

# Bexleyheath Academy

Woolwich Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7DA

## Inspection dates

28–29 November 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to improve the school.
- Leaders have not taken essential actions to make improvements. Standards have fallen for several years.
- Systems developed by the new leadership team to improve the quality of education in the school are recent and have not yet had an impact. Staff do not use the school's policies consistently. Teachers do not use assessment information to inform their planning. Pupils make weak progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum does not meet pupils' needs. Programmes of study in key stage 3 do not prepare pupils well enough for key stage 4.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are not given the support they need to help them learn.
- Pupils' behaviour is poor, and teachers' expectations are too low. Pupils' poor behaviour disrupts learning and hinders progress.
- Different groups of pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make progress that is significantly below national averages.
- Governors are not thorough enough in how they hold leaders to account. They have not ensured that additional funding for special educational needs and the pupil premium are used effectively.
- Leaders do not support staff well enough. Staff morale is low. Pupils' learning is disrupted by a high turnover of staff.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very limited. Leaders do not ensure that pupils develop an awareness of the opportunities and challenges they face outside school.

### The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form is good. Teaching in the sixth form is strong. Students make good progress. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future employment.
- Leaders' work to improve attendance and reduce fixed-term exclusions is having a positive impact. Attendance is improving and the number of fixed-term exclusions decreased between 2017 and 2018.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Rapidly improve outcomes by:
  - ensuring that assessment information is used to plan and meet pupils' needs, particularly the most able and those with SEND
  - allocating the pupil premium funding effectively
  - ensuring that pupils who speak English as an additional language are given the support they need to access the curriculum and make progress.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
  - ensuring that all staff understand and follow the systems for managing behaviour
  - raising expectations of pupils and ensuring that staff address poor behaviour consistently.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the curriculum is appropriate and meets the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring that staff understand and follow the systems to improve the quality of education in the school
  - providing staff with the right levels of support and training they need to uphold the school's policies
  - ensuring that governors analyse information, especially about the pupil premium funding, in a timely manner so that they can hold leaders to account for the performance of all groups of pupils more effectively.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leadership and management is inadequate because leaders have not been able to create or sustain an environment where pupils receive an acceptable standard of education. Leaders have not responded to areas needing improvement with necessary urgency. The school has deteriorated over several years.
- In 2017 and 2018, pupils' achievement was significantly below that of their peers with similar starting points nationally. Current pupils are also making slow progress. This is because of ineffective teaching, teachers' low expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and pupils' poor behaviour that frequently interrupts learning.
- Significant instability at senior leadership level has unsettled the school community. This unsatisfactory situation has existed too long. An environment has evolved where staff feel unsupported and too often work in isolation. Consequently, the turnover of staff is far too high to provide pupils with the consistency they need. During the inspection, a number of pupils told inspectors that they did not know the names of their teachers.
- The school's professional development programme has not been effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders do not ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, know the pupils or systems well enough for their teaching to be effective.
- The relatively new leadership team has identified substantial weaknesses in the way the school operates. Leaders have introduced new systems, but these are not working effectively. Leaders' expectations are not high enough. They do not ensure that staff adhere to the school's policies. Too often, staff accept low standards and do not address pupils' poor behaviour and pupils' frequent use of inappropriate language.
- The curriculum is poorly constructed and hinders pupils from making progress. The key stage 3 curriculum does not prepare pupils well for key stage 4. For example, combined humanities lessons in Year 9 provides an inadequate foundation for GCSE geography and history.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is ineffective. Insufficient time is given to teaching pupils about respecting others. Leaders have removed discrete citizenship lessons from the curriculum. The impact of citizenship across the curriculum needs to be reviewed. A culture has developed where pupils do not respect staff and do not follow their instructions.
- Governors do not evaluate the use of the pupil premium funding effectively. They do not routinely check how the funding is being spent or how well it is being used. This additional funding has not been spent productively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make significantly slower progress than their peers make from the same starting points.
- Leaders have recognised that fixed-term exclusions have been excessively high for several years. Leaders have responded by introducing a new approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This includes evening and weekend detentions. The number of fixed-

term exclusions has reduced significantly in 2018.

