

# Inspection of Briarwood School

Briar Way, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 4EA

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Briarwood School is a place where pupils feel safe, secure and understood. The school is calm and orderly. It is a place where pupils thrive.

A skilled, patient staff team warmly welcomes pupils each morning. Pupils settle into consistent, safe routines. Pupils know that what lies ahead is a carefully planned day that takes their unique character as well as their communication and learning needs into account. As a result, pupils love their time at Briarwood and want to be there. They know that the school helps them to learn the things they need so that they can be as ready as they can for their next steps.

The curriculum is crystal clear. Ambitious, yet realistic, goals are set out in tiny, detailed steps. Consequently, learning activities help to get the absolute best from everyone. Pupils respond by trying hard in lessons. Staff celebrate achievements, however small, with joy.

Briarwood achieves the vision it has set out. Pupils enjoy what they do, engage with their learning, and learn to the best of their ability.

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

Pupils who attend Briarwood School face complex challenges. What they experience at the school is heartening. Staff do everything possible to understand pupils' starting points as well as their communication and learning needs. This leads to bespoke, individualised learning pathways. These are based on a well-constructed curriculum that has a clear set of goals.

The school is determined to achieve the absolute best it can for all pupils. No stone is left unturned when seeking to understand pupils' challenges and barriers. Staff ensure that pupils have the support they need to develop essential skills, such as reading, writing and mathematics. Close partnership working ensures that, wherever possible, pupils achieve relevant qualifications. The school centres on preparing pupils for their futures.

Pupils in key stage 1 experience stories such as 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Stories come to life through sensory experiences such as dance, music, light, sounds and sensations. In key stage 2, pupils continue to learn to love books and reading. The school library provides a wide range of accessible reading materials to attract all pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy choosing books and sharing them.

The school carefully considers how to support pupils' personal development. Pupils across Briarwood experience a wide range of activities. To enrich their learning, staff enable pupils to access visits to local sites. Clubs such as sing-and-sign choir build on pupils' interests and provide relevant opportunities to develop confidence and character.

In the sixth form, the personal and social curriculum helps pupils to develop independent skills. Pupils are supported to be prepared for the world of work as much as is possible and relevant. The school advocates for each pupil, working with determination to support career choices and secure workplace experiences. Pupils attend the Duke of Edinburgh's Award activities, including residential. This contributes well to pupils' confidence to move on to their next steps.

A strength of Briarwood is how effectively everyone works together to share and consider information. Systems to check how well pupils learn the curriculum are particularly effective. The school identifies a wide range of factors that could affect learning or attendance. Pastoral and academic teams collaborate closely to build a complete and detailed understanding of every pupil. The school works positively with parents and carers to ensure that families have any extra help they need from a wide range of agencies. This approach leads to successful adaptations to learning and improvements to attendance. Consequently, pupils at Briarwood achieve well.

Staff report high satisfaction with the support they receive to do their jobs well. Well-considered, continuous professional development ensures that staff have the precise knowledge they need to implement the curriculum effectively.

Briarwood leads the way in the local area, providing highly bespoke provision for pupils, including for pupils with the most challenging of behaviours. Pupils at the Nexus Centre are supported very effectively to learn, step by step, how to manage their anxieties, how to communicate and join in with their peers.

There is no complacency here. Governors and leaders work together to continually review and check quality. The whole team is absolutely determined that everything will continue to be done to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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>	109410
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322197
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	165
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	28
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Deborah Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicolle Deighton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.briarwoodschool.org.uk">www.briarwoodschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	24 and 25 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Briarwood School provides education for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties, complex needs, autism, and sensory impairment. All pupils have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan.
- The school is based on three sites across East Bristol. The school is organised into infants, juniors, secondary, sixth form and a specialist centre for challenging behaviour called Nexus.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and a range of leaders across the school.
- An inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. An inspector also had a discussion with the school's improvement adviser and a representative from the local authority.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and the creative curriculum. 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, such as the 'myself' curriculum.
- At the time of this inspection, there were too few children attending the early years provision for an early years judgement to be made.
- Inspectors spoke to several parents on different school sites during the inspection to gain their views of the school. The inspectors also took the responses to Ofsted Parent View and staff surveys into account.

## Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Leahy	Ofsted Inspector

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