

Inspection of Brooke Weston Academy

Coomb Road, Corby, Great Oakley, Northamptonshire NN18 8LA

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Shaun Strydom. This school is part of Brooke Weston Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andrew Campbell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Morrison.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Brooke Weston Academy is a school that wants the very best for all pupils. Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school and are determined that pupils will succeed here. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their time at school. They value the warm and professional relationships that they have with their teachers. This helps them to feel safe and cared for in school.

Staff share consistently high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils understand and endeavour to follow the 'Brooke Weston Way'. Typically, they behave well and are polite and courteous. The school is calm and purposeful. Incidents of bullying happen rarely. However, the school takes swift action to resolve these effectively.

The extensive enrichment programme is exemplary. It enables all pupils, including students in the sixth form, to develop their talents and interests. For example, they participate eagerly in debating, sports leadership, the future medics programme and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. They take on positions of responsibility and leadership through becoming members of the Combined Cadet Force and as student leaders.

Parents and carers appreciate the high aspirations that the school has for all pupils. A comment typical of many was, 'My child will leave Brooke Weston with memories that will last and an amazing attitude full of aspirations for their future.'

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

There are high expectations at Brooke Weston Academy for what pupils can achieve. The school has put the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at the heart of its broad and ambitious curriculum. Teachers present key concepts well and systematically revisit prior taught content in lessons. This helps pupils to remember the curriculum.

Most staff use assessment effectively so that pupils know more and remember more over time. However, some teachers do not always check pupils' understanding well enough. This means that a small number of pupils do not have secure prior knowledge when they meet new content. Teaching in the sixth form is effective, and students develop high-quality skills. They produce work of a consistently high standard.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are expertly identified and shared with staff effectively. The school uses external services and expert staff in school effectively to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well. Disadvantaged pupils are well cared for.

The school meticulously identifies pupils who find reading difficult. Staff offer swift support through the literacy pathway, so that pupils can become confident and fluent readers. The school has trained sixth-form mentors to support this.

The vast majority of pupils understand and follow the school's routines well. They are keen to succeed and they behave well in class. There are some rare instances of behaviours that do not meet the school's high expectations. However, staff act quickly to ensure that sanctions and additional support are in place as required. A very small minority of pupils state that they have heard derogatory language in school. Sixth-form students demonstrate consistently highly positive and respectful attitudes and a strong commitment to their education.

The school provides effective support for pupils who do not come to school regularly. The Success Centre provides a nurturing environment to help pupils re-engage with education well.

The wider personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. The personal development curriculum builds the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe in the community. They learn about positive relationships, including consent, and about online safety. Pupils show an understanding of the protected characteristics and what it means to treat people equally. They learn about beliefs and cultures that are different from their own and engage in moral debates on topical issues. Pupils and students in the sixth form experience a wide, rich set of experiences that nurture their talents and interests. Sixth-form students take on whole-school leadership roles, such as the leader for equality and diversity. These roles teach students why it is important to contribute actively to society.

The school prepares pupils effectively for their next steps. Staff provide many opportunities for accessing careers advice. This includes the well-attended careers fair, work shadowing and vocational learning. Pupils discuss their aspirations and talents with staff. The school provides pupils with the necessary skills and experiences towards achieving these.

Governors and trustees have a thorough understanding of the school. They work together effectively to provide direction, challenge and support to school leaders. Staff professional development is highly valued and a strength of the school. All staff receive highly effective support to develop new or to deepen existing skills and knowledge. Leaders are resolute in their desire to continually improve the school. Leaders take great care to consider the workload and well-being of staff. Staff are proud and happy to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, some staff do not consistently check pupils' prior understanding effectively. As a result, teachers do not ensure that they know that all pupils have secure knowledge and understanding before moving on to new learning. The school should ensure that all teachers use formative assessment consistently well so that pupils are fully ready for new curriculum content.

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

Unique reference number	135317
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10267910
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,186
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	257
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Morrison
CEO of the trust	Andrew Campbell
Principal	Shaun Strydom
Website	www.brookeweston.org
Date of previous inspection	26 January 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Brooke Weston Trust.
- The school is the lead school for Northamptonshire Teaching School Hub.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To further look at the curriculum, inspectors met with leaders about the curriculums in history and physical education.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance, and documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour. Inspectors also reviewed the documents available on the school's website.
- Inspectors met with pupils to gather their views about the school and looked at the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed informal times, including arrival at school, at breakfast and lunchtime.
- The lead inspector met with trustees and governors.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and responses to the staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Javier Sanchez-Garcia	Ofsted Inspector
Gulbanu Kader	Ofsted Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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