- Leaders should not appoint newly qualified teachers to the school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is ineffective. The school has been part of the Academies Enterprise Trust for the past seven years. During this time, standards have deteriorated and turbulence at senior leadership level has led to the school providing an inadequate education.
- The trust has increased support to the school over the past 12 months, including the deployment of a new executive principal at the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year. There is also a newly constituted governance board in place, which includes principals from other schools in the trust.
- Governors do not understand the school's current situation well enough. They do not have a clear strategy to support leaders to move the school forward.
- Those responsible for governance do not hold leaders to account with enough thoroughness. They do not scrutinise pupil achievement information effectively. Governors do not ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent appropriately. They do not know how it was spent last year, or how it is to be spent this year. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils was significantly below that of their peers last year, and the school's own assessment information indicates a similar picture for the current Year 11.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Arrangements for recruiting new staff are appropriate. Leaders have received relevant training and follow clear procedures when recruiting new staff. Leaders keep up-to-date and accurate records of those currently employed in the school.
- The school's work in identifying and meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils is secure. Leaders maintain up-to-date and accurate safeguarding records. Staff know how to refer any safeguarding concerns and do so in a timely manner.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training. A small number of support staff who had not received up-to-date training completed the training during the inspection.
- The school works well with the local authority and other agencies. Early help for pupils is quickly and effectively put in place.
- Although there is a culture of safeguarding in the school, inspectors observed pupils behaving in an openly defiant way. Pupils are concerned about the negative impact of the behaviour of some of their peers on learning and how this leads to an unsettled feeling around the school. Pupils know who to go to if they are concerned for themselves or others and this reassures them.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Inadequate**

- Teachers do not use assessment information to inform their planning. Typically, teachers are unclear about what pupils need to help them learn. Pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language are not provided with the support they need. Consequently, they struggle in lessons and do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils are unsure about what they are expected to achieve over time. This is because teachers do not set them meaningful targets.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are too low. Pupils are typically given the same work to do, regardless of their ability. The most able are given work that is too easy for them. For example, in key stage 4 mathematics, pupils are given activities typically associated with the primary school curriculum.
- Pupils do not take pride in their work. Pupils' work in exercise books and folders is often poorly presented and unfinished. This goes unchallenged by teachers who typically accept low standards. It is common for pupils to work on sheets of paper that are not retained for future use.
- Some teachers have poor subject knowledge and provide inaccurate descriptions and explanations. In some cases, pupils' misconceptions have become entrenched because their teacher has praised them when they have given a wrong answer.
- The curriculum lacks coherence. Typically, lessons do not fit into a clear sequence of learning. Lessons jump between topics that bear no relation to each other. As a result, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to build on their prior learning and they are poorly prepared for key stage 4.
- Teachers are unclear about what they want to achieve in lessons. Frequently, pupils are asked to complete work that does not match the aim of the lesson.
- Teachers do not check pupils' understanding or explain what they should do to make better progress. The quality of teachers' questioning is typically poor, so pupils do not have the opportunity to develop their thinking.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not effectively supported across the curriculum. Teachers' expectations of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are very low. Pupils frequently spell commonly used words incorrectly and this is not picked up or corrected by teachers.
- Expectations in mathematics are too low and pupils do not acquire mathematical knowledge appropriate to their age. Pupils are not required to think and reason mathematically.
- In some lessons, teachers use good subject knowledge and effective questioning to check that pupils understand what they are doing, and to move them on in their learning. This is strongest in English, design technology and drama.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Inadequate**

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders do not allocate sufficient time to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders recently took the decision to replace citizenship and personal, social and health education lessons with additional English and mathematics.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are not given the attention they require. Tutor periods are now used to develop pupils' personal, health and social education. However, the sessions are unstructured and ineffective. Pupils do not receive sufficient advice and guidance about the issues they may face outside school, such as the dangers of drug misuse.
- Pupils do not widely use the range of extra-curricular activities on offer at the school.
- A significant minority of pupils, parents, carers and staff who responded to the Ofsted online surveys, and those who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, said that bullying is an issue in the school. This is also shown in the school's own records and includes racist and homophobic bullying. This has a negative impact on how pupils feel. Moreover, some parents do not feel that the school deals with their concerns about pupils' behaviour effectively.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Persistent absence has been high for several years and remains high. Punctuality to school and to lessons is poor. Pupils wander aimlessly around corridors and frequently arrive late to lessons. Teachers do not challenge lateness.
- Behaviour in most lessons is poor. Pupils' poor conduct interrupts learning and hinders progress. Pupils do not show appropriate respect towards each other or staff. They shout out and are openly defiant. Pupils are frequently off-task and complete very little work. Work in books is poorly presented and often unfinished.
- Use of inappropriate language is common. Pupils use unpleasant language in front of staff and this is not challenged. Pupils used unpleasant language in the presence of inspectors.
- Pupils' boisterous behaviour around the school is common. Staff do not address this. Staff do not adhere to the school policies for managing pupils' behaviour. Expectations are too low, and staff accept poor behaviour.
- Pupils use mobile telephones while in lessons and around the school. This contravenes school policy but is not addressed by staff.
- Rates of fixed-term exclusion are falling. Leaders have introduced a system of evening and weekend detentions which is showing some signs of success.
- New systems for following up absence from school are having a positive impact. Attendance is improving for most groups of pupils.
- Some pupils do behave well and do have positive attitudes towards learning. Where teachers have higher expectations, and the quality of teaching is better, pupils behave appropriately. This is not typical, however, due to a lack of stable and strong

