

Inspection of Beechwood School

Long Readings Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL2 1QE

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak positively about their experience at Beechwood School and their three central values, what they call 'artefacts' of kindness, respect and excellence.

Pupils feel safe in this school. While bullying does sometimes happen, staff respond quickly to resolve any issues. Pupils feel supported by the pastoral care they receive and are confident there are staff they can talk to if they have concerns.

Behaviour around the school site is generally calm and respectful. Pupils are welcoming and polite to staff and visitors. They show respect in their dealings with one another. There are some pupils who find it harder to settle in lessons, though these are in the minority, and mostly dealt with quickly. There is similarly a small minority of pupils who do not consistently follow the school's expectations for behaviour around the school. There are also too many pupils persistently absent from school.

Pupils access an increasingly ambitious curriculum, which in many subjects is well planned. However, there is still inconsistency in how well teaching meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils are not consistently helped to learn well and remember more. As a result, not enough pupils make the progress that they could through the planned curriculum.

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

Leaders have developed increasingly well-considered plans for each subject area. Many subject leaders have identified the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to develop over time. In the sixth form, this helps students to build their knowledge over time. In some key stage 3 and key stage 4 subjects, carefully sequenced activities help pupils to learn and remember more over time. However, this curricular thinking is not embedded across the whole curriculum.

Increasingly, activities in lessons are adapted to meet the needs of pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide effective training to support teachers to identify the needs of pupils and ensure that these are met. When this works well, teachers make effective activity choices that enable pupils to learn and progress. However, this is not consistent across the school, and as a result, this hinders pupils' learning in some subjects.

Leaders plan regular opportunities for pupils to check how much they have remembered of their learning. This is embedded in some subject areas, but is not yet consistent across them all. Published examination results show improvement, particularly in English, mathematics and science. However, performance in some other subjects have yet to show this improvement.

In the past, too few pupils have studied a modern foreign language, but leaders have made strides to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, now do. More pupils are now choosing to study a language at GCSE, and these numbers continue to grow. In the sixth form, leaders have also established an increasing range of courses to provide students with the opportunities to learn to a higher level, allowing more pupils to reach their preferred destinations beyond school.

In lessons, pupils listen to their teachers and mostly show positive engagement in their learning. However, in some lessons, some pupils are not always as focused, which can lead to some disruption to learning. While behaviour in lessons and around the site is mostly managed well, there are still some pupils who do not meet the school's expectations for conduct. Suspensions are too high, and not reducing quickly enough.

The personal development curriculum is a strength of the school. Through this, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They have a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills, including becoming prefects in Year 11, 'leaders' in the sixth form, and members of the school council. Pupils talk with pride about their work to support in the local community, for example in raising money to support the local foodbank. Pupils are positive about the careers programme, where they are informed about a wide range of career options.

Leaders have made positive changes that improve provision for pupils. They measure carefully the impact of the steps they are taking to improve the overall quality of the curriculum so that pupils in key stages 3 and 4 have the same quality as students in the sixth form. However, leaders do not routinely evaluate how effective their actions are across all areas of the school. As well as suspensions, levels of persistent absence are too high. While leaders acknowledge these as issues, their actions are not having the impact required. Governors routinely consider the areas that the school needs to develop further but do not always offer sufficient challenge for leaders in terms of the impact their actions are having.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff have the relevant training to help them identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know their pupils well and they report their concerns swiftly. Governors ensure that leaders take the right steps to check that adults are safe to work in the school.

Staff liaise effectively with external agencies and ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need. They are unafraid to challenge where this needs to be better. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Rates of persistent absence remain too high. As a result, too many pupils are missing out on their education. Leaders need to take rapid actions to ensure that these pupils attend school more regularly.
- While leaders have worked to develop a planned and sequenced curriculum across subjects, the activity choices teachers make do not consistently support pupils in knowing more and remembering more over time. Leaders need to ensure that activity choices in lessons consistently support the planned curriculum in order to lead to more effective outcomes for all pupils.
- Leaders do not consistently evaluate the effect of the steps they are taking to improve the school. As a result, they cannot pinpoint which actions are having the impact they need them to or where their approach needs to change. Leaders need to consistently measure the effect of the actions they take to ensure that they have the impact they intend.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143327
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10257075
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	871
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	124
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jonathan McNaughton Reekie
Headteacher	Anita Spires
Website	www.beechwood.slough.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been many changes to staffing and leadership, including the headteacher, since the last inspection in 2019.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the local governing body and trustees, including the chair of governors, as well as the chair of trustees.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, mathematics, history, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held meetings with safeguarding leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the single central record and sampled safeguarding records.
- The inspection team also met with leaders in the sixth form, visited sixth-form lessons and spoke with groups of sixth-form students.
- The inspection team also took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes. The team also spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of pupil, parent and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Robb-Webb	Ofsted Inspector
John Burridge	Ofsted Inspector
David Cousins	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 2023