

Inspection of Beckfoot Thornton

Leaventhorpe Lane, Thornton, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD13 3BH

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they feel safe and that they learn a lot. Older pupils told us that the school has really improved in the last few years. Teaching is improving too. This is helping pupils to achieve more than they would have done in the past. The school feels calm and friendly. Pupils move around the large building sensibly. They stick to the rules and one-way system so that corridors are safe. In lessons, most pupils try their best and do what teachers ask of them. Behaviour across the school is good. Teachers say that since the new headteacher arrived, pupils' behaviour is much better. Pupils agree. They say that it is because the teachers have higher expectations of their behaviour now. Pupils told us that bullying does not happen very often. If it does, pupils say that adults in the school deal with it quickly. School leaders work hard to make sure that pupils are well cared for. Pupils can speak with counsellors or other professionals if they have a problem. If pupils need more help with their learning, staff are available to help them.

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

The quality of education requires improvement. Leaders have been successful in improving pupils' behaviour and attendance. They are now starting to review the curriculum. However, leaders have only recently started to think about what pupils learn and in what order. Pupils in key stage 3 spend two years learning a curriculum. In Year 9, they pick their GCSEs, which reduces the number of subjects they study. This means that teachers teach about a broad range of topics but they do not explore subject content in depth. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding.

The quality of teaching, although improving, can vary. Sometimes, when teachers assess what pupils know, they do not use the results as well as they could. This is different in English. Teachers have noticed that pupils in Year 11 need help to evaluate written text. As a result, staff have redesigned subject plans in Year 7 so that pupils master this skill early on. Most teachers are now teaching pupils the subject content that matters the most, apart from religious education, which is limited. Staff are improving their own subject knowledge by sharing ideas and planning together. They also attend regular training sessions that experts lead. Pupils are beginning to show what they are capable of.

Pupils enjoy many opportunities to develop their wider skills. This complements focused activities that help to improve pupils' understanding of mental health issues and the world of work. Careers education is a strength. Nearly all pupils go on to further education, employment or training when they leave school.

Staff help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to get the support they need. This happens in the specialist resource base and in lessons. Leaders say that SEND provision is a priority for them. Recently, staff with more experience have joined the school. This helps to identify early the learning needs of pupils with SEND. Occasionally, teachers do not use teaching assistants well enough to support pupils' development. Leaders have plans to train staff to develop their

skills when they are supporting pupils with their learning.

Sixth-form provision is good. The sixth form is small, which means that students have lots of opportunities to receive help and support. This helps them to achieve well, especially in applied general courses. Teachers know their subjects. Carefully constructed subject plans ensure that students are taught well. Attendance is high and improving. Students are heavily involved in a wide range of leadership activities. For example, some students deliver whole-school assemblies or help younger pupils with their reading skills.

Leadership is strong. The headteacher, senior leaders and trustees work well together. Trustees ensure that they and other leaders know their roles and responsibilities in detail. Leaders' successful systems ensure that they meet their statutory obligations relating to safeguarding, accountability and use of resources. Staff morale is very high. Nearly all staff who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire said that the school is well led and managed. They said that leaders do all they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective staff. Trustees say that they want to create a 'remarkable' school. Initial signs are positive in this regard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make appropriate pre-recruitment checks, making sure that staff are safe to work with pupils. Staff attend regular safeguarding training and can explain the risks pupils may face locally. Leaders ensure that pupils who attend alternative education provision are safe. Pupils know how to stay safe. They have a thorough understanding of the risks posed when using the internet. Systems are in place to check on vulnerable pupils through the pastoral system. For example, leaders would much rather provide support for pupils in school than elsewhere.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Trustees and senior leaders have a sound rationale for the curriculum following extensive consultation between schools. However, school leaders know that it is very early days in relation to their new curriculum. Subject leaders have only just begun to discuss with staff what it is that they want to teach pupils and when. Conversations in this regard have been constrained to individual subject areas at this stage. Consequently, leaders must continue to generate and implement new subject plans, with clearly defined end points, so that pupils deliberately learn the most important content in a coherent order and in a way that enables them to progressively know more and remember more over time.
- Currently, some pupils in key stage 3 do not cover subject content sufficiently well to be able to draw upon their learning in the future. This is because subjects such as religious education lack prominence in the curriculum. Additionally, the time

pupils spend learning new content is limited in some subjects as teachers attempt to teach a broad and balanced curriculum that is commensurate with the national curriculum. However, time is limited, and teachers sometimes gloss over important learning points. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders must ensure that pupils are afforded sufficient time to learn important subject content in detail for as long as possible, including in religious education.

- Some teachers and leaders use assessment well to inform pupils of their next steps. They also use assessment effectively to alter teaching or curriculum plans so that recurring weaknesses in pupils' understanding are addressed. However, this is inconsistent within and across subjects. Leaders must ensure that the use of assessment to support pupils' learning is improved and inconsistencies in this area are reduced.
- The use of teaching assistants to support pupils with SEND varies. Leaders should ensure that teaching assistants have access to meaningful training opportunities to improve their understanding of their role and the additional learning needs of pupils with SEND.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance have improved significantly from a low baseline. Leaders should ensure that they sustain and improve further their good work in these areas so that pupils' attendance is in line with that of other pupils nationally. Similarly, leaders should continue to improve pupils' behaviour, particularly the small minority of pupils in key stage 4 who do not behave as well as they should.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	143114
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10110534
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 sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,414
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	114
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Winkley
Headteacher	Jeremy Richardson
Website	www.beckfootthornton.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The school has its own specially resourced provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties. This provision is currently full, with 15 pupils attending.
- The school is a member of the Beckfoot Trust, a multi-academy trust. Responsibility for the school rests with trustees.
- Currently, the school uses full- and part-time alternative education provision at PiPeLine, TRACKS and J.A.M.E.S, Bradford. In addition, the school also uses its own in-house alternative education provider called 'The Bank Centre'.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors undertook deep dives into the following subjects: mathematics, English, science, geography and art. This involved a meeting with subject leaders, visits to a sample of lessons in these subjects, work scrutiny of books and other kinds of work produced by pupils who were part of classes observed by inspectors, and discussion with teachers and with a group of pupils from the lessons observed.
- Inspectors visited a wider range of subjects on the second day of the inspection. Many of the visits to lessons were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- At the time of the inspection, inspectors took account of a qualifying complaint made in advance of the inspection (2017). The complaint raised concerns about the quality of the leadership and management of the school and the contribution made by the school to the well-being of pupils.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers, trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with subject leaders. In addition, an inspector scrutinised post-16 students' work.
- An inspector visited one alternative education provider used by the school.
- The lead inspector met with one parent.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and trustees' minutes.
- Inspectors took into account the 50 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Ninety-seven members of staff and 27 pupils completed Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. All of these responses were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Redshaw	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dimitris Spiliotis	Her Majesty's Inspector
Louise Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Cummings	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 2019