



**HEAD KID**

The image features the text "HEAD KID" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a thick black rectangular border with rounded corners. A circular icon containing a clockwise arrow is positioned above the letter "A". On the left side of the border, a line extends upwards and then curves to the left, ending in an upward-pointing arrowhead. On the right side, a line extends downwards and then curves to the right, ending in a downward-pointing arrowhead.

# CHAPTER 1





**B**racket Wood School had never, since it was opened all the way back in 1983, received an OFFHEAD ranking of Outstanding. Nor had it received one of Good. There was a very brief golden period, in the early 90s, when it received one of Satisfactory. But then that was found to have been a mistake – the inspector had ticked the wrong box, for which he himself got marked down to Not As Good As We Thought – and it went back

to its usual ranking: Inadequate.

It was, in fact, a running joke in the OFFHEAD offices – not a place where you'd have thought there'd be much joking, but at least on the subject of Bracket Wood you'd be wrong – that one day they might have to create a new ranking for this particular school: Rubbish.

This was a problem for Bracket Wood because OFFHEAD, as I'm sure you all know, is a government organisation which checks that schools *aren't* rubbish. Parents, as you also might know, pay a lot of attention to their reports. Some parents, in fact, spend far too much of their time reading OFFHEAD reports, and discussing them with their friends who are also parents, and worrying all the time about which school to send their children to, based on OFFHEAD reports. Some parents worry about this so much they ruin their child's childhood. But that's another story.

*This* story begins with the staff and governors and parents and even some of the pupils at Bracket Wood in something of a panic. Because OFFHEAD was coming. In a month's time. Which was even more worrying than usual. For two reasons:

1. Bracket Wood Council, Education Department, had announced, on hearing that OFFHEAD was coming again, that if the school got another Inadequate rating it might be time to think about closing the place down, and . . .
2. Ryan Ward.