

Blenheim High School

Longmead Road, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9BH

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have provided strong and effective leadership to overcome the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. They are determined and well equipped to improve pupils' education further.
- Leaders, including middle managers and governors, know the school well. Self-evaluation is accurate and development planning, to raise the quality of teaching, is improving.
- The school has worked hard to improve the attainment and progress of those pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The performance of boys is improving and closer to that of girls.
- Pupils benefit from an innovative, personalised and creative curriculum which secures their engagement and ensures their good progress. Enrichment activities and the extended day have contributed to raising their performance.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are effective and supported by strong subject knowledge and an awareness of examination requirements. Teaching assistants are highly effective and support learning well.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is limited across the curriculum. Pupils' presentation is not consistently supported, and subject-specific words are not stressed.
- The school is a calm, orderly and purposeful community. Pupils behave well and are respectful, kind and courteous. They know how to identify risk and have a secure knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pastoral systems provide high-quality pastoral care for pupils in the school.
- An effective culture of safeguarding exists throughout the school. Staff know pupils well and care about their health and well-being. Staff receive regular safeguarding training.
- The progress and attainment of pupils in 2018 were above the national averages and particularly successful for the most able pupils. Work scrutiny and lesson observations confirm good achievement across all years and all subjects but especially the core subjects.
- Leadership of the sixth form is effective and knowledgeable about strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The sixth-form curriculum represents a good balance between academic and technical courses.
- Progress in the sixth form is good and students attain standards similar to those seen nationally. The school meets the minimum standards for 16 to 19 study programmes with high-quality and impartial guidance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise the attainment and progress of all pupils by ensuring that:
 - literacy and numeracy are supported across all subjects with a focus on pupils' presentation and subject-specific vocabulary
 - the needs of all groups of pupils are fully met in lessons in order to eliminate any gaps in pupils' performance
 - school development planning gives priority to raising the quality of teaching and learning
 - the very best practice across the school is identified and shared.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior staff are extremely ambitious for the pupils and the school. They are passionate and committed to raising standards and ensuring that all pupils leave the school with the qualifications and personal qualities that will allow them to be successful in their future lives.
- Middle leaders are well supported in their work and recent new appointments, especially in English, mathematics and science, have ensured a rapid rise in achievement because of subject leaders' knowledge, determination, expertise and expectations.
- At the heart of the success of the school is the leadership of the headteacher, who inspires and supports his staff to improve practices and raise achievement. Teachers rate leadership highly and feedback such as, 'We are very impressed with the new headteacher and how he is improving the school' was typical of many of the responses received from parents and carers.
- Leaders in the sixth form have ensured that the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme are met in full and that students are well supported to succeed with their next steps. Plans to extend the sixth-form offer are well considered and leaders, rightly, see this as a priority for further development.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Strategic planning is not prioritised, so it is sometimes difficult to see what is the most important aspect and what is less so. The plan does not focus enough on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school's systems for monitoring pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the performance of subject areas are all rigorous and link together well. The attainment and progress of pupils are monitored frequently and carefully. Data is used effectively to target interventions and address any potential underachievement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Adaptions are made to suit individual needs including off-site provision which is carefully coordinated and monitored. The curriculum is enriched by a wealth of extra-curricular activities, including the forthcoming school production at the Leatherhead Theatre, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, sport, dance, orchestra and choir.
- The recent introduction of the extended day allows more time for subjects as well as for opportunities for intervention and support. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness (SMSC) is delivered through the recently reformed personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme.
- The programme is well coordinated to deepen pupils' understanding of equality, diversity and complex moral issues. Schemes of work, featuring specific SMSC content, are also highlighted across the curriculum and delivered at timely intervals. Careers advice and guidance are supportive and informative.
- The development of literacy skills is strong within the English department. However, opportunities to develop literacy skills across the curriculum, including subject-specific

vocabulary, are sometimes missed. The development of pupils' reading skills is well supported through regular timetabled reading opportunities in the school day.

