

Barnwood Park Arts College

St Lawrence Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 3QU

Inspection dates

3 to 4 July 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked with resolve and integrity to improve the standard of education the school provides, following disappointing results in the past. They are well placed to move forward with confidence.
- In 2018, the progress that pupils made by the end of Year 11 was significantly above the national average. This is due to leaders' honest reflection and well-directed actions. However, leaders do not always evaluate the impact of their strategies precisely enough.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities. They are a cohesive team who have supported leaders in the continuous drive for improvement. However, they do not routinely identify the gaps in pupils' subject knowledge or skills so that pupils make stronger progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning is typically good. However, teachers do not always use assessment well enough to make clear what pupils need to do to improve. Occasionally, low-prior-attaining pupils' work is poorly presented or unfinished.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress. However, leaders do not explicitly identify the barriers to learning for such pupils so that their academic needs are most effectively met.
- The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well catered for. As a result, pupils are making improved academic progress.
- The school is a welcoming and inclusive environment. The core values underpin the work of the school. Pupils speak highly of what staff do to promote their personal and social development, particularly their emotional well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Pupils speak eloquently about how they reflect on moral issues and understand how to be thoughtful and active citizens.
- Leaders have redirected their strategies to improve the rates of attendance. While there is some initial success, this is yet to show sustained impact, particularly for those pupils who miss school regularly.
- The advice that pupils receive to support their next steps is comprehensive and well planned. The large majority of pupils move to suitable further education or training.
- Behaviour, both in lessons and around the site, is positive and pupils feel safe. Pupils who are at risk of exclusion are well supported and, as a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - improvement plans have precise and measurable targets so that leaders and governors can evaluate the impact of their actions more closely, particularly the use of the additional funding
 - improvement is sustained by ensuring that all teachers are skilled enough to apply the same level of expectations and practice so that the quality of teaching is good across all subjects
 - middle leaders more precisely identify pupils' gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills in subject disciplines.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the use of assessment through:
 - teachers using the assessment information available to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils
 - teachers identifying misconceptions and ensuring that pupils know what to do to improve and do so
 - teachers consistently expecting a high standard of work, including in the way it is organised and presented.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare by leaders carefully evaluating the patterns of attendance and more stringently challenging those pupils who do not attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are reflective and honest in identifying the things that the school does well and what needs to be done to improve. The disappointing outcomes of 2017 led to critical self-reflection and renewed determination to put this right. This led to an improved performance in 2018, when pupils' progress overall was significantly better than national averages. Leaders have successfully combined improvement in academic standards with a maintained focus on pupils' well-being.
- Leaders' actions are well devised. They understand the need to ensure that their actions are sustainable with long-term benefits for the school and are not purely quick fixes. The senior leadership have integrity, are well respected by staff and are committed to ensuring that they provide the best standard of education for their pupils. They readily work with the local authority and other providers to learn from effective practice. However, leaders need to be more incisive when analysing the impact of their actions on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Senior leaders are proud of the inclusive nature of the school. While a higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally leave the school roll, there are many more that join part way through the year. The reasons why pupils leave the school are legitimate, but leaders do not have a strategic enough overview of the reasons why such decisions are made. Pupils who join the school are welcomed and supported and have made a positive start. Some pupils told us how their attendance and engagement with learning have improved since joining the school.
- Middle leaders are positive and enthusiastic about their work. They feel trusted by senior leaders to make decisions within their areas of responsibility. This autonomy is balanced with regular meetings with senior leaders to discuss the progress that pupils make. They are knowledgeable about their subject areas, but do not always identify precisely enough the gaps that pupils have in their subject knowledge and skills so that their subsequent planning can specifically target this.
- Leaders carefully track the progress that pupils make, checking the validity of this through internal moderation, work with examination boards and collaboration with other schools. As a result, leaders have a clear overview of the profile of different year groups. This extensive information is readily available to staff. Crucially, though, teachers do not always use this astutely enough to focus their planning on the areas that will make the biggest differences to pupils' learning.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum, based on the principle that the curriculum should be broad and balanced and that pupils should enjoy their learning. Pupils choose from a range of subjects and some pupils benefit from personalised programmes which are tailored to their needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils who spoke to inspectors are proud of the school and of their work. They are engaged in their learning and are ambitious for their future. Leaders have plans in place to support such pupils. They are clear about the allocation of funds, but there is not a systematic evaluation of the impact of these strategies to inform future planning.

- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a strong oversight of the provision in place for pupils with SEND. She demonstrates a good understanding of the strategic aspects of her role. This includes staff training, developing support for pupils and sharing information about pupils across the school. Pupils with emotional needs are supported well, enabling them to re-engage with their learning. Pupils who access the resource base benefit from sessions to support their academic progress and well-being.
- Leaders have cultivated positive relationships with parents and carers. The large majority of parents speak positively about their experiences of the school, particularly about behaviour and the fact that their children feel safe and supported. Pupils echo this sentiment and particularly highlight the school's care for their physical and mental well-being.
- Staff are highly positive about the school. Leaders have ensured that training is in place so that staff feel confident in their roles. This has led to improvements in teachers' practice, particularly in some areas of the curriculum, such as science. The 'Reflective Practitioner Opportunity' programme supports collaborative work. However, it is not sharply focused on teachers' needs so that they can improve their practice in areas they feel less confident in. Newly qualified staff receive effective support, and this provides a strong foundation at the start of their teaching careers.

Governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable and diligent about their statutory responsibilities and share leaders' understandings of the school strengths and areas for development. They are equally ambitious for the school and what it can achieve.
- Governors are highly supportive of senior leaders and respect their professionalism, but also maintain what they call a 'healthy scepticism'. They challenge leaders to provide evidence to support their assertions and visit the school to check on improvement plan priorities. Overall, this is effective, but their checks are not as incisive in relation to the impact of additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who need to catch up.
- Governors access relevant training so that they can ask pertinent questions about the regular information they receive from senior leaders. They have thought about how their committee structures function and can align most effectively with the full governing body. This means that information is shared more widely. When vacancies arise, the governing body recruits wisely so that it has suitable expertise and knowledge. New governors feel well supported when they join the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that all staff fully understand the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. Suitable employment checks are in place to ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children.
- Staff know what to be vigilant for and how to report concerns. There are regular staff briefings which have recently included the dangers posed by 'county lines' and the risks

of exploitation.

- Leaders keep track of referrals electronically through well organised chronologies. They can, therefore, oversee the support provided to pupils and families over time. Leaders are working to increase the capacity of the team to deal with more complex cases.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the most vulnerable pupils and families. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that effective help and guidance are provided when needed. Where they are not satisfied with the resolution of referrals, they challenge appropriately. They advocate well for the needs of their pupils. Notably, they have a clear understanding of the moral imperative to keep pupils on the school roll so that they can maintain oversight of safeguarding concerns.
- Pupils say that they are well supervised on the school site and feel safe. Many parents who responded to the 'Parent View' survey issued at the time of the inspection agree with this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is typically good and meets the needs of pupils. Leaders monitor the quality of classroom practice systematically and highlight areas where practice is not as assured. The conclusions from this process are used to inform teachers' training needs. However, the emphasis is sometimes too much on compliance with the policy rather than on the quality of pupils' learning and the extent of their progress.
- Across the school, departments use effective systems for assessing pupils' work. For example, in textiles, pupils are clear about the skills they need to master because teachers use a clear process to highlight this. Departments have designed their own assessment policies so that they can trial approaches that are suited to their subjects. There are effective examples in history, where pupils use assessment criteria to reflect on their initial responses to enquiry questions. However, there are still wide variations within departments. Where practice is weaker or is inconsistently applied, the impact on pupils' progress is not evident.
- Where teaching is most effective, as was evident in science, art and mathematics, pupils' work is well organised and curriculum content is logically sequenced. Teachers question effectively, and pupils understand the techniques or knowledge that they are developing. Where teaching is stronger, there is no discernible difference between the quality of disadvantaged pupils' work and that of their peers.
- Additional adults are usually deployed effectively in order to support pupils with SEND in their lessons. Occasionally, support plans are too generic and lack sufficient focus and detail about how best to support pupils' academic progress.
- Where teaching is not as assured, approaches are not fully embedded, or teachers are not clear how to use them to best effect. Where teachers' advice is not specific enough or where pupils do not follow this advice, pupils' knowledge is not further secured and deepened.
- At times, pupils' basic misconceptions or gaps in knowledge are not rectified early enough and this hampers the progress that pupils make. This is particularly evident in the accuracy of spelling and punctuation for low-prior-attaining pupils. In this group,

