

Inspection of Buckler's Mead Academy

St John's Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4NH

Inspection dates: 12–13 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not achieve well. There has been a marked decline in standards. The school's curriculum does not provide pupils with the knowledge they need to be successful. As a result, pupils are often unable to recall what they have learned.

Pupils' behaviour can be rowdy around the school site and disrupts the learning of others in lessons.

The school has seen much change this term, with a new headteacher and a number of new staff. Pupils welcome some of the changes which new leaders have made to keep them safe. For example, they say that split lunchtimes have made the playground and dining hall less crowded and safer. In addition, pupils like the ban on mobile phones, which they say has reduced cyber bullying. However, pupils continue to have some worries about bullying. They do not have confidence in their teachers to stop it.

Pupils enjoy participating in the wide range of clubs which the school provides, for example Greenpower and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils proudly represent the school in sporting events.

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

Leaders do not manage the school well. The curriculum lacks structure in many subject areas. Leaders' expectations for what should be taught and when in each year group is not clear. They do not provide enough guidance for teachers. In addition, the curriculum for Year 9 pupils is too narrow.

Trustees have not done enough to stop the school's decline. They do not understand their roles well enough. Trustees have not had the training and development they need to make close checks on the headteacher's work and that of the rest of the school.

The education which the school provides is weak. Pupils do not achieve well. They are not well prepared for when they leave the school. The school's careers advice and guidance are weak.

The education for pupils' personal development is weak. The teaching of the risks of radicalisation and extremism is not good enough. Leaders recognise this but have been slow to put it right. Pupils have a very limited understanding of how to keep themselves safe in these respects.

Leaders do not ensure equity of what is offered at the school. There are school trips to broaden pupils' cultural understanding, for example a history trip to the First World War battlefields and a school trip to Germany. However, few pupils benefit from these trips as they are not offered to everyone. Leaders do not make sure that

all pupils have equal access to the curriculum subjects. For example, some Year 7 pupils do not take part in modern foreign languages as they receive extra English and mathematics learning. Therefore, these pupils are denied an opportunity to learn a foreign language from the start.

The school has chosen books for its Read to Succeed scheme to enhance pupils' moral and cultural understanding. However, leaders do not ensure that these activities make a difference.

Some pupils say that bullying is common at the school. They do not feel able to report it. They say that bullying of pupils, including homophobic bullying, is not challenged by staff.

Leaders have not done enough to tackle pupils' poor attendance. Too many pupils are regularly absent from school.

Leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. However, behaviour at social times, and when pupils move around the school, is often too disorderly. Pupils push and jostle each other. Disruption is evident in a range of lessons across the school. Pupils take little pride in their work.

The school has effective systems to identify and plan for the needs of both its disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) but these are in the early stages of implementation. They have not made a difference yet. The school's thrive centre is well regarded by pupils who feel safe and included when they are not in the main school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The recently appointed leader for safeguarding has enhanced the school's safeguarding systems and processes. As a result, staff are well trained to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They follow the school's policies and procedures for reporting concerns they may have about pupils' welfare. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that staff receive further training so that they know the possible risks associated with radicalisation.

The safeguarding leader has successfully formed links with key organisations and to understand the local issues. Pupils who need early help are referred to external agencies promptly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leadership does not have the capacity to make the necessary changes. While some subject leaders are developing their roles, others have not started, or their

work is being implemented too slowly. Senior leaders do not provide staff with the training and support they need to lead their areas of responsibility well. Trustees must ensure that leaders at all levels receive the professional development they need to bring about school-wide improvement.

- The school's curriculum is not well organised. Nor is it equitable. The curriculum is narrow. It does not help pupils to build on what they already know and can do. As a result, pupils do not achieve well. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is carefully thought out so that pupils know and understand more.
- Leaders have not made sure that teachers' subject knowledge is sufficiently strong. Teachers do not make good use of what they know pupils can or cannot do to plan what they do next. The work which teachers set does not help pupils to build on their understanding of what they have learned before. Leaders must ensure that teachers have enough subject knowledge to help them to use their assessment well so that pupils can know, do and understand more.
- Leaders have not done enough to make sure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils leave the school ill-prepared for their next steps academically and socially. Leaders need to make sure that pupils can develop into good citizens. Leaders must urgently act to create a more tolerant culture, so pupils have better attitudes toward each other. Leaders must ensure that bullying, including homophobic bullying, is dealt with effectively.
- The school's policies and procedures are not fit for purpose. The board does not get the information it needs from leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work. There has been a decline in standards and pupils' achievement. The board must ensure that school policies, procedures and guidance are understood and implemented by all staff, so that the school's overall effectiveness improves rapidly.

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	137193
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10111520
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	802
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Hunt
Headteacher	Mark Lawrence
Website	http://bucklersmead.com/
Date of previous inspection	16–17 September 2014

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- There is a larger proportion of pupils with SEND than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- We met with the acting headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, associate staff, teachers, trustees and pupils during the inspection.
- We visited lessons, spoke with curriculum leaders and met staff and pupils. We did deep dives in: English, mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages.
- In order to inspect safeguarding, we checked the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, considered its safeguarding policy, interviewed the designated safeguarding leader, and spoke with pupils and staff.
- The results of Ofsted's online surveys of parents, pupils and staff were considered.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Harris	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Jones	Ofsted Inspector
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