

Inspection of The Brookfield School

Grandstand Road, Hereford HR4 9NG

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is not a happy school. The quality of education is poor. Too many pupils are not learning enough, due to inconsistent staffing and poor behaviour. Some of the oldest pupils say they do not feel the staff understand their special needs, such as autism, well enough. Inspectors agree. This means that too many pupils struggle to learn. Some older pupils feel the school is 'gloomy and dim' and has 'no soul'.

Teachers in primary and some in secondary are trying to improve lessons. However, what pupils get taught and when is too hit and miss. The oldest pupils are at risk of not completing their qualifications this year.

Staff are not skilled enough at helping pupils to manage or improve their behaviour. Disruptive behaviour and swearing are common across the school. This worries and upsets pupils. Some of the oldest pupils are not confident in the staff's ability to deal with poor behaviour.

Pupils say bullying happens. Leaders investigate any reported cases of bullying and take appropriate action when needed. However, they do not always tell the pupils what they have done about it, so pupils still feel unsafe.

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

The recently appointed headteacher knows that the quality of education is not good enough, for any of the pupils. Trustees agree. Since her appointment in September, the headteacher has started to address the weaknesses that have developed over several years. The curriculum, teaching and behaviour in primary have started to improve. However, even here, there is lots more to do to make sure all pupils receive a good quality of education. The issues in secondary are many and deep-seated.

The success of the curriculum is too dependent on what individual teachers know and do. This leads to a curriculum that is much too random. Too many teachers lack the skills necessary to make sure activities closely match the ability of the pupils. As a result, pupils are not learning what they need for the next stages in their education, employment or training. One of the secondary-aged pupils told inspectors that 'the curriculum has been watered down at the most critical time in our lives'. This is a good description of what is happening in some subjects.

The teaching of early reading is inconsistent. Pupils have only recently started to learn phonics. The phonics they are learning are often too hard or too easy. Too few pupils can choose their own books or read for pleasure. Pupils do not take their books home to practise reading with their family. Not all staff have completed the right training to teach reading. This means some pupils learn phonics incorrectly.

There is a lack of consistency in how the school manages the older pupils' behaviour. Poor behaviour can often disrupt lessons. One of the oldest pupils told inspectors

that he felt the behaviour of some pupils was having a detrimental effect on his own mental health. Other pupils agreed. Staff are not confident in the school's ability to deal with behaviour, and do not feel supported in doing so. In the primary part of the school, behaviour is much better, with classes that are settled and learning more than previously.

Attendance is very low. Too many pupils have too much time away. A number of pupils are on part-time timetables. Leaders have only recently started to identify the right systems to make sure all pupils attend school more regularly.

Leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of how well pupils are doing while at alternative provision, or at the school's own offsite 'Arrow' provision. Senior leaders have not visited the settings enough to be confident pupils are getting enough from these opportunities.

Too few pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to help them to develop as healthy and active citizens. A small group of leaders plan opportunities such as outdoor learning, trips, independent travel training and careers guidance. However, the low attendance of some pupils mean that they miss these opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not established a culture for keeping pupils safe. Supervision across the school is not good enough, so there are times when pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders' monitoring of alternative provision is poor. This means they do not know if pupils are safe when at the provision.

Staff have completed the right safeguarding training. When concerns are raised, leaders investigate and take appropriate action. However, staff are not clear enough about the school's safeguarding processes. This means not all concerns are raised and dealt with.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Policies, procedures and practice for safeguarding do not ensure that all pupils feel, and are, safe. Recent changes need to be firmly established. Pupils are not always supervised well enough. Older pupils say that they do not always feel safe in the school and that they are not confident that staff will keep them safe. Leaders need to ensure that there is a clear understanding of, and culture for, safeguarding, so all pupils are safe and feel safe.
- Leaders do not monitor the use of alternative provision properly. This means that they have little understanding of how safe the pupils are while at the provision or how effective the provision is. Leaders need to monitor alternative provision

thoroughly and frequently, so they can be assured that it is keeping the pupils safe and providing a good-quality education.

- The quality of curriculum planning and implementation is over-reliant on the individual skill and knowledge of a few teachers. Inconsistencies in how the curriculum is designed and implemented mean that not all subjects build on previous learning and extend knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad curriculum that deepens knowledge and understanding in all subjects.
- Processes for staff's professional development have been neglected. As a result, staff do not have the necessary subject or pedagogical knowledge to ensure that the curriculum is well matched to the special educational needs and / or disabilities and abilities of all the pupils. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to improve the quality of education.
- The teaching of early reading is too inconsistent. Most staff have not completed training to teach early reading. While phonics is taught across primary, the work is not matched well enough to the pupils' ability. This, along with the failure to prioritise reading in secondary, means that pupils are not learning to read well enough or developing as confident readers. Leaders need to ensure that reading is taught effectively to all pupils from the outset and continues to be taught to older pupils as necessary.
- The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. Staff are not confident in the school's approaches to dealing with behaviour. This means that the standard of behaviour has declined over the last few years. Leaders need to ensure that there is a consistent approach to helping pupils to manage and improve their behaviour.
- Attendance for some pupils is very low and has not improved since the last inspection. This limits the pupils' progress. Leaders need to ensure that attendance improves for all pupils.

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're 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	141487
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10122469
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Tim Manson
Headteacher	Michelle Mannion-Parkes
Website	www.brookfield.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and took up post in September 2019.
- An interim board of trustees has been appointed, and a new chair of the trustees has recently taken up the role.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- During the inspection, we focused on the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. In these subjects, we visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects were taught. We also

looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.

- We examined external performance data about the school and looked at school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning.
- The school's website was not available, so we were not able to consider the content.
- We asked pupils, staff, leaders and trustees about safeguarding arrangements. We examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. We also found out about safety procedures and routines.
- We observed informal times of the day, to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, we had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, trustees, teachers and pupils. We also talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. One inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Derek Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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