out in the behaviour policy.

Leaders have organised training to help staff better manage pupils' challenging behaviour. Teaching staff know their pupils well and are quick to step in when pupils are struggling. Pastoral staff provide a range of specialist support and interventions for pupils. These help pupils overcome some of the barriers they face. However, pupils do not get enough planned opportunities to help them take greater responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Pupils remain dependent on the high levels of adult support during their time at the school.

The school has found it hard to recruit and keep governors. High turnover, low numbers and poor attendance have limited governors' impact on the school's performance. Some governors do not know the school well enough. For example, some governors have limited information about pupils' performance in different subjects across the school, other than national examination results. This hampers governors' ability to provide the effective support and challenge needed to improve the quality of education. The school has recruited additional governors with suitable experience and expertise recently. It is intended that they will improve the effectiveness of the governing body.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils trust staff to help keep them safe. Pupils know that staff will deal with any concerns that pupils share with them. This means that pupils with high levels of anxiety are able to cope with school day to day. Staff work well with other professionals. This helps vulnerable pupils and their families get the help and support that they need. Staff keep up to date with their training. They understand their roles and responsibilities. They record and report their concerns appropriately. Leaders carry out frequent welfare checks on those pupils who attend alternative provision or who are on phased integration plans. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, including governors, have not paid enough attention to improving the quality of education. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should build on the work started on curriculum plans. They should ensure that there are detailed plans for the full range of subjects taught across the school. Subject leaders need training, support and resources. They need to devise coherent, well-sequenced plans. Teachers also need support and training. In particular, training is required for those staff who are teaching subjects that they are not experts in.
- Senior leaders, including governors, do not know how well pupils are learning in the different subjects. They are not holding leaders and teachers to account for pupils' achievement and the quality of education is not good enough. Senior leaders, including governors, must use the information that they receive about pupils' learning to improve the quality of education.
- Leaders, including governors, do not check for coherence and consistency across the school. All staff do not routinely follow policies and procedures. This leads to some low expectations and inconsistency in how well pupils learn. Leaders should put arrangements in place to make sure policies and procedures are followed properly. Leaders should then check that these policies and procedures are having the intended impact, such as improving attendance and behaviour.
- Pupils are not given sufficient, planned opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. This means that pupils are not well prepared for their next steps. Leaders should ensure that the provision for pupils' personal development is used more effectively to develop the qualities that pupils need to be successful both at school and when they move on to education, employment or training at the end of Year 11.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	119895
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10082098
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maria Taylor
Headteacher	Rob Brocklebank
Website	www.brookfieldschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 November 2014

Information about this school

- This is a community special school.
- The school is based on four separate sites. Three of these sites have opened since the previous inspection.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses three alternative providers: 4Techmoto (Preston), 4Techmoto (Blackpool) and Apple Cast North West.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers. We spoke with the chair of the governing body and three local authority representatives.
- We spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- We considered the four responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and four free-text responses. We spoke with a parent by phone and also considered the responses to a recent parent survey carried out by the school.

- We considered the 26 responses to the staff survey and the 20 responses to the pupil survey.
- We met with the people responsible for safeguarding in the school. We scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including case files. We spoke with staff and pupils and considered the survey responses from staff, pupils and parents around safeguarding.
- We observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school. We spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of them.
- As part of this inspection, we considered how leaders plan and organise the English, mathematics and physical education curriculums. We spoke to teachers and subject leaders. We visited lessons. We talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books, as well as other evidence of their learning.

Inspection team

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