

Inspection of The Bath Studio School

Frome Road, Bath, Somerset BA2 5RF

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils. He is a very good role model. Despite the imminent closure, he is providing the best education possible for pupils so that they have a good start to their next steps in life. Pupils and staff recognise the strength of the headteacher and find him a reliable support in difficult times.

The school offers a unique curriculum. Teaching in the specialist subjects, such as photography and graphics, is of a very high standard. This is not the same for core subjects. Too few pupils succeed in English and mathematics.

Pupils are safe in the school. They understand how to keep themselves safe and are aware of the dangers of the internet and social media. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively on the few occasions when it happens.

Leaders do not offer enough physical activities and enrichment for pupils. Pupils do not understand democracy and the importance of equality in society. They do not reflect on important cultural issues. Many pupils struggle to explain their views as they do not have enough opportunities to discuss and debate.

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

The multi-academy trust (MAT) is supporting the school financially through its final year. Leaders of the MAT are sensitive to the situation of the school. They do not burden staff with unnecessary paperwork. They know that their role is to guide and support, and they are doing this with care and consideration.

Pupils studying the specialist subjects achieve well. Pupils engage positively with their learning. They use technical equipment expertly. Teachers and pupils respect each other's ideas. As a result, individual pupils develop their talent quickly and skilfully.

The teaching of English and mathematics in key stage 4 is not strong. Although school leaders have been monitoring and supporting teachers, they have not checked the teaching well enough. In English, pupils' learning jumps from one type of writing to another too quickly. Teaching does not ensure that pupils understand enough before moving on. In mathematics, there has not been enough vigilance at the start of term about what is being taught.

Most pupils behave well in school and show respect for each other and staff. The headteacher introduced new behaviour expectations last year. Sometimes, teachers do not use the guidelines or challenge pupils who are off task. When this happens, pupils remain disengaged and do not learn.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Leaders understand their needs. Some disadvantaged pupils do not make

enough progress as leaders have not identified their specific issues. The pupil premium funding is not always spent wisely.

There are still too many pupils who arrive late to school or do not attend regularly. The attendance officer is vigilant in making sure the most vulnerable pupils are safe when they are not able to attend. However, too few teachers challenge pupils about lateness, so the habit continues.

Pupils receive effective careers guidance. Most pupils in key stages 4 and 5 have been on work experience to industries related to digital media. This has provided them with useful experiences about potential careers.

Visiting speakers and leaders took assemblies last year to enhance pupils' personal development. Many speakers were from the media industry and provided useful information about careers. However, the lack of planning meant that important aspects of pupils' personal development were missing, such as greater awareness of diversity and differences. Currently, teachers are not making good use of tutor time. Pupils are not taught anything worthwhile in this slot.

Students in the sixth form are very well supported. Teachers are highly skilled in the specialist subjects. With fewer students in each group, teachers regularly provide detailed guidance about how to improve work. Students respond well and show a desire to succeed. Consequently, many students produce work of a high standard. In graphics, students are working at industry level already. Most students find suitable placements at university, or industrial training, when they leave.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant in noticing any signs of concern regarding vulnerable pupils. They understand the requirement to inform safeguarding leaders immediately so that necessary steps can be taken to protect pupils.

The site is secure, and pupils are safe. This is important as the site is shared with other schools and there are times of tension between a few pupils.

Leaders check recruitment procedures thoroughly. They work well with local agencies, such as the police, to make sure pupils receive the right messages and stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders have provided training and support to teachers in English and mathematics, pupils are not yet receiving an adequate curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in these subjects is sequenced effectively so that

pupils can build on prior learning and remember more.

- Many pupils in key stage 4 have weak literacy skills in reading and communicating orally. Leaders are keen to provide a reading programme in tutor time. Leaders must ensure that it is done in a way that will engage pupils and improve their vocabulary. In addition, pupils need to be given opportunities to discuss and debate their reading.
- Over time, too many pupils have failed to attend school regularly. Leaders must remain vigilant in their efforts to change previous poor habits of pupils and parents and carers. Thresholds for challenging pupils' non-attendance need to be higher so that attendance improves, and persistent absence decreases.
- Leaders provide effective careers guidance for pupils but are less proactive in promoting other aspects of pupils' personal development. Leaders must ensure that pupils have a diverse range of enrichment activities so that they understand more about British values and have a spiritual and cultural awareness of life in the 21st century.

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	140944
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10111484
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Broad
Headteacher	Peter Headeach
Website	www.thebathstudioschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2017

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The school is closing in July 2020.
- The school is part of the Wellsway Multi-Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors visited lessons with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils in groups and informally.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and curriculum leaders, teachers and the secondary director of the MAT.

- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the one response and one comment on the online Parent View survey and the eight responses to the online pupil survey.
- English, mathematics, graphics, photography, creative media and games design were considered as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alun Maddocks

Ofsted Inspector

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