- Pupils' presentation skills are variable, and some books are well presented while others are untidy and scrappy. Opportunities to develop numeracy across the school are still being developed although numeracy in mathematics lessons is rigorously and regularly supported.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils are well supported to enable them to take part and achieve as well as their peers. As a result, this group of pupils make comparable progress to other pupils nationally with similar starting points. The gap between them and their peers is closing.
- Leaders also make good use of the funding available to support Year 7 pupils who need to catch up. The support for these pupils is well focused and includes extra staffing, one-to-one tuition, guided reading and additional mathematics support. The spending supports pupils' progress very well.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in transition, with a new leader having recently taken charge. Overall, this group of pupils do make progress in line with expectations for pupils with similar starting points but there are occasions where their individual needs are not being met and parents have been frustrated by a historic lack of communication.

Governance of the school

- Governors are supportive, perceptive and well informed. They know their school well as a result of careful monitoring and timely updates. They have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they are not afraid to hold the school to account for its performance.
- Governors take their statutory responsibilities very seriously. Their training and areas of expertise ensure that they are confident in supporting and challenging senior leaders. Governors' experience of financial management is used effectively to finance senior leaders' plans to strengthen the quality of education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that the child protection policy is up to date, comprehensive and written in conjunction with the latest government guidance. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Pupils who were spoken to during the inspection agreed that they felt safe and secure at the school.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff understand, and follow, leaders' protocols for reporting any safeguarding concerns. They know to pass on any concerns immediately via the school's child protection online management system (CPOMS).
- Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are carried out methodically. Leaders are quick to respond to national events that may cause alarm,

raise fears of safety or promote an unthinking emotional reaction. Assemblies and PSHCE lessons are used to good effect at such times. The PSHCE programme is constantly reviewed and amended to reflect current areas of concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Much of the teaching across all subjects is good so that pupils make good progress in response to the challenging targets set for them. The quality of teaching has a high profile in the school and the school's detailed judgements, collated over time, accord closely with inspectors' views that teaching is good.
- Good teaching is supported by teachers' strong subject knowledge and their comprehensive insight into examination requirements which they share with their pupils. Lessons are carefully planned, structured and resourced. Teaching assistants are highly effective and used to good effect in supporting learning.
- The pace of lessons is fast, and pupils acquire knowledge and understanding securely. Expectations are invariably high. The use of questioning is well considered and allows teachers to check understanding and decide when to move the lesson on. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong and mutually respectful.
- Pupils' progress is measured regularly and robustly. Assessment procedures and information are used well to support pupils' progress through clear targets and regular dialogue. Pupils know their targets and have a clear idea of exactly what they need to do to meet them. Intervention is used well when pupils fail to meet the exacting targets set for them.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is not evident across all subjects and subject-specific vocabulary is not always developed well. In particular, the school's requirement to comment on spelling, punctuation and grammar is not followed through regularly. Books and folders confirm that further work is needed to ensure a consistent approach across all teaching groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders, staff and pupils work together to make the school a harmonious community. Pupils know how to identify risk and have a range of strategies to keep themselves safe, including when online. They have a good understanding of the world beyond the school as a result of the school's PSHCE programme which supports SMSC.
- Pastoral systems provide high-quality pastoral care for pupils in the school. PSHCE lessons are used to discuss issues such as bullying, extremism, radicalisation, e-safety and Britishness. Pupils discuss and debate issues in a considered way, showing respect for others' ideas and points of view. Relationships are harmonious.
- Pupils say that they know about different forms of bullying including homophobic bullying and bullying over social media. Pupils say that they are confident that staff will

help them to deal with any potential issues. They say that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and robustly. Parents and staff overwhelmingly agree that pupils are safe.

