

Inspection of Robert Blake Science College

Hamp Avenue, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 6AW

Inspection dates: 4–5 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want Robert Blake Science College to be an inclusive school. They are proud of their school and want a school where every pupil can do their best. However, more needs to happen to support all pupils to achieve their best and regularly attend. Some pupils do not have access to the full range of subjects they should be studying.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they are happy at school and that the teachers care for them. Pupils feel safe. They know that teachers will help if they have a problem. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens but that when it does, the teachers help them to sort it out.

Pupils enjoy using the facilities at the school. They take part in many clubs and activities and are proud of their achievements. They say that teachers help them in lessons. Some pupils say they would like extra help from the school with their learning. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Leaders have worked hard to improve behaviour. Fewer pupils are excluded because of poor behaviour.

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

Leaders have begun to put in place a curriculum that will support pupils' learning well. Good planning in some areas ensures that learning builds on what pupils already know and can do. This is particularly the case in mathematics, art and photography. In these subjects, pupils understand how learning in lessons has supported them to achieve. Pupils know what to improve on to develop further. However, this is not the case in all subjects. Other subjects, in particular science, do not deliver an effective curriculum to enable pupils to achieve well.

Teachers attempt to strengthen learning and help pupils remember knowledge for longer. They check to see if pupils know what they have been taught. However, this practice is inconsistent across the school. As a result, some pupils do not understand key ideas and are not supported well enough to learn.

The curriculum is not designed well enough to ensure appropriate learning for pupils with SEND. Learning for these pupils is not well sequenced. As a result, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. Some pupils with SEND receive appropriate additional support. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive the therapeutic support they might need. They do activities like bushcraft and horticulture to improve their resilience and independence.

Leaders have put in place 'pathways' at key stage 4. These 'pathways' support more learners to choose the English Baccalaureate subjects where appropriate. However, many pupils, especially those in Year 9, do not study the broad range of subjects that

they are entitled to. As a result, some pupils are not prepared well for studying GCSEs.

The behaviour of pupils has improved. Pupils behave well and are polite and helpful. Pupils say that the good behaviour of other pupils has helped them learn more. This year, fewer exclusions of pupils have occurred. Furthermore, fewer pupils attend internal exclusion. Leaders have begun to work more closely with pupils and their families to raise attendance. However, currently, attendance remains too low and too many pupils are persistently absent.

The school provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their confidence and independence. A range of visiting speakers supports a carefully planned curriculum. As a result, pupils are kind and considerate of one another.

Governors are very supportive of leaders in the school but are unclear of their duty to ensure that pupils receive the full curriculum to which they are entitled. They rightly acknowledge that behaviour has improved and that the support and achievement for pupils with SEND are not good enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe when at school. Staff receive training to know what to do if they are concerned about the safety of a pupil. When this is the case, staff work quickly to ensure that the pupil is safe. Staff work with experts outside the school to give the right support to both pupils and their families.

The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn how to keep safe when online and out in the community. Pupils say they feel safe at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not have access to the broad and balanced curriculum that they are entitled to study. This is particularly so for pupils in Year 9. This results in some pupils not being well prepared to study GCSEs. Leaders and governors need to ensure that all pupils study the subjects they are entitled to and receive a curriculum appropriate to their needs and abilities.
- While some pupils with SEND receive effective support, too many do not have an appropriate curriculum and support for their individual needs. This inhibits their learning. Leaders need to ensure that pupils with SEND receive an effective curriculum which provides these pupils with appropriate support.
- In some subjects, particularly science, the curriculum is not well planned and sequenced. This limits pupils' ability to learn more and remember more. Leaders

need to ensure that the curriculum for all subjects is planned to ensure that pupils learn effectively.

- Pupils' attendance is low. Too many pupils are persistently absent. This impedes their ability to learn well across the curriculum. Leaders need to continue to work closely with pupils and their families to raise attendance.

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	123878
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10111568
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	850
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tim Scott
Headteacher	Deb Loveridge
Website	http://robertblake.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8–9 December 2015

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend an off-site alternative provision at Bridgwater College.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with leaders, teachers, pupils and the governing body. We undertook lesson visits and talked to pupils during break and lunchtimes. We looked at pupils' books and talked to pupils about their work.
- We spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- We spoke with staff in charge of the alternative provision used.
- We reviewed surveys from pupils, parents and staff.
- We spoke with those staff with responsibility for safeguarding and reviewed safeguarding records processes and procedures.
- We undertook deep dives in English, mathematics, science, physical education,

modern foreign languages and art and photography. We spoke to the leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and subject teachers and looked at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Deirdre Fitzpatrick, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jerry Giles	Ofsted Inspector
Kirsten Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
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