

# Inspection of a good school: Pebble Brook School

Churchill Avenue, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 8LZ

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Inspection dates: 13 to 14 March 2024

## Outcome

Pebble Brook School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Pebble Brook School thrive. They have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and work hard to achieve their very best. From the moment they start at the school, the focus is on preparing for a successful future. Pupils are provided with rich experiences which inspire them. They are motivated to work hard to achieve their aspirations. Parents particularly value the support on offer with one explaining to inspectors how well their child is being supported to 'reach their full potential at this school'.

There is a distinctly inclusive and nurturing ethos throughout the school. Staff know pupils very well. This is evident in the strong relationships between staff and pupils. This carries through to equally respectful and kind interactions between pupils.

Pupils are well supported to grow their confidence. They appreciate the guidance they receive to manage their own emotional wellbeing. They learn strategies to self-regulate. As a result, a consistently calm and purposeful atmosphere permeates the school.

Pupils feel safe and secure here. They are taught to understand that everyone is different. They are accepted and able to be themselves. Pupils in the sixth form are kind and helpful. They are strong role models for the younger pupils to look up to.

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

All staff share a firm commitment to ensuring pupils are ready to take their next steps into education or employment. This starts from Year 7 and remains a consistent focus throughout the school. Planning for next steps is started early, and parents are encouraged to be involved. Pupils achieve a range of relevant qualifications. This supports them to make a successful transition onto a college course or a supported internship.

Alongside a range of curriculum subjects, pupils work on targets linked to their education, health and care (EHC) plans. In addition, pupils are taught the schools' unique 'social interaction and social resilience' curriculum. The impact of this learning is seen in pupil's

confident interactions and positive attitudes. Staff work closely with therapists to identify and provide for pupils' communication or sensory needs. This ensures pupils are equipped with all they need to access the whole curriculum.

Pupils develop their literacy and maths skills through daily lessons. Those who need targeted help to improve their reading receive precise support. This focus continues into sixth form. This is because the school want every pupil to be as independent as possible. In key stage 4, pupils also study vocational aspects such as construction or horticulture. Older pupils learn to apply the skills they have learned through the curriculum. They learn how to manage their personal finances or organise their own correspondence.

The well-planned curriculum enriches pupils' lives by providing new experiences. All pupils have the opportunity to grow their independence through attending a series of residential trips. They learn about different faiths and cultures through visits to the local church. Time and care is provided to pupils when needed, to support religious observance. Trips to the theatre and visiting musicians also serve to broaden pupils' cultural knowledge and understanding.

Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school. Staff listen to their opinions and help them to achieve their aspirations. Pupils enjoy being part of the school council. The school prepares pupils well to take on responsibility. They have a keen appetite to contribute their ideas and opinions and be more actively involved in decision making in school life. The school recognises this as a further area for development, building on the strong personal development work in place.

Work experience is intricately woven into the wider curriculum offer. This ensures that pupils develop the necessary skills to become worthy employees of the future. This includes the opportunity to work in the school's own café business. This provides strong motivation for many pupils to work hard on their qualifications. The fact that the school now employs some ex-pupils indicates the impact of this transformative work.

As well as academic achievement, staff care about pupil's holistic development. This includes monitoring information about their attendance, wellbeing, and behaviour. While clear records are kept, the way they are organised does not enable leaders to easily analyse and monitor patterns or trends. This means important information could be missed.

Governors are closely involved in the school community. With leaders, they have implemented a clear strategy to support staff wellbeing including providing regular confidential 'space for you' talk sessions. Staff work as a cohesive team, supporting one another to make a difference to pupils' lives.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders use a variety of systems to record information. While these are well understood they are not streamlined, meaning trends or important details about pupils are not always easily identified. Leaders need to embed a clear, cohesive process to support sharper analysis and oversight of pupils' wellbeing, attendance and behaviour.
- Currently, pupils do not always have opportunities to contribute their views regarding developments in the school. This means pupils do not always feel actively involved in the decisions made about aspects of their education. The school should continue to further develop and implement opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas to the life of the school.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110576
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296176
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	171
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	47
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kirsty Gilroy
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Miller
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.pebblebrookschool.org.uk">www.pebblebrookschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>	18 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 19 years who have specific learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, life skills and personal, social and health education. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

## **Inspection team**

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jason Philipsz

Ofsted Inspector

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