- Pupils are also offered advice on keeping themselves healthy in terms of healthy eating and regular fitness as well as their emotional and mental well-being. Careers education, information, advice and guidance are effective and support pupils to make informed choices and move to their next steps successfully.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative providers for two days each week to ensure that their curriculum is personalised. Leaders effectively manage the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of these pupils. Regular liaison with the providers ensures that these pupils experience some success.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are respectful, kind and courteous to their teachers and to one another. Behaviour in and around the school was generally positive although some pupils said that this was not always the case when staff were not visible.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and would recommend it to others. As a result, they attend school regularly and are punctual to lessons. The focus on supporting better attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND has been effective in raising attendance rates overall. Attendance is now similar to the national average for secondary schools.
- The number of pupils who are regularly absent has dropped significantly because of leaders' robust monitoring and persistence as well as the alternative provision in other colleges and providers.
- The number of exclusions has also fallen over the last few years. This has been largely due to improvements in the curriculum and leaders' determination to eliminate poor behaviour. Exclusion rates are similar now to those seen nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school has acted swiftly, decisively and successfully to address the underperformance of pupils identified at the last inspection. As a result, attainment in 2018 showed a significant improvement from the previous years. Attainment in the majority of subjects was above national averages especially in the three core subjects.
- Pupils join the school with attainment which is roughly in line with national averages, so this achievement represents good progress which is now above the national average. The progress is also above the average for the local authority, where the school was recently rated as the most improved secondary school in Surrey.
- The school has worked hard to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and, although gains have been modest, the gap is now closing and the school's thoughtful actions are having a considerable impact on such pupils lower down the school.
- The identification of pupils with SEND has improved and recent changes in personnel

are beginning to make a positive contribution to narrowing the gap in progress. The gap between boys' and girls' progress is also narrowing but the school acknowledges that further efforts are needed. The most able pupils continue to make the fastest progress in 2018.

- During the inspection, high levels of attainment were witnessed across the core subjects as well as in the sixth form. In key stage 3, available class records confirm that pupils are in line to meet and exceed the challenging targets set for them. Disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and boys were seen to be making similar progress to their peers.
- In the sixth form, tracking data and lesson observations confirm that sixth-form students are performing well overall. Year 13 students are broadly in line with national expectations for progress and attainment.
- Pupils who attend off-site alternative provision are monitored effectively and progressing well.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is effective. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The extended school day is ensuring that students take their lessons seriously and are much better focused.
- The sixth-form curriculum represents a good balance between academic and technical courses. The introduction of applied courses in dance and physical education is much appreciated. There are many opportunities for learners to develop their leadership skills. Sixth-form students provide positive role models for younger pupils.
- Students' well-being and welfare are additionally supported through the thoughtfully constructed tutorial programme. The programme covers sessions including sex and relationships, mental health, radicalisation, equality and British values. Students say that they feel safe and well supported.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students make good progress across different courses and subjects. They attain standards similar to those seen nationally. Work in students' books and folders confirms this. The very small number of students without GCSE examination results at grade 4 or above in English or mathematics make good progress in retaking these subjects.
- The school's most recent tracking information indicates that students in the current Year 13 are on course to attain similar standards at A level in 2019. The school meets the minimum standards for 16 to 19 study programmes with all students completing a programme of worthwhile work experience.
- Students receive high-quality and impartial guidance to ensure that study programmes are right for them. Retention rates between Years 12 and 13 are improving and now similar to national averages. The great majority of students complete their two-year courses and move onto employment, apprenticeships and education including a range of highly regarded universities.

School details

Unique reference number	137906
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10088161

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,274
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	183
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chairs	Claire Hadcocks and Louise Footner
Headteacher	Anthony Bodell
Telephone number	01372 745 333
Website	www.blenheim.surrey.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@blenheim.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2017

Information about this school

- Blenheim High School is a larger than average comprehensive school. The school converted to an academy in September 2012 and the headteacher took up post just after the last inspection in April 2017. At that time, the school was judged by Ofsted to require improvement.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, the proportion who speak English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding are below national averages. There are more girls than boys at the school.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to

the national average and the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is falling but still similar to national averages.

- Thirteen pupils attend alternative provision for two days each week at the North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT), Merton College or Academy 21.
- The requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme are fully met.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 38 lessons and part lessons as well as a further 31 lessons included on learning walks. Many of the lesson observations and learning walks were carried out jointly with senior and middle leaders. Inspectors reviewed pupils' and students' books and folders across a range of subjects to check attainment, progress and presentation.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and governors. The lead inspector spoke with one parent and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with pupils and students as well as speaking informally to them inside and outside of lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the school website as well as a range of documents, including those relating to the curriculum, assessment, progress, school improvement, self-evaluation and safeguarding.
- There were 135 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including the free-text service. The lead inspector also received a letter from a parent during the inspection. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaires and 89 responses to the staff surveys.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Roessler	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Bauckham	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Norman	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Richards	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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