

Inspection of a good school: Bradon Forest School

The Peak, Purton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 4AT

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher is working to raise expectations of pupils and staff. Around school, and in lessons, most pupils conduct themselves well. Low-level disruption to learning is rare and dealt with swiftly.

Most pupils are happy and feel safe. However, some pupils expressed concerns about other pupils' disrespectful behaviours and inappropriate name-calling. They tend not to report these issues because they are unsure of the consequences. Staff reinforce the importance of pupils showing respect and tolerance and staying safe online. There are a persistent few, though, who choose to ignore them.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attend school regularly. Staff have worked diligently to make sure that pupils and families trust the school's processes for supporting good attendance.

There is a rich provision of lunchtime and after-school clubs. They cater for pupils' interests, such as dungeons and dragons, drama, debating and many sporting activities. The library is a hub of the school, with pupil librarians helping many younger pupils to find suitable reading books.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and when. Changes to the curriculum allow more pupils to study the English baccalaureate subjects, especially languages. However, some subject leaders are not ambitious enough about their curriculums. In key stage 4, some subject curriculums have not been designed well enough to support pupils to deepen their understanding.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. However, the way in which subjects are taught is not consistently effective. As a result, sometimes, pupils struggle to understand. Senior leaders have a suitable strategy for improving teaching, but it is too soon to see any impact.

In a few subjects, pupils' understanding is not always checked precisely enough. As a result, teaching does not remedy misconceptions when they occur. Consequently, some pupils, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn inaccurate concepts that persist.

Some pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, lack guidance about how to complete written work. Consequently, there is often a series of unfinished tasks evident in workbooks. Most pupils present their work well, but there is not sufficient support for those who struggle with their handwriting.

Disadvantaged pupils in Years 8 and 9 who are weak readers, receive additional support to improve their fluency. Pupils enjoy this and gain confidence in reading. There is, currently, no specific support for all pupils in the school with weak reading skills. The new headteacher acknowledges the importance of improving the support for reading more widely and is addressing this.

Leaders are aware of pupils' needs and provide information for teachers to inform their planning. However, in too many cases, reasonable adjustments are not made for these pupils. Therefore, they do not follow the curriculum as well as they could. Trust leaders have recently undertaken a review of the provision for pupils with SEND and have given clear guidance for staff to improve the support provided.

Leaders have introduced an improved system for managing behaviour. Pupils who repeat offences have time to reflect on their misdeeds. Leaders evaluate the impact and ensure that teachers use the system consistently.

The headteacher has energised the leadership team to work on the improvements needed rapidly. She has a very secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In addition, she and senior leaders consider workload sensitively, which is appreciated by staff. Trust leaders have supported the school well to manage the challenges posed by COVID-19.

In discussion with the headteacher, the lead inspector agreed that the following may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection:

- ensuring teachers' expectations of pupils' work is of a high enough standard
- ensuring there is consistency in the implementation of the curriculum so that pupils know and understand more
- creating a culture where respectful behaviour is the norm and pupils have the confidence to report disrespectful behaviour if it does occur.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained in the latest safeguarding updates. Leaders make sure that the most vulnerable pupils are protected and are safe by working with a range of agencies. The checks for recruitment are compliant with the Department for Education's expectations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers' expectations of pupils' work are too low. This means that pupils do not always produce their best work. Leaders need to ensure that teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The teaching of subjects is inconsistent. This results in pupils not learning and remembering more in some areas of the curriculum. Leaders and subject leaders must monitor the implementation of subject curriculums more thoroughly and regularly, so that pupils learn effectively.
- Some pupils shared concerns about disrespectful behaviour. Many of them do not report it. Therefore, a minority of pupils suffer in silence because of ongoing behaviour issues. Leaders must ensure that communication and education, that lead to a culture of trust and respect, are created with urgency.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 19 and 20 April 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	142316
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10199707
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	961
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Boggis-Rolfe
Headteacher	Sarah Haines
Website	http://www.bradonforest.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 April 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees, the trust's chief executive officer, and the chair and vice-chair of governors. The lead inspector had a telephone call with the link staff member of an alternative provider.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, history, art and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector looked at recruitment practices and checks. In addition, the lead inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors spoke with staff about their training in safeguarding and to pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to Ofsted’s survey, Parent View, and staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Sarah Favager-Dalton

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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