

# Brimsham Green School

Broad Lane, Yate, Bristol BS37 7LB

## Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Require improvement</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Require improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress, while improving in key stage 3, is too inconsistent in key stage 4.
- Not all teaching enables the most able pupils to think more deeply about their learning and to be consistently challenged, and therefore these pupils do not progress as well as they should.
- Teaching in key stage 3 and 4 is not yet good as pupils do not make enough progress in some subjects.
- The quality of teaching and student outcomes is too variable across the 16 to 19 study programmes. Not enough students achieve their potential.
- The new arrangements for assessing pupils' progress do not provide clear enough information for parents or pupils.
- Effective communication and consultation with parents have yet to be fully established.
- Governors do not focus on pupils' learning sufficiently when they check the quality of teaching to pinpoint the elements that could be improved.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governing body have created a strong vision and an inclusive ethos. Leaders are beginning to make improvements in securing more consistently good teaching.
- Pupils feel safe because staff show great care. Leaders are unrelenting and effective advocates for pupils, especially when working with other agencies.
- Homework develops learning skills well, including the use of online teacher support.
- Additional funding for pupils who need to catch up in Year 7, including those who are disadvantaged, is targeted effectively on pupils' individual needs. These pupils improve their reading and learning skills, grow in confidence and have raised aspirations.
- The resource base for pupils with a physical disability and/or a complex health or medical need successfully integrates pupils into the whole school learning community.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and raise pupils' outcomes by:
  - ensuring that teachers have the skills necessary to adapt what is taught so that pupils are suitably challenged
  - improving feedback so that pupils can confidently articulate what they need to do to improve their learning further
  - ensuring that assessment informs teachers' planning and enables pupils to understand how well they are progressing
  - ensuring that leaders' monitoring of teaching has sufficient focus on the impact it has on pupils' progress.
- Improve the teaching and progress of the most able pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, and those in the sixth form, by:
  - planning learning so that it is suitably challenging and deepens pupils' understanding
  - engaging pupils more fully in their learning.
- Improve communication so that parents:
  - understand how well their child is progressing
  - are consulted on school policies and are well informed about how such policies work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has shown determination to appoint the right leaders to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further. She has successfully established senior and middle leadership teams who are promoting a clear culture of improvement. Teachers show determination to be part of the headteacher's vision for Brimsham Green School that 'nurtures the limitless potential of all learners, inspiring students and staff to excel'.
- Inconsistencies in teaching have been reduced as a result of a well-regarded coaching structure which leaders have introduced. Individual training programmes for teachers are linked to their appraisal targets and this enables teachers to identify how well their skills have improved. However, when leaders monitor the quality of teaching they do not focus enough on the impact that it has on pupils' learning to determine its effectiveness.
- Subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. They understand the important role they must play to improve teaching and are challenging areas that need to be improved. Performance management is used effectively to hold staff to account for their performance.
- Leaders have precisely targeted the additional government funding for the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up. Pupils who have benefited from the catch-up funding are now more confident learners because their reading skills have improved. Leaders have a clear strategy for boosting learning for disadvantaged pupils by providing focused teaching. This is improving pupils' confidence and they are making better progress, particularly in their literacy skills.
- There is effective leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils make at least expected progress given their starting points and those who are in the resource base are successfully integrated into the school community.
- Leaders understand that the most able pupils do not make enough progress; they have not yet had sufficient impact on improving teaching and raising outcomes for this group of pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and nurtures pupils' wider personal development well. The school offers an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and a significant proportion of pupils take part.

### Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the last inspection.
- The governing body is led successfully and with determination and supports and challenges school leaders. Governors understand the quality of outcomes and leadership well. While they have a better understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, it is not yet of a consistently good standard across the school.
- The governing body has taken the lead in strengthening the accountability in the Cotswold Edge sixth form partnership. While it is too early to see an improvement in outcomes, leaders in the sixth form are beginning to improve teaching.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel safe in the school and are taught about a range of potential risks, for example when using social media.
- The record-keeping to keep pupils safe meets the statutory requirements, is up to date and is thoroughly administered. School leaders comply with the requirements of safer recruitment. Governors monitor the school's safeguarding practice effectively.
- Child protection issues are accurately recorded, which enables leaders to appropriately consult and involve other agencies, including informing the police when necessary.
- The staff are trained well to recognise the signs that pupils may be susceptible to radicalisation or extremism, and to prevent this happening, and are regularly updated on safeguarding. Teachers explained clearly the vigilance they needed to show and what responsibilities they have when they suspect that pupils are at risk of harm.
- Senior leaders work successfully with other agencies to protect children. They advocate relentlessly for their children when agencies do not respond in the best interests of the child.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- While teaching and learning are improving, the inconsistencies within, and between, subjects have not yet been overcome. A number of parents and pupils highlighted this as a concern to the inspection team.
- Teaching is less effective when learning is not adapted to make sure that all pupils can engage in their learning and progress well. At times, learning is insufficiently challenging for the most able pupils and not accessible for the least able or for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. On occasions, this also applies to pupils in the resource unit. Although these pupils are willing to learn, they sometimes sit quietly waiting and do not make enough progress.
- Teaching is effective when relationships are strong, subject knowledge is good and teachers have an accurate understanding of how to make activities lively and interesting. Pupils make good progress when they are actively involved in their learning, teachers ask challenging questions and tasks are modified to support pupils' individual needs.
- Homework is set regularly and supports pupils' learning well. Pupils frequently use the useful, readily available teacher support, including online guidance. This develops strong pupil learning habits and better resilience as learners.
- Parents and pupils both said that the current arrangements for reporting pupils' progress are confusing. Pupils cannot explain how good their progress is because there are different systems in use across subjects. Parents are unsure what the information that they receive tells them about the progress of their child.
- Although pupils receive frequent feedback, it sometimes lacks the information needed to support their progress. Pupils report that they would like more advice about the next learning step they need to take in a particular subject. This is hindering their progress.
- Most pupils who are disadvantaged make good progress, particularly in key stage 3. A clear focus on developing pupils' literacy skills helps them to improve their confidence. Nevertheless, not enough is expected of the most able disadvantaged pupils.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils with profound mobility and health problems who attend the unit are fully integrated into the school community. Pupils made sure that those with mobility difficulties were escorted to the correct place when a fire alarm was sounded.
- Attendance has improved to broadly the national average and persistent absence is reducing. These improvements also apply to disadvantaged pupils. However, the high absence rate for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is often due to the medical conditions of pupils in the resource unit.
- A few parents expressed a concern about bullying. Bullying and the use of derogatory language are dealt with promptly and successfully. Incidents of bullying are accurately identified and effective actions taken to de-escalate and change pupils' behaviour. School leaders listen carefully to pupils but do not accept intolerant behaviour. Pupils expressed a view that bullying is rare and were very confident that it is satisfactorily resolved.
- Pupils who are in the care of the local authority feel supported by staff in the school. The additional funds are carefully used to provide both academic mentoring and personal support. Pupils described how their aspirations are raised. They feel more confident about moving on to a course, even if this means moving to another college after key stage 4. Pupils feel involved in the writing of personal education plans and know how targets to improve their progress are linked to the additional funding.
- Moral, social and cultural development are strong in the school. Sixth form students regularly engage with the local community by, for example, providing tea for older people and organising a Christmas party. Sixth form students also undertake in-class support, specifically for pupils who are disadvantaged. Opportunities for pupils to expand their understanding of other cultures are frequent, such as the recent trip to Uganda and drama events. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss and debate the views and beliefs of a range of religions, but opportunities to broaden their wider spiritual development are less prominent.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to learn about British values. Pupils used a democratic model, which included presenting a case to be elected house captains for the new house system.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils demonstrate good behaviour around the school. They are courteous and polite and know that the school is a caring community. They do not tolerate behaviour which does not conform to school expectations.
- A few parents expressed a concern about poor behaviour in some classes. When teaching is challenging and pupils are encouraged to think deeply, they behave well and concentrate hard. Occasionally, when teaching is not engaging, some pupils' behaviour does not support good learning.
- School leaders have effectively reduced exclusions. Leaders are quick to identify any behaviour that triggers an early concern and they act promptly to prevent incidents escalating. Pupils feel that the restorative justice processes used to improve behaviour are effective because staff listen to them and work with them to find a solution.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Require improvement

