

Inspection of The Brooksbank School

Victoria Road, Elland, West Yorkshire HX5 0QG

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Darren Atkinson. This school is part of the Together Learning 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), David Lord, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jan Wallis. There is also an executive headteacher, Dave Hewitt, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school transformed. Pupils feel safe and are proud to be part of this vibrant school. They are welcoming to all, positive and speak confidently about their learning. Older pupils say how much their school experience has improved. There is a collective identity built around the 'Core Values' of respect, empathy and determination. Pupils understand these and demonstrate them well. They show pride in their work and a positive approach to their learning. Routines are understood by staff and pupils alike. Pupils conduct themselves in a mature and responsible way.

Pupils know that an adult in the school will be able to help them if needed. They are supported in numerous ways to attend well and make the most of their time in school.

Pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 4. The school has worked effectively to improve its impact on pupils' learning. It has a wide range of opportunities for pupils to grow beyond the academic. A range of sporting activities are available, including darts at lunchtime and competitive rugby after school. Pupil ambassadors and students in the sixth form have a growing influence on life in school. Pupils participate in volunteering outside of school regularly, positively contributing to the wider community.

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

The school, with the help of the trust, has developed an ambitious curriculum. Pupils from Years 7 to 13 learn a broad and balanced curriculum. This helps them towards their next steps. Teachers have a keen focus on what pupils need to know and understand. The curriculum has clear endpoints for pupils to reach. Assessment is used well to check pupils' learning. Pupils develop their understanding of important ideas and vocabulary.

Reading is at the centre of the school's work. Pupils read often and widely, through 'iGen' sessions, the English curriculum and the school-wide reading programme, where they encounter a variety of high-quality texts. The school is working to support pupils who need help with reading. It provides targeted phonics teaching for some pupils. However, reading support beyond phonics is at an early stage of development. Furthermore, curriculum changes in a few other subjects are less advanced than in others. More time is needed for their impact on pupils' achievements to be seen.

There have been sustained improvements in both pupils' attendance and behaviour over the last two years. Pupils behave positively in lessons, contributing to the calm and purposeful atmosphere in the classroom. Staff strive to understand pupils well and to remove any barriers to success. The school uses a range of bespoke approaches, including working effectively with external agencies, to secure the help that pupils need.

The school has thoughtfully created spaces such as 'The Bridge' to support pupils' engagement with education. There are clear processes in place to identify pupils who may need additional help. However, there is too much variation in the support given by staff to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) while the curriculum is

being delivered. The school is working to develop its provision for pupils with SEND further, including through staff training.

The school has considered carefully the way in which it provides for pupils' wider development, particularly in terms of student leadership and character development. Pupils learn age-appropriate content in terms of relationships and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations when considering their future careers, and the school has strong links with a range of employers. They consider and engage with what former pupils have achieved through the school's 'Alumni Programme'. Students in the sixth form are integrated well into this. They receive high-quality support, particularly about the range of next steps available to them. They also support younger pupils to engage with their education positively, such as mentoring or help in lessons. Disadvantaged pupils receive targeted support to ensure that they widen their horizons by having equal access to all the opportunities.

Trust and senior leaders have relentlessly driven improvements since the school became part of the trust. Trustees and governors have a clear and precise understanding of the school and its priorities. They provide effective challenge and support. This helps to ensure the school continues to improve. Leaders work together to bring in ideas that aid the school's development. This contributes positively to pupils and staff being able to work and learn in this inclusive community. Staff say that the school cares about their well-being as well as that of the pupils. They speak positively of the development opportunities that they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not consistently make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum for some pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils with SEND are not able to engage fully with the ambitious curriculum. The school and trust should ensure that teachers are supported to make adaptations for the pupils with SEND.
- In some subjects, including reading, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of implementation than it is in others. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn as well as they could do. The school should ensure that the curriculum is embedded well across all subjects so that pupils' learning is deepened.

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	149531
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10383505
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1494
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	153
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jan Wallis
CEO of the trust	David Lord
Headteacher	Darren Atkinson
Website	www.thebrooksbankschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Together Learning Trust.
- The Brooksbank School converted to become an academy in November 2022. When its predecessor school, The Brooksbank School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The school uses five alternative provisions for pupils, one of which is registered and the other four of which are unregistered.
- 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.

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 of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, executive headteacher, the CEO of the trust and other senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with trustees and governors, including the co-vice-chair of the trust, and the co-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, science and design and technology. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors visited form time and reviewed the extra-curricular activities with leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils at various points in the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding. 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 took account of responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Dan Whieldon	Ofsted Inspector
Christina Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Senior	Ofsted Inspector
Harkireet Sohel	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025