

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Brook Green Centre for Learning

Bodmin Road, Whiteleigh, Plymouth, Devon PL5 4DZ

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 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. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

Pupils love coming to this school. It is a place where they grow in confidence and thrive. The school cares deeply for the pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptional. Staff understand each pupil's unique needs, which enables them to reduce their anxiety and stress. Consequently, pupils are happy and feel safe.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class and during social times. They understand the difference between right and wrong.

Pupils are keen to learn and overall achieve well. However, pupils in the early stages of reading do not receive the guidance or undertake the practice they need to develop their reading accuracy and fluency.

Provision for pupils' wider personal development is strong. Pupils take pleasure in the rich and varied opportunities on offer. These activities increase their confidence and build self-esteem. However, the school recognises that relationships and sex education (RSE) is not securely in place to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to learn how to manage their personal and social lives in a positive way.

Parents are delighted with the school. They recognise that the way staff support both pupils and families contributes to making their children happy.

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

Everything the school does is about helping pupils to realise their potential. The school sees beyond pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), believing that, in the words of their motto, all can 'believe, thrive, achieve'. Pupils are clear that everyone's opinions are listened to, and adults understand what they are going through. Pupils learn

to treat everyone with respect. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to do their best. They strive to overcome challenges. They display positive attitudes to learning. It is rare for learning time to be lost.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to receive a high-quality education. Typically, the curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure pupils get the knowledge they need to achieve well. Pupils enjoy success and gain qualifications. For example, in science and mathematics, plans for how pupils will learn the key knowledge is clear. Teachers revisit prior learning to help the most important knowledge stick in pupils' memory. However, the school is fully aware that the RSE curriculum is underdeveloped. This means that pupils do not always develop the deep knowledge they need to manage their personal and social lives well. The school has plans to strengthen this, but these are in their early stages of development.

The school aims for every pupil to become, at the very least, a functional reader. However, the current phonics programme is not helpful for pupils in the early stages of reading. Staff do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach phonics. Pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to practise the sounds they are learning. Books used to teach and practise reading are not always matched closely enough to the pupils' stage in the phonics programme. This limits pupils' reading fluency and accuracy. Teachers do not read stories to pupils regularly. Consequently, pupils do not encounter a wide enough range of books in school. Some do not develop a love of reading.

Pupils have high quality and impartial careers guidance. Work experience is carefully linked to pupils' dreams and aspirations, such as computing and construction. This helps pupils identify possible career choices.

The school is committed to developing the talents and skills of the whole school community. There are numerous enrichment activities on offer. Pupils spoke with pride about their recent success in achieving their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which resulted in an invitation to Buckingham Palace. Other opportunities include sailing, music and working with the local basketball and football teams. These opportunities develop pupils' self-confidence and sense of achievement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The current phonics programme is not effective. This means that pupils in the early stages of reading are not able to read with fluency and accuracy. The school must ensure that there is an effective phonics programme in place so that pupils learn to read well.

- The school does not have the RSE curriculum fully in place. This means that pupils do not have the opportunity to learn about how to manage their personal and social lives sufficiently well. The school must ensure this work is completed and fully in place.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in July 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 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113648
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288139
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chairs</b>	Karen Powell and David Fildes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sara Jordan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.brookgreen.org.uk">www.brookgreen.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Brook Green Learning Centre is a school for pupils who have cognition and learning and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils who attend have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the 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.

- The lead inspector sampled other subjects which included mathematics and design and technology.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the head of education and an education improvement partner from Plymouth local authority.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including school strategic development plans and governors' minutes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies, and responses to the staff survey. Inspectors spoke with parents during the inspection and considered written correspondence received from them.

### **Inspection team**

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Hannon

Ofsted Inspector

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