

6 March 2018

Mrs Sara Ainsworth  
Headteacher  
Brookfields School  
Moorfield Road  
Widnes  
Cheshire  
WA8 3JA

Dear Mrs Ainsworth

### **Short inspection of Brookfields School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2018 with Martin Hanbury, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in March 2013.

### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your dedication and passion for what you do permeates the school. Together with governors, you have created a culture where teamwork is the key to success. You and your highly skilled, enthusiastic staff embody your school motto, 'enjoy, believe and achieve together'.

Governors and staff share your high expectations and your drive for continued improvement. Together, you have successfully addressed the area for improvement identified at the last inspection. Staff work closely with the occupational therapist and have the expertise, knowledge and skills to meet the very specific sensory needs of the pupils in your care. You have ensured that you have the capacity to share your knowledge exceptionally well across the local authority and surrounding areas. You effectively support a number of staff in a range of mainstream settings, to enable them to help pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

The high-quality teaching seen at the last inspection has continued. You have established a strong culture of professional dialogue, support and challenge among your staff. They appreciate the professional development that they receive, and the many opportunities that they have to share skills and knowledge with each other, and with colleagues in other schools. Potential is spotted and nurtured. Staff feel highly valued and know that their well-being is important to you. The exceptionally

strong relationships within the school contribute effectively to the strong progress that pupils make.

You place the development of the whole child at the centre of everything that you do. The school is a learning community that provides excellent education and care for its pupils. Skilfully designed activities meet the needs and interests of the pupils. As a result, pupils are calm, focused and happily engaged in their learning. The environment is carefully designed to support the needs of pupils. Staff know and understand extremely well the pupils in their care. As a result, they are able to manage pupils' behaviour in a well-judged and timely manner.

Staff use a range of assessment information, gathered from a number of sources, to accurately identify the next steps in pupils' academic, and social and emotional learning. Consequently, pupils are given the bespoke help that they need. This has a direct impact on the extremely strong progress that they make. You have good plans in place to produce a more holistic assessment format that combines information from all the professionals that work with each pupil and the school's information on pupils' academic, emotional and social development.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the individual care, guidance and support that they receive from you and your staff. They speak very highly of the time that you give to build relationships with the whole family. They appreciate all the opportunities that you provide for them and their children. For example, workshops, sleep clinics, swimming sessions, drama, art and cookery clubs, all enhance the learning opportunities and experiences for pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are followed closely. Documentation relating to safeguarding and the welfare of pupils is kept meticulously. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained to support the pupils in their care. Appropriate training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and are vigilant about potential risks. Staff engage closely with parents, carers and appropriate authorities to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders follow up any absences rigorously and provide excellent support to families so that pupils can attend school regularly.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have established highly effective partnerships with medical and educational professionals. Your dedicated staff use their knowledge and understanding of the many aspects, and strategies, related to the teaching of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. You very effectively support colleagues in other settings to meet the needs of their pupils. You also work with a number of agencies to enhance the provision and support that they provide to ensure that they are effectively meeting the needs of pupils and their families. As a result of the work

that you do, you and your staff are highly regarded by the local authority and other colleagues.

- You and the governors have successfully tackled the area for improvement from the last inspection in developing a sensory team to meet pupils' occupational therapy needs. This team contributes to the support that you offer to other colleagues, and pupils, in other settings. All staff receive appropriate training to ensure that they have an understanding of sensory processing which has been identified as one of the key barriers for learning for your pupils. The occupational therapist works alongside individual staff to ensure that they have the skills that they need to deliver bespoke programmes to meet the needs of individual pupils. This has a positive impact on the strong progress that pupils make.
- The careful consideration leaders have given to the environment, both inside and out, enhances opportunities for pupils to develop their social and emotional skills effectively. A pupil who spoke to the inspector said: 'I like the nurture room, it's the best place to be when you are cross.' The high-quality provision provided by other professionals, for example in music, art and 'rebound' therapy, plays a highly significant part in pupils' progress. Workshops and clinics for parents give them the skills and understanding that they need to support their children.
- You and your senior leaders frequently monitor, and analyse, information to ensure that you have a detailed understanding of the progress made by each pupil. Teachers use this information exceptionally well. Learning activities are individually designed to meet the specific needs of pupils. Staff at all levels are very knowledgeable about pupils' individual needs. This contributes to the extremely strong progress pupils make from their individual starting points.
- You work very closely with other early years providers which allows you to accurately identify key barriers to learning before children start school. Very effective transition arrangements allow staff to establish strong relationships with parents and carers. The work that you do with parents in the early years, and across the whole school, is exemplary. Staff establish and maintain close family links, for example through workshops, drop in sessions, phone calls, family activities and a range of after-school clubs. This very successful work with families builds parents' confidence to support their children. Evidence seen during the inspection shows that the youngest children make exceptionally strong progress from their starting points.
- The strong relationship between parents and staff ensures that you know your families extremely well and understand some of the challenges that they may face on a daily basis. As a result, you are able to provide the support that they need to ensure that their children attend school regularly. You work closely with a wide range of other professionals and agencies to ensure that the family receives the help that they need. You have a number of incentives that are very popular with pupils, who wear their attendance stickers with pride. The fact that pupils feel safe, happy and secure in school contributes greatly to their improving attendance. Where attendance remains a barrier to pupils' learning you are extremely vigilant and ensure that pupils are receiving the care and support that they need.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they produce and effectively use, an assessment tool which captures assessment information from other professionals who work with pupils along with the school's own information to provide a holistic picture of each pupil's progress in academic, emotional and social development.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Halton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the day inspectors met with you, other members of the leadership team and staff. I also met with the chair of the governing body and five other governors. I met with a representative of the local authority and your school improvement partner. Inspectors conducted a learning walk with you and your deputy headteacher and we visited classrooms, where we had the opportunity to speak with pupils and look at their work. Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils and spoke with a number of parents. I also took account of the 11 free-text comments and the 15 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' assessment information, the school's self-evaluation document and your school improvement plan. Inspectors also scrutinised the single central record, and other documents relating to safeguarding and child-protection procedures and practices.