

# Brookfields School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110186
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310215
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Blackband

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	182
6th form	13
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr K Parsons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Byrne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Sage Road Tilehurst Reading RG31 6SW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189 421382
<b>Fax number</b>	01189 455176

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<b>Age group</b>	2–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Brookfields School provides for pupils with moderate and severe special educational needs, as well as for a small but increasing number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). There are twice as many boys as girls. One in three pupils has an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Most pupils are of White British ethnicity. There are however, a small number of pupils from Asian and Caribbean backgrounds. The school recently has gained Specialist School status for Cognition and Learning.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Brookfields is an outstanding school, which continually strives to improve the provision for all its learners. Because of their learning difficulties, the standards reached by pupils, in most cases, are exceptionally low but all pupils do very well in their studies and many make outstanding progress. The pupils love coming to school and parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing they will be safe, that they enjoy their lessons and that the school has high expectations of their progress. One parent's comment was typical: 'We feel that the care and support is excellent.' All the pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. The quality of teaching is excellent. The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. Lessons are very well planned and they are characterised by the high quality of support given to pupils by well-trained learning support assistants. The school's monitoring and tracking of pupils' overall achievement is exemplary. The curriculum is outstanding because, through the excellent quality of assessment, it is so well tailored to pupils' needs. There is outstandingly well-organised and effective provision to support pupils with sensory difficulties such as auditory or visual impairment and to support the pupils with ASD. The school is particularly effective in helping these pupils develop their behavioural skills and understanding.

The pupils feel safe and well supported. They make excellent gains in their personal development because of the outstanding teaching and curriculum provision in personal, health and social education (PHSE). They learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. They value the school and this is evident through the good relationships they have with staff, their very good attendance, and the way they all proudly describe their school. The pupils made many comments to inspectors such as 'It's a brilliant school-everyone should come', and 'They make you want to come to school.' Locally the school is held in high regard. It offers a valuable consultancy service to mainstream schools. The school's high quality work has recently been recognised by the award of specialist school status.

Provision in the post-16 part of the school and in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Post-16 students make excellent gains in their level of maturity and self-confidence, helped by an outstanding programme of work-related learning. Foundation Stage pupils quickly settle in the school through excellent teaching and care.

Exceptional leadership and management drive all this. The headteacher's work is outstanding in maintaining and improving standards. A very able senior team supports him and this team has been very effective in leading staff in the drive to improve pupils' achievements further. The school monitors and evaluates its work extremely well. For instance, the curriculum has been recently revised to give more prominence to aspects of the pupils' language development. The leadership is committed also to the development of provision for PMLD throughout the school as more pupils are admitted. The governing body is supportive and monitors aspects of the school's work robustly. The school has consolidated its high standards of performance since the previous inspection and has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development because of excellent procedures to help them gain experiences of adult life. They are encouraged to make their own choices and to seek independence. The staff effectively promote an adult ethos and mature behaviour.

Excellent teaching results in many pupils making outstanding progress, especially in their basic literacy and numeracy, their life skills and independence training, and in their grasp of work-related learning. The school has developed good links with local schools and colleges and almost all pupils leave for further education courses. The pupils are able to achieve their potential through a range of accredited qualifications. The leadership and management of the provision are of a very high quality.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The records in the department clearly show that children make exceptional progress, particularly in their communication and behaviour. Assessment is rigorous and work is very well matched to appropriate small steps in learning. Children receive a high level of individual attention by caring and competent support staff. The staff know their children very well and demonstrate this by the excellent standards of planning and teaching, tailored to the needs of each individual. The teacher and support staff are skilled in creating many opportunities for communication. The curriculum is very well adapted to provide for each child's learning needs and, together with the emphasis on children's personal development, provides a very good basis for their future success in the school. The department is very well led and managed.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend the school's good practice in providing for the needs of pupils with PMLD to all teachers and support staff.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