pupils' work was sometimes poorly presented or incomplete.

- Pupils are focused on their learning and show resilience and concentration when they find concepts more difficult. Teachers encourage them to persevere and to draw on what they already know to help them. Some pupils said that there is sometimes low-level disruption in their classes but this was not evident during the inspection.
- Teachers set homework regularly to support or extend pupils' knowledge. Pupils say that they can use the library if they need to do independent work. In art, for example, pupils' research into an artist of their choice both reinforced their independent investigation and provided inspiration for future projects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils talk confidently about topics relevant to their context, health and stage of development. They have the maturity to recognise that for some pupils the discussion of certain topics might be upsetting, and they are sensitive to this. They say that teachers are skilled at facilitating debate about such issues in a supportive environment. Leaders' evaluation shows that pupils' perceptions of their own mental and emotional health are strong.
- There is a well-planned curriculum to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are articulate when they talk about such issues. They are prepared to grapple with moral issues, and they recognise the complexities within such debates. They can talk about values such as respect, tolerance and democracy, making them well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and have been taught how to keep safe, including when online. The three guiding principles of 'Live without harming others', 'Do acts of kindness' and 'Show respect for others' are demonstrated by pupils in their interactions, their sense of community and in their outlook.
- The arrangements for pupils moving to the school in Year 7 are well planned. During the time of the inspection, Year 6 pupils were visiting the school and were looked after well by older pupils. The benefit to both groups was evident. Year 7 pupils say that they had been supported well and because of this had settled quickly into the life of the school.
- There is an extensive programme for pupils to be informed and advised about their next steps in education or training. There is effective evaluation of the effectiveness of this work through feedback from pupils and employers and through analysis of pupils' destinations. Pupils who require additional support to choose appropriate destinations are identified. They discuss options with staff to ensure that their choices are suitably ambitious. Staff regularly help pupils to make telephone calls and complete their applications.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are articulate and self-assured. They take pride in their work and their school. Pupils' attitudes to their learning and willingness to do extra work are largely positive. Pupils spoke confidently to inspectors, frequently holding open doors and offering directions.
- Pupils recognise that relationships at the school are positive overall. They appreciate the open culture of the school, enabling them to talk to staff when they have concerns. Pupils say that any problems or concerns, including incidents of bullying, are dealt with straight away. Leaders recognise the need to have a more strategic oversight of behaviour patterns so that they can act proactively to mitigate this.
- Staff are passionate about their role in providing support, particularly for vulnerable groups of pupils who attend the school. The newly configured pastoral team demonstrates high levels of interest and involvement in pupils' happiness, engagement and progress. As a result, the rate of fixed-term exclusions is reducing. The plans to reintegrate such pupils into school are sharply focused on pupils' needs. The arrangements for those pupils who are on a reduced timetable are reviewed regularly, with a view to supporting them to increase the hours they attend the school.
- There are systems in place to monitor rates of attendance, but these remain just below the national average. There are many good examples of individual pupils who have been supported and nurtured by the school, and their attendance and engagement has improved as a result. However, strategic oversight of those pupils who are persistently absent is limited, which means that common themes and barriers cannot be easily identified.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the last three years, the progress that pupils make by the end of Year 11 has improved. This is now significantly above the national average. Observations and work scrutiny completed during the inspection confirm that this continues to be the case, including in key stage 3.
- The progress that pupils make by the end of Year 11 in English and mathematics is in line with national figures, overall, but significantly better for middle-prior-attaining pupils. Current pupils are encouraged to read high-quality texts in English and show an understanding of genre and context. In mathematics, pupils are engaged and interested in solving mathematical problems. Teachers insist on precision when using a protractor and use the local environment to reinforce pupils' understanding of bearings and scale conversion.
- The proportion of pupils who are entered for the English Baccalaureate combination of subjects is lower than is typical nationally. Those pupils who take such subjects make progress well above national comparisons in science, humanities and languages. In science, there have been notable improvements in the quality of teaching and this is reflected in the much improved outcomes in 2018. From Year 7, there is a clearly

