

Inspection of Brookfields School

Moorfield Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 3JA

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sara Ainsworth. The school is part of Shaw Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Joanne Heard-Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Meehan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Brookfields School is an inspiring environment, in which pupils flourish. Pupils are proud to be a part of this school. Staff place the pupils' educational, personal, social and emotional development at the core of all that they do. They create a calm atmosphere, where pupils are happy and secure.

Pupils' behaviour is commendable. They feel valued as individuals. Staff are highly skilled in supporting pupils to manage their feelings and emotions. This includes children in the early years. In lessons, pupils persevere with tasks extremely well.

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They face significant difficulties and challenges in their learning and development. Staff are expertly trained to support pupils to overcome any barriers which they may face. Across curriculum subjects, pupils' achievement from their individual starting points is impressive. This is because staff are exceptionally ambitious for all pupils.

The school prioritises pupils' wider development. Pupils are absorbed in the many opportunities on offer to them. These help to develop and broaden their understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils take part in a theatre production with other local schools. This gives them the chance to experience a range of different plays and to perform with others.

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

Exceptional leadership is woven into the fabric of this school. The school, alongside the multi-academy trust and academy council, shares the vision that pupils deserve the very best education. It is relentless in its pursuit to continue to make further improvements to pupils' education, where these are needed. Together with the trust, the school has developed a highly successful staff team, who are focused on meeting the specific needs of all pupils. Staff feel that the school responds very well to their workload and well-being. They particularly appreciate the professional development that they receive. This supports them to deliver the curriculum effectively.

The school has meticulously constructed the curriculum. There is a real focus on ensuring that pupils develop a rich body of knowledge, along with life skills which prepare them well for adulthood. The school has precisely identified the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. Learning is sequenced seamlessly from early years to Year 6.

Teachers deliver the curriculum with expertise. They have exceptional subject knowledge. They understand pupils' individual needs well and tailor their explanations to support each child. Staff use the most effective approaches to help pupils to recall and remember knowledge. For example, pupils learn to communicate more effectively over time.

The school has effective processes to identify if pupils have any additional SEND. Staff carefully consider the next steps in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. This includes any therapeutic support, alongside educational provision. Pupils' needs are met

exceptionally well across the school. Subsequently, pupils are prepared superbly well for the next stage in their education.

The school places significant importance on developing pupils' oral communication and reading skills. From the early years, staff rightly focus on developing pupils' early communication and vocabulary. Children listen attentively and respond to a variety of rhymes, poems and songs. This supports their early language development. The school identifies correctly when pupils are ready to access the ambitious phonics curriculum. Teachers carefully match the phonics programme to individual pupils' needs. The school develops pupils' communication and reading skills remarkably well. As a result, pupils' communication and reading skills improve remarkably as they move through the school.

Reading is at the core of the school. As pupils move through school, they experience a wide range of books and stories. Pupils respond positively to the texts which they study.

Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptional. Routines are well embedded. This starts in the early years. Pupils understand the school's high expectations for their behaviour. The majority of pupils attend school regularly. A few pupils do not attend as often as the school would like them to. The school is relentless in its work with families to understand the reasons behind any dip in attendance. The school supports pupils and their parents and carers through a range of strategies. This is proving to be effective. Typically, this minority of pupils are now attending school more often than in the past.

Pupils' wider development is incredibly well thought out. There is a razor-sharp focus on ensuring that pupils can carry out every day experiences, this includes visiting the local supermarket. These visits help pupils to become familiar with different environments and prepares them for activities they may take part in outside of school. The school also offers a wide variety of extra activities and clubs to develop pupils' talents and interests. In addition, the school carefully considers pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils also learn about the different faiths and cultures which make up Britain.

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

Unique reference number	146110
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10321460
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Meehan
CEO of the trust	Jo Heard-Jones
Headteacher	Sara Ainsworth
Website	www.brookfieldsschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Brookfields School converted to become an academy in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Brookfields School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Brookfields School is part of the Shaw Education Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school operates over two sites. There are three classes based at the lower school site.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of cognition and learning needs and speech, language and communication needs.

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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. 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.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum and reviewed samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with leaders for attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with members of the academy council, including the chair of the academy council. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the board of trustees and a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and as pupils moved around the school building. They scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sheldon Logue

Ofsted Inspector

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