

Inspection of Brearley Hall School

Brearley Hall, 1 Burnley Road, Luddendenfoot, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX2 6HS

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2022

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
|------------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| The quality of education | Good |
|--------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
|-------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Personal development | Good |
|----------------------|-------------|

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Leadership and management | Good |
|---------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
|--|--------------------------|

| | |
|--|------------|
| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | Yes |
|--|------------|

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a nurturing school where pupils feel safe. Pupils like the small class sizes and the support they get from staff. Many pupils join the school after struggling to learn in previous settings. Once settled at Brearley Hall, pupils attend well and concentrate in lessons. Pupils support each other and bullying is extremely rare.

Pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects. They progress well through the planned learning in most subjects. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils do not retain key information as well as they need to. Pupils read a lot in school. They learn how to broaden their vocabulary and improve their comprehension skills. Some pupils join the school at the early stage of reading and have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Phonics is not delivered consistently at present. Leaders have plans in place to address these curriculum issues. The school has been open for one year. The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted some of the improvement work leaders had planned to complete since the school opened in April 2021.

The school is set on a large, woodland site. Staff use the outdoor areas to enrich pupils' understanding of themselves and the world around them. For example, pupils have forest school lessons and spend time working in the large, vegetable garden.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school. One parent said, 'I am so impressed with Brearley Hall. The headteacher and his staff team have made incredible efforts to support and encourage not only our child but us as parents too.'

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

Leaders understand the special educational needs and/or disabilities of their pupils well. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. There are long- and medium-term plans for all subjects. Most plans are structured well, and pupils revisit key learning points effectively. However, in a very small number of subjects, this does not happen as well as it needs to. On occasion, pupils struggle to remember what they have learned because teachers do not understand what needs to be taught next.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know and can do. In lessons, teachers are quick to spot any misunderstandings pupils may have. Most pupils recall what they have learned with confidence. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils do not hold onto information securely. This is extending the time it takes for pupils to move confidently through the planned learning.

Many pupils at Brearley Hall have previously missed a lot of formal education. Leaders gather information about what each pupil knows and can do when they join the school. This information includes checks on reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders also check pupils' communication skills and for any social and emotional barriers to learning. Staff use this information well. There is an on-site clinical team who trains staff to deliver therapeutic approaches that pupils in the school need.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the curriculum. Pupils who need help to broaden their vocabulary and improve their comprehension skills get specialist, daily support. However, pupils at the early stage of reading are not getting the phonics teaching they need to become independent readers. The school has a phonics-based reading scheme, but it is not used. Leaders have plans in place to train all staff to deliver phonics effectively.

Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Staff support pupils' behaviour consistently. Pupils respond positively to staff and show a readiness for learning that is impressive. Pupils' attendance is good. For some pupils, this is the first school where they have attended full school days routinely.

A world studies programme supports pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. World studies include geography, history, Spanish, personal, social and health education, citizenship, religious education and relationships and sex education (RSE). The plans for most subjects within world studies are detailed and well sequenced. The school's RSE programme complies with statutory guidance.

Speakers and organisations come into school regularly to enrich the curriculum for pupils. For example, pupils have had workshops from the police on the dangers of knife crime and learned about personal finance from a multi-national and financial services organisation. Pupils learn how to keep safe online and when they are out in the community. Older pupils learn about possible future jobs and have access to independent careers advice. Pupils learn about mental health and well-being in regular, timetabled lessons. Pupils also have specialist therapy sessions which help them to understand their emotions and manage their feelings.

The proprietor has an ambitious vision for the school which is shared by all staff. Parents and stakeholders from referring local authorities speak highly of the school. Staff are clearly proud of their school and feel well supported by leaders. The proprietor ensures staff are trained in child protection, safeguarding and health and safety. The proprietor speaks to the headteacher every day to monitor any urgent issues such as a safeguarding referral. The proprietor holds weekly, termly and half-yearly meetings to do more formal checks on how the school is performing against key objectives. Leaders are rightly proud of how diversity is modelled and the rights of the individual are met in the school. The proprietor has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor has developed a robust child protection policy. Staff and volunteers know what they must do to keep pupils safe. Leaders regularly check staff's safeguarding knowledge. Staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities of the pupils in their school. Pupils are taught how to understand their feelings and talk

through anything that is worrying them. All pupils have a trusted adult in the school to who they feel they can go for help.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and his deputies are trained to an enhanced level. The DSL works closely with local agencies to secure additional help for pupils who need it. The DSL is quick to make a referral if he has any concerns about a pupil. The DSL keeps accurate records of all referrals. Leaders monitor the progress of all referrals and their outcomes.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The medium- and short-term plans in some subjects are not as detailed as they need to be. This is affecting pupils' progress through the planned learning in these subjects. Leaders should complete their curriculum review so that all subjects have detailed plans which explain how pupils will progress through the planned learning from their individual starting points. To support this work, leaders should continue with their ongoing review of staff's subject and pedagogical knowledge and provide subject-specific training as needed.
- Leaders have not made sure that staff have the skills to deliver phonics effectively. Pupils who are still at the early stage of reading when they join the school are not having the gaps in their phonics knowledge addressed. This means that some pupils are not becoming independent and automatic readers as quickly as they could. Leaders should review staff's phonics knowledge and provide appropriate training.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, leaders already have clear plans to review aspects of the curriculum and train staff where needed. For these reasons, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

| | |
|--|--|
| Unique reference number | 148537 |
| DfE registration number | 381/6026 |
| Local authority | Calderdale |
| Inspection number | 10220885 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 13 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Timeout Children's Homes Ltd |
| Chair | Dominic Macauley |
| Headteacher | James Docherty |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £50,000 |
| Telephone number | 01422 820510 |
| Website | www.brearleyhall-school.com |
| Email address | james.docherty@timeouthomes.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Brearley Hall School is situated on a large, rural site between the market towns of Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge.
- This is the school's first standard inspection since being registered as an independent school by the Department for Education on 27 April 2021.
- Brearley Hall School is an independent special school for pupils aged seven to 16 years with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils may also have a learning disability or a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. This is a requirement for admission to the school.
- The school has capacity for 50 pupils with 13 on roll at present.
- The school is based on one site and does not currently use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, and the proprietor. They also met with a range of other staff and members of the school's clinical team.
- Inspectors undertook a tour of the school and visited the classrooms, social areas and other facilities. They checked the school buildings and grounds against the independent school standards.
- Inspectors did deep dives into English (including reading), mathematics, science and world studies. The deep dive for each subject included a meeting with curriculum leaders and a review of subject documents and plans. The deep dive also involved lesson visits, meetings with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum plans of all other subjects and visited a range of other lessons.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school throughout the day, including breaktimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents and the arrangements to safeguard pupils. This included checking the school's safeguarding systems and the single central record of staff's recruitment checks, meeting with the DSL and speaking with staff and pupils about safeguarding
- Inspectors considered 12 responses to the survey, Ofsted Parent View, and telephone calls with three parents. Inspectors considered surveys completed by nine staff and 12 pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives from the local authorities who commission places at the school.

Inspection team

Patricia Head, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022