

# Inspection of Bexleyheath Academy

Woolwich Road, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7DA

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Inspection dates: 6–7 July 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils told us how the school has changed completely. They told us how much better it is now because of the changes made by the principal and his senior team. Pupils are proud of their school.

Pupils say that school leaders are much more serious about learning now. Adults set them consistently high expectations. Established routines in classes help pupils to enjoy learning and make progress. Lessons are hardly ever disrupted. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well.

Pupils are polite, friendly, and considerate. They actively demonstrate the school value, 'be big-hearted'. They help build the positive atmosphere in classes and around the school. Pupils who have arrived from other schools settle well, and say it is easy to make friends here. Bullying happens only occasionally, and pupils are confident that adults will sort it out if it does occur.

Pupils' experience of remote education has transformed the way they work in school. Pupils have an IT device provided by the school and expect to use these in almost all classes. They told us how much easier it is for them to manage their own work, share their work with others and get help from the teacher.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and broad in scope. In Years 7 to 9, leaders have removed subject carousels and all subjects are taught regularly. This helps pupils learn in more depth. Pupils make strong progress in their subjects, particularly English and mathematics. Where subjects, such as chemistry A level, are not yet in place, they are planned for September 2021. Staff are well trained in both subject knowledge and teaching strategies.

Subject leaders use the school's values, such as 'discover what's possible', to plan the curriculum. Pupils told us that these values help them 'to think outside the box'. Learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Subject leaders sequence work so that it builds on pupils' prior learning. In geography, pupils visit the Jurassic Coast in key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. This is so that pupils can learn increasingly complex concepts. In science and history, the purpose and sequencing of work is less clear.

The school's assessment system is strong. Pupils recall what they have learnt using the 'do now' tasks. The 'check out' activities help teachers to identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders support weaker readers successfully. Key staff are trained, including in phonics, and know pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading. They use this information to support pupils using a range of reading schemes. Sixth form students

have had reading training and mentor younger pupils. As a result, weaker readers make strong progress. Overall, however, pupils do not read widely and often.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils' personal development. Clubs ran remotely through the lockdowns and these continue within current restrictions. Clubs are inclusive. Almost all disadvantaged pupils regularly attend at least one club.

Pupils' cultural development is promoted across the curriculum. In English, teachers use a range of texts, including those by authors which reflect pupils' ethnicity and life experience. In music, pupils study the music of black, female composers, as well as the classical composers.

The school council are conscientious about their leadership role. They are proud to represent their peers and make a significant contribution to school life. Members planned a Pride Month assembly and run a campaign to reduce the use of plastics in school.

The careers programme is of high quality. Work experience is in place for Year 10 and Year 12 this term. Leaders put the best interests of pupils first. They make sure that the advice is impartial and meets pupils' needs and aspirations. Leaders support sixth form students well in planning their next steps to university, apprenticeships, and employment.

Teachers and classroom staff know how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have information about pupils' learning needs and adapt work, including online learning activities, so that pupils make strong progress, including in the sixth form. Pupils with SEND behave well and attend in line with their peers.

Governors know the school well and give leaders strong support. Governors use their expertise to ask questions of senior leaders, challenge them and hold them to account. Governors meet often to scrutinise a wide range of information about the school. Leaders manage staff workload and support staff well-being effectively.

Another aspect of governance, the Parent and Community Advisory Board is less well developed. Parents and carers praise the changes leaders have made. However, the ways for parents to contribute proactively to school improvement are limited at present.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders always put the needs of the child first. They identify risks, seek advice, and make sure that pupils get the right help. Leaders develop strong partnerships with external agencies, which help to keep pupils safe. Leaders make sure that the required checks are made on all staff.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. If they have concerns about anything, they know who to go to. Pupils are confident that adults' responses will be quick and helpful.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils do not read widely for pleasure. This limits pupils' opportunities to gain knowledge across the curriculum and limits their vocabulary. Leaders should ensure that all pupils read a broad range of literature, both fiction and non-fiction.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned in some subjects, including in the sixth form. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it, that they are in the process of bringing this about in history and science. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied.
- There are not enough opportunities for parents to contribute their views and ideas to help improve the school. This means that the sense of community at the school is not as strong as it could be. Leaders should ensure that parents are more involved in school life, including through the governance arrangements.

## **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 school 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137138
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10184582
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1107
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	169
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Hall
<b>Principal</b>	Graeme Napier
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bexleyheathacademy.org/">http://www.bexleyheathacademy.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26–27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is fully staffed for September 2021.
- The school has not used agency teachers since September 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, and groups of staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with governors, including the chair of governors and the trust's national director of secondary schools. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of PCAB.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the single central record and records of safeguarding and behaviour. They talked with staff about the impact of their training and to pupils about how safe they feel.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from all year groups in school and the school council. They talked informally with pupils and staff around the school.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, and music. They visited classes, looked at subject plans and pupils' work, met with pupils and held discussions with teachers and subject leaders.

### **Inspection team**

Janet Hallett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lucy Bruce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Welch	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bryony Freeman	Her Majesty's Inspector

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