

Inspection of Baxter College

Habberley Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 5PQ

Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Baxter College are looked after well. The pastoral support given to them is highly effective. Every pupil matters. Pupils say that they feel safe. If bullying happens, pupils say that they have someone they can talk to. They trust them to sort it out.

Behaviour in the vast majority of lessons is good. Very little learning time is lost. Pupils enjoy their lessons and want to do well. Positive relationships between staff and pupils support pupils' learning well.

The school offers a full range of activities and trips for pupils. These include trips to Venice, Iceland, the theatre and local places of worship. Activities include music, drama, sport and science. Pupils value these activities.

Students in the sixth form are well prepared for the next stage in their education. All students go on work experience. They all take part in enrichment activities, including gardening and care for the elderly. As a result, the vast majority go on to higher education, employment or training.

All staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. This means getting good qualifications and preparing them to be good, active citizens. For example, pupils raise money for charities, including Birmingham Children's Hospital.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum that pupils follow. They have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Last year, a full review of the curriculum was carried out. Consequently, pupils in key stage 3 are now well prepared for the choices they make at key stage 4. The school offers a full range of subjects at key stage 4. These subjects and the curriculum are well matched to pupils' interests and ability. While the number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate (a specific set of subjects at GCSE level) is increasing, it remains low. Leaders are taking effective action to address this.

Pupils achieve well in most subjects. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The vast majority of pupils in Year 11 last year went on to education, employment and training.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan and deliver lessons in a logical order. This helps pupils to build on what they knew before and to develop their knowledge and skills well. The use of assessment is effective. For example, pupils and sixth-form students speak positively about learning forward forms and the use of bridging questions. They say that these approaches are helping them to remember more of the work and to challenge their thinking. The work in pupils' books supports this.

The school provides good support and care for pupils with SEND. They can study all subjects and access the whole curriculum. Pupils value this, but they could achieve better. Staff receive training and information on how to meet pupils' needs in the classroom. However, leaders do not check to see if staff are using the guidance and information well. As a result, some teachers do not make sure that learning tasks are appropriate to the pupils' ability and needs.

Pupils receive high-quality pastoral care and support. Staff in the inclusion team are highly effective in helping pupils manage their emotions. Sometimes a small number of pupils find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Staff in the inclusion team are highly skilled in helping pupils with this. As a result, the number of repeat fixed-term exclusions is falling.

Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils in school and in alternative provision well. Consequently, some pupils have improved their attendance from low starting points. However, attendance overall remains low. This is particularly so for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Persistent absence is high. This is hindering pupils' progress.

Students in the sixth form speak positively about the school. They say that teachers are ambitious for what they can achieve. Students are highly motivated to do well and take responsibility for their learning. As a result, most achieve well. For example, in art, students talk confidently about their work and how they are going to improve it. In sociology, students take part in healthy debate about current affairs and show a good level of understanding.

Leaders take care of their staff. All staff say that they are proud to work at the school. They say that they are well supported by leaders.

The trust supports the school well. For example, it has added capacity to the leadership team with the secondment of a deputy headteacher from the trust central team. The setting up of the project board has provided additional support to governors. For instance, the project board has provided training for governors on the school's priorities. As a result, governors' minutes show governors challenging leaders on issues such as the impact of inclusion on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. The designated safeguarding lead is highly effective. The risks pupils face in the local area are identified well as a result of effective links the school has with the police. Staff receive specific training on this. Pupils learn about this in assemblies and in lessons. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe.

Staff know pupils well and take their concerns seriously. They quickly report any concerns, confident in the knowledge that leaders will deal with them effectively.

Records are detailed and well organised. Adults who work at or visit the school are appropriately checked.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school provides effective care and support for pupils with SEND. However, their learning and academic outcomes could be better. Although leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate information about individual pupils' needs and training in some aspects of SEND provision, they do not routinely check and review how well this information or training is being used. Leaders need to regularly monitor and evaluate how well the needs of pupils with SEND are being met, so that they achieve their full potential.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance well in school and in alternative provision. They use a range of strategies to improve attendance. For some individual pupils with particularly low starting points, this is beginning to have an impact. However, attendance overall is low and persistent absence remains high. This negatively affects the learning of those pupils who are frequently absent. Leaders need to work with parents and carers to improve the attendance of pupils who are regularly absent from school so that they are in school, learning well and making better progress.

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 the provider and 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	144367
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10122427
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	865
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	103
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Sarah Beadsworth
Principal	Matthew Carpenter
Website	www.baxtercollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Baxter College converted to become an academy on 1 February 2017. When its predecessor school, also known as Baxter College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate.
- The principal was appointed in January 2018.
- The school currently uses alternative provision for 16 pupils on a full-time or part-time basis. The providers used are Abberley Care Farm, ContinU Plus Academy, Crowsmill Craft Centre and the MET (Medical Education Team).

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the principal, other senior leaders, members of the local governing body, including the chair, the chief executive officer, a director, the chair of the

project board, the business manager and the principal's personal assistant. An inspector visited an alternative provider used by the school.

- The inspection focused on English, mathematics, physical education, history and art. We met with curriculum area leaders and teachers. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. We talked to pupils about their learning.
- An inspector checked the single central record and the procedures for the recruitment of staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and checked pupils' records.
- We reviewed the 39 responses from staff and the 132 responses to one of the school's pupil questionnaires. We also considered the 57 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including the 35 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

Dave Gilkerson

Ofsted Inspector

Steve Byatt

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 2020