

Inspection of Maiden Beech Academy

Lyme Road, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 8HG

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning at Maiden Beech Academy. Across the curriculum, lessons enrich pupils' understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils learn about the importance of democracy through voting for the school council. Staff and leaders invite pupils' views. The school council has influenced changes to the school canteen. Pupils learn to be kind, respectful and fair towards each other. All are welcome at Maiden Beech.

Pupils receive a good quality of education. Additional activities enable pupils to strengthen their understanding of the subjects they study. For example, pupils visit Exmoor to experience the setting of the novel, 'Lorna Doone', that they read in English.

There is a harmonious atmosphere in much of the school. Most pupils behave well and have high aspirations to achieve well. A minority of pupils create low-level disruption during some lessons. However, pupils state that bullying is rare and that staff resolve it quickly if it occurs.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive at the school. Leaders and staff provide additional support where required. Pupils with SEND are confident, successful learners.

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

Leaders and staff have designed a well-sequenced curriculum. Pupils draw on their prior knowledge to help them learn new concepts. For example, in mathematics, pupils review their knowledge of multiplication and division to help with problem-solving. Leaders and staff use assessment effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Consequently, staff have adapted the reading curriculum to meet the individual needs of pupils. Through highly tailored approaches, pupils who need to, learn to read very well.

Leaders have devised a broad curriculum that benefits from the strong subject knowledge of staff. In science, staff nurture pupils' innate curiosity and deepen their knowledge of scientific concepts. The music curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, learn to read musical notation, play the guitar and keyboard and compose their own music. Pupils are very well prepared for studying music at key stage 4. The English curriculum enables pupils to read a breadth of genres and text types. Pupils talk and write knowledgeably about themes and characters in the texts they study. For example, pupils in Year 6 applied their knowledge of the Russian Revolution that they have studied in history to their reading of George Orwell's novel, 'Animal Farm'. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils have planned opportunities to read for enjoyment.

Pupils with SEND have access to the same broad curriculum. Leaders use additional funding effectively to support pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Staff use the information about these pupils to help them enjoy learning and achieve well.

The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Leaders have established clear routines for promoting pupils' positive behaviour. Staff model good behaviour and have strong relationships with pupils. However, a minority of pupils persist in low-level disruptive behaviour that is not always addressed by staff.

Pupils are punctual to lessons and have good attendance. Pupils, parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent's comment in the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire is typical of many: 'A wonderful school...supportive and nurturing teachers.'

Trustees and governors hold school leaders to account. They ask challenging questions about the quality of pupils' education as well as safeguarding. Leaders and governors ensure that staff receive pertinent training. Staff state that leaders support their well-being and their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant in ensuring the physical and emotional safety of pupils. They act quickly and appropriately to ensure that pupils are not at risk of harm. Leaders are alert to safeguarding concerns that arise in the local area. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. They know how to identify the signs that a pupil may be at risk and know how to refer their concerns. Pupils state that there is a trusted adult at the school whom they can talk to should they need to. Leaders ensure that appropriate background checks are carried out on adults working within the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although pupils read well across different subject areas, leaders have not established an effective culture of reading for enjoyment. Leaders should ensure that pupils have planned opportunities to read for enjoyment in the curriculum.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons. However, a minority of pupils do not follow the rules of the classroom and create low-level disruption. Leaders should ensure that staff address all low-level disruption consistently well.

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	137118
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10212245
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	383
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Berry
Headteacher	Carl Winch
Website	www.maidenbeech.net/
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Maiden Beech Academy is part of the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, mathematics and music. This meant that, in each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.

- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff from the Ofsted online questionnaire.
- Inspectors held discussions with leaders, including the director of education from the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust, and three governors.
- Inspectors held discussions with single-sex groups of pupils to gather their views on the culture of the school.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinators and spoke with pupils with SEND in lessons. Pupils with SEND were included in group discussions about the quality of education in different subjects.

Inspection team

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