All the pupils achieve well and many make outstanding progress. Pupils making exceptional progress are from all sections of the school population, including those with PMLD and those in both the post-16 provision and in the Foundation Stage. The outstanding support for pupils with sensory impairment and those with ASD ensures these pupils make excellent progress. The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in the acquisition of basic skills is really exceptional and this has a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers capture each small step in progress, which pupils make, and this leads to well focused targets for each pupil's further improvement. Many pupils make excellent progress in meeting challenging targets in their individual education plans. Pupils in Year 11 and in Year 14 are able to demonstrate their potential through nationally accredited qualifications.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's strong management of behaviour and emphasis on moral and social values. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils develop a strong awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and of keeping themselves safe through the excellent provision for PHSE. They make excellent gains in their social skills through the many communal activities. Similarly, older pupils make excellent gains in acquiring valuable life skills through work experience and effective

careers provision. Pupils feel safe and confident and know what is expected from them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. Behaviour and attendance are outstanding because pupils' enjoy school so much and love to be there. Pupils emphatically report that they feel free from bullying or unpleasantness and that they really look forward to coming to school. The many parents who returned questionnaires were unanimous in their unqualified praise for the school and its impact on their children's lives. One parent was typical of many when writing, 'I cannot speak highly enough of the school.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Teachers know their pupils very well and this enables them to plan interesting well-paced lessons. There are very good relationships between classroom teams and between staff and pupils. The very well deployed staffing allows the very competent support staff to give high levels of individual tuition. The pupils enjoy their lessons and try their best. All classroom staff play a full part in assessing and recording each small step in pupils' progress. As a result, the teachers are able to plan challenging activities for each pupil, so enabling many of them to make outstanding progress. For example, in literacy and numeracy lessons pupils in all age groups spend sections of the lesson on their own individual work, geared specifically to their ability and present attainment. The management of behaviour is excellent. Pupils understand and respond to clear routines. When a pupil's behaviour becomes unacceptable, staff deal with it calmly and with understanding and support for the pupil involved. Teaching is very well matched to the age range as well as to individual needs, for example in promoting independent learning by post-16 students.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Pupils enjoy a carefully constructed curriculum, which is very well adapted to their individual needs. All pupils have equal access to learning opportunities because of the excellent levels of support for those with extra learning difficulties. The curriculum is rigorously monitored for its effectiveness. There are very good programmes for post-16 pupils and particularly good provision for work-related learning. Programmes in the Foundation Stage have been carefully adapted to meet each pupil's early learning needs. The provision for pupils' development in PHSE underpins much of the school's work. This has a significant impact on the pupils' achievement in personal skills. The school's excellent provision for the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills is extremely effective in promoting their confidence and access to learning opportunities in other subjects. There is a good range of activities to take pupils out of the classroom, teaching them to behave appropriately in the community. This adds substantially to the pupils' social skills, their self-confidence and their interest in learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The school provides a very high standard of care for all of its pupils. Governors regularly monitor the health and safety policy. The effective organisation of staffing means pupils have many opportunities to talk to adults, and relationships are supportive. The pupils are proud of their successes. They like the way that staff tell them how well they are doing in both their work and personal development, and that they reward them with praise and encouragement. Pupils thus are helped to understand their learning targets. Parents receive accurate and comprehensive progress reports for Annual Review meetings and report a high degree of satisfaction with their level of involvement in their children's education. For example, parents can help to set their child's overall targets for the year. Pupils receive very good advice and support as they are about to leave school. There are good links with local colleges which results in almost all pupils taking advantage of further education courses when they leave school.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The headteacher shows outstanding leadership through his determination to maintain the highest standards of teaching and progress by the pupils. A strong senior team supports him. A strength of the school lies in the rigorous and effective way managers monitor, evaluate and improve on every aspect of both the school's performance and the pupils' achievements. There are very effective procedures, for instance, to measure and improve staff performance. Because of the excellent procedures for assessment and tracking, the management team retain a very good overview of pupils' achievements and are able to ensure that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and that their targets are both relevant and challenging.

Communication within the school is excellent. Staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. There are excellent procedures to support new staff. Governors provide outstanding support to the school, they work closely with individual staff and they rigorously monitor the school's strengths and areas for development. Relationships with parents are extremely good. The communication between home and school is very well organised and parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's education.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookfields School, Reading, RG31 6SW

Not long ago my colleague and I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the school better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom, at school council and at lunchtimes. Thank you and well done.

We were with you for two days. That was long enough for us to realise that Brookfields is an outstandingly good school. We could see that you all enjoy school very much. We liked many things. Here are a few.

- You work hard and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development.
- The many different people at the school look after you very well.
- There is an excellent range of activities including those that help you become independent, make choices and learn how to behave well.
- You receive excellent teaching and your teachers and other staff are very good at recording all the progress you make. This helps them to prepare interesting work for each of you.
- Your school is extremely well run by your headteacher who is very well supported by everyone else including your parents.

We think the school can improve even further if all the staff keep planning how they can help those of you with the greatest difficulties. You can help too, just by working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for all the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes and good luck.

Yours sincerely,

Mel Blackband

Lead Inspector