

# Inspection of Brimble Hill Special School

Tadpole Lane, Redhouse, Swindon, Wiltshire SN25 2NB

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Fewings. This school is part of the Brunel Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jackie Fieldwick, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by William Wyldbore-Smith.

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

Pupils at Brimble Hill School use many different ways to communicate with others. They say and show that they are happy in school. Staff know pupils well, and relationships are strong. This supportive climate means pupils are safe, which helps them to focus on their learning.

The curriculum to support pupils' personal development is well planned and coordinated. It is based on the principle of supporting pupils to become increasingly independent. The programme successfully promotes the skills and attributes that prepare pupils well for their future lives. Pupils enjoy the programme and its many varied activities.

Pupils take part in a range of events while at the school. These are the '50 things to do before you leave Brimble Hill'. For example, pupils take part in concerts, put on art exhibitions, visit a place of worship and meet a visitor. Pupils love the many activities that are on offer at the school.

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

The school and the trust work closely together to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. The school has developed the content of the curriculum and the quality with which it is taught. Leaders ensure that changes are implemented well and that staff have the expertise to match the curriculum to the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils study a well-structured and purposeful curriculum.

In each subject, 'knowledge ladders' set out in detail what pupils will learn. Staff skilfully determine the right curriculum pathway for pupils by assessing what they know and can do. The pathways match pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans closely. Leaders and staff implement these with a good degree of consistency. This helps pupils to follow the curriculum successfully. However, at times, some pupils find it hard to recall what they have learned before.

Staff teach pupils to read well. They routinely introduce pupils to a wide variety of stories, rhymes and songs to support pupils' language development. Staff teach early reading skills through a phonics scheme, which is implemented effectively. Staff are skilful at matching the programme to the needs of individual pupils.

There has been much thought and planning given to how best to manage pupils' behaviour. The newly implemented system is very sensitive to pupils' emotional needs. It has resulted in positive changes to pupils' behaviour. Staff work closely with parents and view them as co-educators. Leaders are resolute in their efforts to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Staff use well-devised strategies with firm sensitivity. Consequently, attendance is improving.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and their colleagues. They feel part of one big team, working to provide what pupils need. They appreciate the support they receive to raise standards in the effectiveness of the school's work. Staff workload is well-managed.

Governors know the school well and have a clear and compelling vision. Pupils' learning and well-being are at the centre of this vision. They seek reliable evidence from school leaders to inform their decision-making. They use this to hold leaders to account and are active in their support of 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)**

- At times, pupils are not supported well to build their knowledge progressively. They therefore find it hard to use what they have done before to help them with what comes next. The school should continue to develop staff's expertise so that pupils are supported to know more and remember more over time.

## **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>	143013
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288208
<b>Type of school</b>	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>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	William Wyldbore-Smith
<b>CEO</b>	Jackie Fieldwick
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Fewings
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.brimblehillschool.org.uk">www.brimblehillschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Brimble Hill Special School is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- Brimble Hill Special School converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, also called Brimble Hill Special School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- When the school became an academy, it joined Brunel Academy Trust.
- The school does not use off-site alternative provision.
- The school can cater for two-year-olds, but at the time of this inspection, there were no two-year-olds on the school roll.
- In September 2023, an additional school site opened at Walsingham Road in Swindon, which is an integral part of Brimble Hill School. There are currently 17 pupils at this site. These pupils are in Reception and key stage 1 and were new to Brimble Hill School in September 2023.

## Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's arrangements for the management of pupils' behaviour, exclusions and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including the free-text comments and survey responses from pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Hill

Ofsted Inspector

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