leadership.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate because too many pupils make weak progress from their starting points. Different groups of pupils make progress over time that is significantly below national averages.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than their peers. Leaders have not used the additional pupil premium funding effectively. The school's own assessment information indicates that the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers persists.
- Teachers do not consider the needs of pupils when they plan. Current pupils with SEND are not well supported in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, and do not make adequate progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are not supported appropriately. Inspectors observed pupils unable to access their learning because teachers had not made appropriate adjustments for them. As a result, this group of pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Teachers do not give sufficient challenge to most-able pupils. Expectations are too low in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and languages. As a result, most-able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. They leave year 11 with results similar to those of middle-attaining pupils nationally.
- Achievement in the sixth form is better than in the rest of the school. Students studying for vocational qualifications make particularly strong progress from their starting points. Students on academic pathways have achieved less well historically. However, the school's own assessment information indicates an improving picture.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Good

- The 16 to 19 study programmes are good.
- The sixth form is very different to the rest of the school. Strong, well-established leaders in the sixth form have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this phase of the school. They monitor the sixth form effectively and respond quickly and productively when they identify an area for improvement.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students make strong progress across a range of subjects, particularly in the applied courses.
- Leaders in the sixth form have developed an effective curriculum. They have been bold in removing subjects from the curriculum that did not meet students' needs. They have created suitable pathways for different groups of students that prepare them well for the future. This includes a foundation tier for those who want to retake GCSE English and/or mathematics. Students who retake GCSE English and/or mathematics achieve in line with their peers nationally from the same starting points.
- Students receive appropriate independent and impartial careers advice. They speak highly of the support and guidance they receive. The number of Year 11 pupils

choosing to stay on into the sixth form is increasing. They are confident that they will do well, not least because they see older students achieving well, and an increasing number moving on to university. Leaders have ensured that most students complete their study programmes successfully.

- Attendance in the sixth form is high. Leaders monitor this well. Attendance so far this year is almost 98%. This is an indicator of the value students place on their education.
- Students benefit from a wide range of activities that enhance their school experience and prepare them well for adult life. Students value the range of activities offered to them, such as the extended project qualification, as well as various work and enterprise opportunities. For example, students interested in a career in law were given the opportunity to spend some time at a local law firm. All students are expected to take part in the enrichment programme and, as a result, they are developing a range of valuable skills that will serve them well in the future.
- Leaders in the sixth form have developed very positive relationships with students. They listen to what the students say and respond quickly to their concerns and requests. For example, leaders have increased opportunities for students to undertake apprenticeships as a result of students' feedback.



## School details

Unique reference number	137138
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10053265

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,624
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jack Boyer
Executive principal	Paul Mundy Castle
Principal	Dan Steel
Telephone number	020 8303 5696
Website	<a href="http://www.bexleyheathacademy.org/">www.bexleyheathacademy.org/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:vmorrison@bexleyheathacademy.org">vmorrison@bexleyheathacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Bexleyheath Academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It converted to an academy in September 2011. It is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above that of other schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan is below

the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Horizons Academy and Break Through. No reference is made to them in this report because to do so would risk identifying them.
- The principal took up his post in January 2018. He is supported by an executive principal who took up his post in September 2018.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe teaching and learning across a range of subjects. The majority of these observations were undertaken jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' learning over time through scrutiny of pupils' books and during visits to classrooms. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their experiences at the school, and they listened to Year 7 pupils read.
- Meetings were held with leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the impact of their work. Discussions were held with a range of staff, including senior and middle leaders and those at the early stages of their teaching careers.
- Inspectors discussed aspects of the school's work with members of the trust, governors and the local authority officer who is linked to the school.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, teaching and learning, safeguarding records and procedures, behaviour records and attendance information.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 81 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and parents who contacted inspectors by telephone during the inspection. Inspectors also considered the 52 responses to the staff survey, and the 134 responses to the pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Niall Gallagher, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andy Webster	Ofsted Inspector
Terry Millar	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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