

Inspection of Brearley Hall School

1 Burnley Road, Luddendenfoot, Halifax HX2 6HP

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel secure and well supported at Brearley Hall School. Many pupils have faced interruptions to their learning previously. Some have been absent from education for extended periods. The school enables pupils to move on from these challenges. On arrival, they adapt quickly and establish friendships. The constructive, caring guidance that staff provide helps pupils to feel happy and settled. This enables pupils to reconnect with their learning.

Pupils understand that staff expect them to apply themselves and to do well. They generally respond positively to these expectations. In class, pupils engage with their learning. For instance, they volunteer responses and to read aloud. When unsure, they ask questions to secure their understanding. Pupils gain suitable qualifications that prepare them well for their next steps. This includes at GCSE level, where appropriate, across a variety of subjects.

Pupils typically conduct themselves sensibly in school. They are supported to regulate their feelings. As a result, they make appropriate decisions about their behaviour.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. Some report that it has made a significant difference to their children's lives. This is because pupils form trusting relationships and are supported to succeed in a nurturing environment.

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

Leaders and staff share a clear commitment to improving the life chances of pupils. This underpins all aspects of the school's work. All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school takes time to gain a thorough understanding of each pupil's additional needs before they join. As a result, staff provide carefully targeted support that enables pupils to settle quickly and make progress from the start of their education.

When pupils start at the school, staff promptly assess their reading and phonics skills. This information is used to tailor a reading curriculum to meet individual needs. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading receive focused support to help them develop confidence and fluency. This helps pupils to access the full curriculum and to read fluently.

The school is aware that many pupils have experienced interrupted or uneven learning prior to joining the school. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and adapt lessons to help pupils to catch up. In many subjects, checks are made on pupils' understanding and adjustments made to teaching to address pupils' misconceptions. Staff notice when additional explanation is required and adapt

lessons accordingly. However, the school recognises that further development is needed to ensure that information from these checks consistently informs the planning of future learning. In some subjects, these checks do not identify whether pupils' earlier learning is fully secure. This makes it difficult for staff to be certain of what pupils know and can do.

Pupils are polite towards staff and towards one another. They follow established routines well. Behavioural incidents are addressed quickly and with care, ensuring that learning is not interrupted. The school implements many strategies to support pupils to improve their attendance. For some pupils this is effective, and their attendance increases over time from their individual starting points. However, for some pupils these strategies do not have the intended impact and there are some pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.

Pupils follow a carefully planned programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. They receive age-appropriate teaching in relationships and sex education. Pupils gain a knowledge of difference and diversity within society. This prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. Pupils also benefit from cultural and enrichment opportunities, such as theatre trips, food technology lessons, which explore global cuisines, and sporting competitions with other similar schools.

Pupils access a broad careers programme that helps them explore and plan their next steps. Staff encourage pupils to be ambitious when considering their personal goals. Pupils speak positively about the activities and trips that they take part in. The use of the surrounding forest area builds pupils' confidence and enhances the curriculum. The school provides effective support to help pupils transition to further education or employment. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and how to raise any concerns. They are able to identify trusted adults they can approach if they have worries.

The proprietor ensures that the school continues to meet the independent school standards ('the standards') securely. For instance, statutory policies are in place and an accessibility plan fulfils the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Pupils benefit from well-kept outdoor space to play and take part in physical education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Assessment is not used consistently across subjects. At times, the checks made on pupils' learning do not identify whether pupils are fully secure with prior learning before they move on to new content. This means that assessment of pupils' learning over time is not always clear and staff cannot be sure of what

pupils know and can do. The school should work to ensure there is consistency in assessment so that staff can be assured of what progress pupils are making.

- The school has not fully addressed the significant absence of some pupils. This impacts on how well pupils learn and hinders their progress. The school should continue to review how they work with parents and other agencies to tackle pupils' poor attendance.

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

Unique reference number	148537
DfE registration number	381/6026
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10391804
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Timeout Children's Homes Ltd
Chair	Dominic Macauley
Headteacher	Dominique McDonagh
Annual fees (day pupils)	£64,380
Telephone number	01422 822549
Website	www.brearleyhall-school.com
Email address	dominique.mcdonagh@timeouthomes.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 to 28 April 2022

Information about this school

- Brearley Hall School is situated on a large, rural site between the market towns of Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge.
- The school is located at 1 Burnley Road, Luddenden Foot, Halifax HX2 6AG.
- Brearley Hall School is an independent special school for pupils aged 7 to 16 years old with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has capacity for 50 pupils with 33 on roll at present.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school is registered for pupils aged 7 to 16, at the time of this inspection no pupils under the age of 11 were being educated at the school.

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.

- 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 of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into English (including reading), mathematics, science and PSHE. The deep dive for each subject included a meeting with curriculum leaders and a review of subject documents and plans. The deep dive also involved lesson visits, meetings with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning and pupils' work in some other curriculum areas.
- 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 lead inspector met with the managing director of the proprietary board.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including key policies as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. They also looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- To check the school's compliance against the standards, inspectors completed a tour of each of the school premises. They also reviewed a sample of risk assessments and maintenance documentation.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys, including Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also spoke to parents via telephone and in person.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Suzette Garland-Grimes

Ofsted Inspector

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