

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Brentwood School

Cherry Lane, Sale, Greater Manchester M33 4GY

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Brentwood School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this school. Their smiles fill the corridors with joy. From when they arrive in Year 7, until they leave the sixth form, pupils are supported and cared for by staff who understand their varied needs and abilities exceptionally well. Pupils thrive here.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school ensures that this does not limit its ambition for what pupils can achieve. Pupils learn eagerly. They rise to meet the school's high expectations. For many, this includes building the skills that help them to successfully move on to appropriate further education or employment.

Pupils learn about and respect each other's differences and feelings. This helps them to treat each other with understanding and kindness. They develop a close bond with staff and firm friendships with their peers. Staff manage any incidents of challenging behaviour effectively to minimise disruption to learning.

Pupils benefit from a rich variety of experiences that help them to expand their interests and develop independence. For instance, they enjoy trips to the gym and cinema. Some pupils represent the school in disability sports tournaments. Pupils were proud to showcase their enterprise projects at the recent Christmas market.

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

Pupils, including those with the most complex needs, learn a broad range of subjects. This helps to develop their understanding of the world around them. The curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the wide range of pupils' SEND. It identifies the most

important knowledge that pupils need to learn, regardless of their starting points. This helps pupils to lay firm foundations, onto which they can build up their skills gradually.

Preparation for adulthood is meticulously incorporated into every aspect of school life. For example, staff first help pupils to build their social understanding through everyday experiences such as taking turns and asking for help. Later, staff provide opportunities for pupils to develop teamwork and take on responsibilities.

In the sixth form, students focus on skills for independent living such as cooking, personal hygiene and managing money. Furthermore, pupils learn about healthy relationships and the importance of consent in ways that are appropriate to their age and needs. This learning, combined with highly personalised careers guidance and supported work experience, enables pupils to take their place in society as young adults.

When pupils are ready, the school ensures that their learning is formally accredited. For instance, pupils in key stage 4 and students in the sixth form work towards a range of recognised awards and qualifications.

Staff know their pupils exceptionally well. The school draws on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to set individual targets. Staff are furnished with a wealth of information about how best to support pupils. Most staff use this information very effectively to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. This helps most pupils to learn well. However, there are occasions when activities do not take enough account of what pupils already know. As a result, a minority of pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Most pupils at the school are at the early stages of learning to read. They benefit from expert delivery of the school's phonics programme. Many pupils develop into confident, accurate readers during their time at school. They develop a love of reading through the stories and books that staff share with them.

Communication and language development is a high priority in the school. Skilled staff support pupils to use a wide range of communication techniques including symbols and gestures. This enables pupils to have a voice, share any worries with staff and socialise with their peers. As pupils' independence grows, they benefit from regular opportunities to practise their communication skills in the local community. For instance, students in the sixth form volunteer in a community café.

The school's well-established routines help pupils to behave calmly and positively. Staff respond sensitively when pupils experience distress. They are skilled in therapeutic approaches that help pupils to regulate their emotions and quickly re-engage with their learning. The school has successfully helped some pupils who did not attend during the COVID-19 pandemic to build back up to full attendance once more.

Since the last inspection, governors' rigorous oversight has helped to ensure that the school's high standards have been maintained. Leaders have successfully expanded the school and responded to the changing profile of pupils' needs. Parents and carers are delighted with the care and support that their children receive.

Staff are very proud to work at the school. They appreciate the high-quality training that the school provides to support them in meeting pupils' needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some staff do not make effective use of pupils' assessment information when they design learning. At times, this means that lesson activities do not fully support the intended learning for pupils. This slows the progress that some pupils make towards the objectives in their EHC plans. The school should work with staff to ensure the better use of assessment information so that lesson sequences firmly take into account what pupils already know and can do.

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 outstanding 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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	106391
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10348027
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Parkin
Headteacher	Judith Lomas
Website	www.brentwoodschoolandcollege.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with complex learning difficulties, many of whom have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils also have physical disabilities.
- All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan. Places at the school are commissioned by local authorities.
- The school is co-located with Brentwood Community College, a specialist provision for adult learners with SEND. This inspection only considered the 11-19 provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on the school's roll has grown considerably. A large number of new staff have also joined the school.

- 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.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at examples of their work. They also considered the school's self-evaluation document, along with other documentation and analysis provided by the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Phill Walmsley

Ofsted Inspector

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