

# Inspection of Brookthorpe Hall School

Stroud Road, Brookthorpe, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 0UN

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Inspection dates: 11 to 13 July 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

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

Most pupils have had negative experiences with education in the past. Some did not attend school for months or years. At Brookthorpe Hall, pupils get a fresh start. Staff spend time getting to know pupils quickly when they join. They build warm and trusting relationships. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, and attendance is high.

Leaders want the best for pupils. They have designed a curriculum to meet the complex needs of each pupil. Leaders and staff meticulously unpick these needs and put highly personalised therapeutic support in place. This prepares pupils very well to be ready to learn.

Pupils thrive in a structured, orderly environment. Staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour and in the way they treat them. This is why pupils settle in so well. As staff unpick pupils' complex needs, pupils learn to feel safe. They become calmer and are more able to understand and take control of their emotions.

Leaders plan rich experiences beyond the classroom to heighten pupils' awareness of the world around them. For example, visiting a museum, taking pupils on a train and working with the police reinforce staying safe in the community.

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

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders rightly prioritise pupils' personal and social development as they transition into school. They identify pupils' next steps quickly and accurately. Bespoke support packages, such as occupational therapy, help pupils re-engage with their learning. Over time, pupils build their confidence and resilience well.

Leaders' revised approach to the academic curriculum suits the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers weave the basics of reading, writing and mathematics into well-sequenced lessons. In cooking, for example, pupils apply their understanding of measurement when weighing ingredients. Staff regularly assess and review pupils' learning. They break knowledge down into small achievable steps. This helps pupils learn the basics successfully.

Leaders have started to strengthen the academic curriculum in the secondary phase. New staff benefit from targeted work with more experienced staff. This gives them the ability to teach with greater confidence. However, not all staff have the subject-specific expertise to deepen pupils' knowledge sufficiently well in all subjects. Leaders have well-considered plans in place to remedy this.

Leaders have high expectations that all pupils learn to read. Staff provide extra support to help the weakest readers. However, not all staff have a secure knowledge of the agreed phonics programme. This slows the progress of a minority of pupils. Staff select books to match the sounds that pupils know. Pupils practise reading

daily to improve their accuracy and fluency. Older pupils read regularly and with increasing confidence.

Pupils are productive in lessons. They enjoy earning praise points for doing the right thing. Pupils behave well and interact with each other and staff positively. Disruption to learning is infrequent, including bullying. Staff provide effective guidance for a small number of pupils who need help to regulate their behaviour.

The provision for personal development is evolving as the school continues to grow. Pupils learn to be respectful of others. They say that 'if you can't say something nice, say nothing at all'. Pupils have many opportunities to be active in the school and community. For example, they practice social skills when playing team games. They learn to challenge themselves and take risks when horse riding and rock climbing. The careers programme is in its infancy but is set up effectively to meet the needs of pupils as they start receiving secondary education.

Leaders and the proprietor know what works well and what needs to be better. They recognise the need for greater rigour in checking how effectively staff implement the agreed schemes of work. Leaders meet the independent school standards in full. They comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff well-being has a high profile. Leaders, including the proprietor, support staff to manage their workload. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration and care. They are proud to work at the school. Staff value the company-wide training to share best practices.

The vast majority of parents praise the school's work. Positive comments include how their children now learn with 'increasing independence and self-pride'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created an effective safeguarding culture. They train staff thoroughly to identify potential risks to pupils, including online safety. Leaders escalate concerns swiftly to safeguarding partners when staff raise concerns. They seek advice to secure the right support for pupils and families needing extra help.

Leaders complete the necessary pre-employment checks on all staff before they begin working at the school. The school's safeguarding policies and procedures are published on the school's website. These are in line with government guidance.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Leaders have recently revised some of the subjects in the academic curriculum. Currently, there is variability in staff expertise to deepen pupils' knowledge as

they progress through the school, including in early reading. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and training to implement the academic curriculum effectively.

- Leaders do not have comprehensive oversight of how well pupils learn some of the academic curriculum. As a result, inconsistencies exist in how staff implement the agreed schemes of work. Leaders, including governors, should assure themselves that teachers implement the curriculum programmes as intended in all subjects.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149064
<b>DfE registration number</b>	916/6029
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267723
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	26
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	3
<b>Proprietor</b>	P Bloom Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joy Price-Bish
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£59,000 to £84,090
<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 717 004
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.brookthorpehallschool.co.uk">www.brookthorpehallschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	joy.price-bish@brookthorpehallschool.co.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Brookthorpe Hall School is an independent special school. It opened to pupils in September 2022. The school caters for pupils with a range of SEND. These include social, emotional and mental health needs and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The school is one of several independent ASD schools operated by the proprietor.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. Four local authorities fund these places.
- The school is registered for 60 pupils between the ages of 7 and 16 years. Currently, there are no pupils in key stage 4.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, other school staff and the director of education to discuss aspects of the school's work. The lead inspector met with the regional director and a representative of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English (including early reading), mathematics, personal, social and health education and physical education. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, talked to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils from key stages 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the school's designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to staff, pupils and governors about the school's safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors conducted a range of activities to confirm whether the independent school standards were met in full. This included health and safety checks of the

premises, risk assessments, record-keeping for behaviour management, attendance and supervision during social times.

- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sandy Hayes

His Majesty's Inspector

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