

Inspection of Belper School and Sixth Form Centre

John O'Gaunts Way, Off Kilburn Road, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0DA

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff have created a positive atmosphere. Most pupils are happy at school because relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils get on well together. Bullying is rare. Pupils feel safe. They know that there is always someone who will help them if they are worried.

Pupils know that their teachers want them to do well. They say that their teachers always help them to achieve their best. For example, one pupil said, 'My teachers never say "no"'. Most pupils behave well in lessons. However, some pupils do not behave well and are repeatedly taken out of lessons. They spend too much time in the school's 'focus' or isolation rooms. This does not help them understand how to behave well.

Pupils in each year group have designed their own way of remembering the school's behaviour expectations. For example, pupils in Year 10 follow the 'CLASS' (calm, low key, appropriate, safe and sensible) code.

Most pupils behave well around school. The school is very busy at lunch and breaktimes and some vulnerable pupils do not feel comfortable in public areas.

Leaders have helped some pupils to improve their attendance but not all pupils attend school as regularly as they should.

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

The quality of education is not good enough, including in the sixth form. It is better in some subject areas than others. Senior leaders make sure that pupils study a wide range of subjects. They do not make sure that all curriculum leaders do a good enough job in planning how pupils will study each subject. In some subjects, leaders make sure that pupils experience the richness of that subject. For example, in English pupils read a wide range of literature. In other subjects the range of topics is too narrow. Leaders have not thought about how to make sure disadvantaged pupils have the knowledge they need. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Some subject leaders have planned the curriculum so that pupils build on their knowledge. This helps them to know and remember more. This is particularly the case in English and science. Elsewhere, leaders have not thought about what pupils should learn and when. For example, in computing activities are not connected. Pupils cannot remember what they have studied previously. Pupils do not have the basic knowledge they need to tackle more-difficult work.

Senior leaders do not monitor the quality of education well enough. They have been slow to help leaders to improve the curriculum in each subject area. The headteacher has introduced monitoring activities. However, this work is in its early stages.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study the same subjects as other pupils. However, leaders have not thought about how to make sure that these pupils achieve as well as possible. Leaders do not always identify pupils' needs. They do not check that all pupils with SEND are getting the help they need.

Pupils are keen to do well. Positive relationships help pupils to work hard. Teachers try to help pupils understand when they find things difficult.

Students in the sixth form can study lots of different subjects. Staff guide students to choose appropriate courses. More students now complete their courses than was previously the case. Students enjoy being in the sixth form but some students do not attend well enough. This is particularly the case for Year 13 students. There are lots of opportunities for students to get involved in activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. However, not all students do work experience. They are not as well prepared for the world of work as they might be.

The school aims to help pupils become confident and independent. Pupils take part in lots of activities to help their personal development. For example, they take part in community and charity work. Pupils are kind and considerate. They accept others' differences. Pupils understand how to live healthy lifestyles. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. For example, they can take part in drama and music productions and sporting events. Pupils receive high-quality pastoral care. They appreciate their tutors' support. Leaders make sure that pupils know about their possible next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders consider staff well-being. They have reviewed the assessment system. It provides the information teachers need without causing unnecessary work.

Governors do not know enough about the quality of education. They do not make sure they have the information they need to carry out their duties well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. They report any concerns about a pupil's safety or well-being. Leaders are quick to follow up concerns. They make sure that pupils get the help they need as soon as possible. Staff know the safeguarding risks which pupils may face in the local area. They make sure that pupils learn how to reduce the risks they may encounter.

Leaders check that staff are suitable to work with children. They take appropriate and swift action when any concerns about an adult's conduct arise. They follow the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subject leaders have a clear vision of their curriculum intent. They do not know what they want pupils to achieve. The curriculum is not coherently planned in all subject areas. Senior leaders must ensure that all curriculum leaders clearly understand what they want pupils to achieve. They must ensure that the curriculum is sequenced well so that pupils build on their knowledge and are given opportunities to practise and consolidate their knowledge and understanding to achieve the curriculum aims. Senior leaders should ensure that curriculum leaders have the training and support they need to design and monitor their curriculums in this way.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders have not considered how the curriculum gives these pupils the knowledge they need to succeed. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is designed so that disadvantaged pupils acquire the knowledge they need to achieve well.
- There is a lack of strategic oversight of the provision for pupils with SEND. Leadership of this aspect of the school's work is poor. Leaders must ensure that roles and responsibilities to lead the provision for pupils with SEND are clear and understood by all. Leaders must make sure that the quality of the provision is monitored and evaluated so that pupils' needs are accurately identified and met. Leaders must ensure that staff have the necessary skills, training and information they require to meet pupils' needs.
- Some action taken to improve attendance has been effective but leaders do not evaluate the impact of their work. Some pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. Leaders should ensure that they analyse attendance information and use this to help pupils attend regularly.
- The system for dealing with poor behaviour is not working. Too many pupils are removed from lessons as a sanction for poor behaviour. Furthermore, many pupils are repeatedly placed into seclusion. Pupils spend too long in isolation, including when they return from fixed-term exclusions. Leaders must review the processes for dealing with disruptive behaviour to ensure that all pupils receive a good quality of education.
- The requirements of the sixth-form study programmes are not met. Too few students take part in work experience. Leaders must ensure that all students take part in appropriate work experience placements.
- Senior leaders do not check that the school is providing a good quality of education. They must monitor all aspects of the school's work and address any weaknesses. They should develop a strategic and holistic approach to school improvement so that all aspects of the school's work are good.
- Governors do not understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well enough. They should ensure that they have the information, skills and training to enable them to be more effective in their roles.

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 are 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	112989
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10110085
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
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	1,203
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alan Eccleston
Headteacher	Nick Goforth
Website	http://www.belperschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up his post on 1 September 2019.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision at Bennerley Support Centre and Adventur.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and members of the learning support team. Inspectors met with support staff.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the vice-chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

- An inspector spoke, by telephone, with alternative providers.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives into English, mathematics, humanities, science and computing. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks, met with pupils and met with the teachers of the lessons they visited.
- The lead inspector met with the deputy headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead, and three members of the safeguarding team. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The lead inspector looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including students from the sixth form.

Inspection team

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Anderson	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Farhan Adam	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Nixon	Ofsted Inspector

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