

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Braidwood School for the Deaf

Bromford Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B36 8AF

---

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

## **Outcome**

Braidwood School for the Deaf has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

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

Braidwood School is not just a school for pupils who are deaf; it is an inspirational community based on ambition, care and friendship. Not a moment is wasted in providing pupils with the skills needed to be strong British Sign Language (BSL) communicators. From this, they learn to become ambitious and excited deaf learners with a thirst and drive for knowledge.

Staff expect pupils to get the most from their time at Braidwood. Pupils expect the staff to get to know them as people and make every moment count in preparing them for the best life possible. All rise to meet these expectations and are driven to get even better in the future.

Staff, parents, carers and pupils are united in making things even better so that more deaf pupils become active and inspirational members of the West Midlands community.

Mental health and well-being are priorities. Caring and attentive staff empower pupils' feelings of self-belief and worth. As a result, pupils attend well to their learning because they are skilled at regulating their emotions. When pupils need additional support, staff act swiftly to provide emotional support. This means that behaviour is calm, productive and respectful in lessons and at other times.

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

Expectations are high for what pupils should learn and when. The school has identified the vital knowledge that all pupils must learn. Skilful teachers translate these expectations

into exciting learning opportunities that are adapted to the pupils' needs. For example, inspirational hearing and deaf staff inspire excitement in learning new words and phrases. Consequently, pupils learn quickly to communicate their wants, feelings, and, most importantly, what they have learned and are learning. Deaf relationships are nurtured and pupils talk about the friendships they have formed because of Braidwood.

The ambitious curriculum sets out precisely what pupils should learn. Learning is carefully planned and successfully developed from Year 7 to the sixth form. The school has thought carefully about how pupils should learn key information to help them build knowledge over time. The staff know the pupils exceptionally well and act swiftly to provide encouraging support when the pupils might need more help, for example a well-timed question or further explanation for a more complicated task. In many cases, pupils can talk at length, debate and reflect on what they have learned. This deepens their understanding, develops critical and reflective thinking, and helps them apply their learning to new challenges. However, in other cases, pupils do not routinely have these opportunities to talk and sign at length, meaning there are missed opportunities to deepen knowledge.

Understanding the individual needs, talents and interests of pupils is a real strength. Some pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities that require additional help or support. Whatever the need, staff work hard to provide the right support at the right time and so nurture pupils' talents and interests. Opportunities to develop positive mental health, counselling, physiotherapy, and reading skills are well-placed and planned, ensuring pupils who need the support quickly get it. The school band and art enrichment develop personal strengths and capitalise on special interests and talents.

Many pupils attend school regularly. For those who attend less regularly, the school works closely with their families and agencies, such as Deaf CAMHS, social care services, and local authorities, to implement the right actions to improve attendance and engagement with learning.

The school's work on careers is exemplary. Surrounded by deaf role models from industry, pupils quickly start to see what is possible and ambitious for them. Deaf builders, architects, forensic scientists, and even deaf TV chefs provide the impetus and inspiration that any career is possible. From Year 7 to the sixth form, career advice is frequent and supports pupils to develop a strong sense of vocational ambition.

Opportunities to work alongside hearing pupils from other schools are well-planned and frequent for the oldest pupils. Performing at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre is just one way that pupils work alongside hearing members of the community. Students in the sixth form are already highly skilled at interacting in a hearing workplace because of well-considered and planned work experience. However, for younger pupils, these opportunities to interact with the world outside of Braidwood are still in the early stages of development. This means that opportunities for younger pupils to practise these skills and develop real-life skills are not consistently provided yet.

Parents, carers, staff and pupils are proud to be part of the Braidwood community. They have an ambition that things can improve in the future, and they have confidence that leaders are making the right changes to the school. However, some staff members told inspectors that, in some cases, they do not always feel they get the information they need from colleagues to fulfil their role well enough. Leaders are aware of this issue. Their actions demonstrate their tenacity in ensuring that all staff are skilled in communicating with pupils and their colleagues.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some pupils do not have regular enough opportunities to talk and/or sign at length about what they have learned. This means that staff cannot always accurately determine how well pupils have understood what they have been taught. As a result, pupils do not develop as independent thinkers and problem-solvers as intended. The school should ensure that all pupils have regular opportunities to talk and/or sign at length about what they have learned.
- Some younger pupils do not benefit from regular opportunities to interact as active members of the world around them. This limits their ability to practise their learning in real-life situations with hearing and deaf members of the community. The school should ensure that all pupils have regular opportunities to practise their newly gained learning in various situations.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 good for overall effectiveness in October 2013.

## **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 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>	103611
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322700
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 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>	92
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Michael Price
<b>Headteacher</b>	Charlotte Nock
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.braidwood.bham.sch.uk">www.braidwood.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the post in January 2024.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed from the existing staff group in September 2024.
- The school is co-located with Hodge Hill High school.
- The school does not use any registered or unregistered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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.
- The inspection was supported by two commissioned British Sign Language Interpreters.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- An inspector met with five members of the governing body members, including the chair.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: English and mathematics; and personal, social, health and economic education, drama and art. For each group of subjects, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Pete Hines OBE

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 looked after children, 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 2024