

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Brookfields School

Moorfield Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 3JA

---

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 January 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a warm, welcoming school where staff greet every pupil with a smile. Pupils enjoy the many enrichment experiences that leaders provide. Pupils appreciate the chance to immerse themselves in the world around them. They learn to swim and take part in dance, art and music events. Older pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential trip where they enjoy a range of physical activities, as well as developing their independence skills.

Every pupil is valued for their uniqueness. Leaders expect pupils to behave and to achieve well. Staff support each pupil to achieve their personal targets. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those who are non-verbal, are able to communicate their wishes and feelings.

Children in the early years and pupils across the rest of the school feel happy and safe in school because they trust adults to provide the right help when they need it. Pupils achieve well in some subjects, but their progress through the curriculum is not as strong as it should be. This is because leaders have not made it clear what pupils should learn and when this content should be taught.

Pupils learn how to be kind to each other. They learn how to play together, and pupils are keen to talk to their friends. Staff are quick to identify when pupils may need additional support around behaviour or sensory needs. Leaders deal with infrequent incidents of bullying well.

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

Leaders provide a curriculum that captures pupils' interests, meets their needs, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and helps them to increase their knowledge. However, the curriculum does not help pupils to achieve as well as they should. This is because, in some subjects, leaders have not decided what they want pupils to know or be able to do as they progress through the school. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the subject content that pupils should learn. Consequently, staff are unsure what they should teach to help pupils progress well through the curriculum. At times, pupils do not remember what leaders expect them to know.

There is a strong culture of reading in school. Staff immerse children in the early years and pupils across the rest of the school in songs, rhymes, music and stories. Teachers design activities that develop pupils' attention and involvement in their learning. Staff are creative and use a wide range of resources to reinforce learning. A sharp focus on phonics ensures that children and pupils in the early stages of reading get the knowledge that they need to become fluent readers.

Pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC) are used well to set ambitious targets for pupils' development. Staff are well equipped to identify needs and shape their teaching to help pupils access their education. Speech and language specialists provide valuable support to enable some pupils to communicate with staff more effectively.

Staff are highly skilled at supporting pupils' behaviour. They know when a pupil's behaviour may indicate that it is time for additional support or a sensory break. There is very little low-level disruption, as staff know the pupils well. They are quick to intervene if there are signs that pupils are struggling.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities to enhance their wider development. Regular trips to parks, shops and restaurants support pupils in developing their independence. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is developed through trips to museums, art galleries and theatres. Themed days immerse pupils in festivals and spiritual events. Pupils visit other schools, children's centres and care homes to promote inclusion and support pupils' social skills.

Pupils are prepared well for their next stages of learning. Staff work closely with pupils, parents, carers and the receiving schools to prepare pupils for the transition on to secondary school. Children joining the school in the early years are supported well. Staff build trusting relationships and work in partnership with parents, providing individual support and access to numerous relevant workshops.

The majority of staff said that their workload is manageable. They appreciate the time that leaders take to listen to their concerns. Trustees and members of the local governing body have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They hold leaders to account to ensure that all statutory duties are fulfilled.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in how to safeguard pupils. Staff are highly vigilant. They notice any changes in pupils' behaviour that may indicate a safeguarding concern. Staff use the school's systems well to pass on their concerns.

The safeguarding team secures the help that pupils and their families need. Leaders work closely with the local authority and other agencies to keep pupils safe.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in school, the community and online. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and help them to understand about their bodies and what should be private.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not refined their curricular thinking in some subjects. This means that it is not clear to teachers what pupils need to learn and in what order this subject content should be taught. As a consequence of this, at times, pupils do not learn what they should. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum identifies what pupils should learn and when this will be taught.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Brookfields School, to be outstanding in March 2018.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146110
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256105
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Claire Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sara Ainsworth
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.brookfieldsschool.com">www.brookfieldsschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Brookfields School converted to become an academy in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Brookfields School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Brookfields School is part of the Shaw Education Trust.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has two satellite classes based in The Grange School, Latham Avenue, Runcorn.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no two- or three-year-old children attending the school.
- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of needs. These include autism spectrum disorder and speech, language and communication.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the chief executive officer, director and trustee of The Shaw Education Trust. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke with two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading and communication; personal, social, health and economic education, and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. They also spoke with leaders and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Elizabeth Clarke

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023