sequenced curriculum, which means that pupils build the scientific knowledge they need from Year 7. In humanities, pupils can construct a well-reasoned argument.

- Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress. In 2018, progress for such pupils was broadly in line with national averages, which is a significant improvement from the previous two years.
- Pupils with SEND are typically engaged in their learning. They can discuss their learning and are well supported by additional adults. The guidance that staff provide enables pupils to participate in and complete their tasks. As a result, this group of pupils are making improved progress from their starting points. Those pupils with more complex needs receive the support they need, but this is not always aligned sharply enough to their academic progress
- The most able pupils produce detailed work and show a strong understanding of subject terminology and concepts. Pupils who opt to take a language perform strongly. They can sustain their writing in the target language, increasingly using more complex grammatical structures and a range of tenses. Occasionally, pupils are not prompted to apply their understanding to more complex tasks or problems. This is because teachers' planning is not always tailored sufficiently to pupils' starting points.
- Leaders have identified those pupils who arrive at the school with standards below those expected for their ages. Leaders have identified that reading fluency and comprehension are the main barriers to learning for this group of pupils. As a result, they have made changes to the curriculum so that pupils receive additional support. However, leaders have not tracked the impact of such interventions closely enough nor precisely identified pupils' needs so that this support has the maximum impact. There is not a holistic approach to literacy across the curriculum to build on these interventions.
- Pupils choose from a wide range of subjects and, overall, perform well in these. In subjects, such as dance, pupils understand different elements of technique. In art and technology, pupils' work is beautifully presented and benefits from the clear next steps given by the teacher. Pupils are proficient in using digital mediums and use specialist software successfully.

School details

Unique reference number	115720
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10084109

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	606
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Higgins
Headteacher	Sarah Tufnell
Telephone number	01452 530 389
Website	www.barnwood-park.gloucs.sch.uk
Email address	head@barnwood-park.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 to 13 June 2014

Information about this school

- Barnwood Park Arts College is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, catering for pupils between the ages of 11 to 16. The first cohort of boys was admitted into Year 7 in September 2018.
- An unusually high number of pupils leave the school roll at points other than at the end of Year 11. Many pupils join the school, either mid-year or at points other than in Year 7.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above national figures. There was a larger-than-average increase in the proportion of pupils requiring special educational needs support between 2017 and 2018. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The school has 15 out of the 17 possible

ethnic groups set out in Ofsted's Inspection Data Summary Report. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised pupils' written work. Observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the leadership team and representatives from the governing body. In addition, inspectors met with curriculum and pastoral leaders. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation, including the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for future improvement. Inspectors reviewed progress, behaviour and attendance information relating to current pupils, and governors' records.
- School policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, and the curriculum were scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the 58 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 24 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 58 responses to the staff survey and 118 responses to the pupils' survey, which were issued at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Trudi Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Baker	Ofsted Inspector
David New	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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