- Not enough pupils make strong progress in each key stage. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Variation in performance between some subjects results in some underachievement, especially for the most able pupils.
- Pupils reach national average standards but their outcomes should be better. Examination results and pupils' work show that progress varies from subject to subject. For example, mathematics is a strongly performing department, compared to humanities where pupils' performance is less successful.
- Pupils' writing in Year 7 shows a marked improvement from previous years. A key reason for this is that pupils bring a piece of writing from the end of Year 6 and teachers use this as a starting point on which to build. This is helping to keep expectations high for new pupils.
- Progress for disadvantaged pupils, especially in Years 7 and 8, is improving. Their progress is in line with that of other pupils.
- The information and guidance provided for pupils are strong and result in a better than average proportion of pupils going on to employment or further learning. The independence of this advice enables pupils to move on to the best course that matches their aspirations, even when this may not be the school's sixth form.
- In the sixth form, many students do not reach their target levels. There is variation in subject performance which has not yet been entirely remedied. At AS level, there has been an improvement from 2015 to 2016. Outcomes in the different subject areas remain inconsistent and this is clearly reflected in students' work.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Require improvement

- The requirements of the post-16 study programmes are met and the Cotswold Edge partnership provides a broad choice for students, which mainly involves academic courses. The proportion of students who stay on their courses is in line with a national average.
- The quality of teaching and students' outcomes are too variable. When learning is best, strong subject knowledge leads to well-structured learning but this is not typically the case. Results in GCSE re-takes in mathematics and English show that most students improve their grades.
- The governors' initiative to strengthen accountability is bringing about a more ambitious vision for the sixth form and is starting to challenge underperformance throughout the partnership. Senior leaders have taken a strong stance, including no longer offering underperforming subjects.
- The students who are motivated and have developed positive attitudes to their learning achieve well. Those who are yet to develop these qualities do not make good progress because they are not challenged consistently by all teachers to develop their thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Personal development and welfare are strong. Students appreciate how well they are supported and know there is an expectation of them to contribute to the school community, which they rise to admirably.
- Students benefit from a high standard of independent careers advice and guidance. A high proportion move on to employment or higher education.

## School details

Unique reference number	109319
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10019946

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	989
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janice Wragg
Headteacher	Kim Garland
Telephone number	01454 868 888
Website	<a href="http://www.brimsham.com">http://www.brimsham.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@brimsham.com">admin@brimsham.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2014

## Information about this school

- Brimsham Green School is larger than the average-sized secondary school and serves the community of Yate and beyond.
- The school has a resource base for up to 14 pupils with physical disabilities and/or a complex health or medical need.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Since the previous inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed and the governing body has been reconstituted.

- A small number of pupils attend a college course for a part-day or the Pathways Learning Centre as dual-registered pupils.
- The school provides sixth form provision as part of a three-school partnership known as Cotswold Edge.
- The school is supported by a national leader of education. It works in partnership with Clevedon School.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. There are some policies and performance data that are being updated.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors scrutinised the previous inspection report, past and present pupils' performance information, school leaders' self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- The inspection team held discussions with groups of pupils, governors, senior and middle leaders, teachers, a representative of the local authority and a national leader of education.
- The team examined a range of documentation concerning safeguarding and a record of incidents.
- The inspection team undertook an extensive number of visits to lessons to observe teaching and learning, most of which were conducted jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors considered the quality of education provided by the unit attached to the school.
- Inspection team members listened to pupils from different year groups read. The team scrutinised a wide variety of pupil work.
- The inspection team took into account the views of 123 parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire, and 117 written comments. They considered responses to the pupil and staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Mark Jenner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Ofsted Inspector
Shelagh Pritchard	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Colledge	Ofsted Inspector

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