

Inspection of Becton School

Sevenairs Road, Beighton, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S20 1NZ

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Adults work tirelessly to provide unique curriculums to meet pupils' needs. Pupils are calm and respectful around each other and adults. Most pupils responded positively when questioned about how much they like their school. Pupils enjoy the calm atmosphere and say it helps them learn. Pupils quickly learn to become responsible for their own behaviours. Expectations are high. Adults act as good role models and demonstrate respect and tolerance of difference.

More than half the pupils show massive improvements in how many days they regularly attend school. Pupils are taught in small groups, which they like. Adults are close at hand to help them understand the work they are given and support them in gaining a greater understanding. All pupils have individual education plans, which guide teachers in how best they can help pupils learn.

Learning mentors create useful links between, pupils, families, the school and other professionals. Everybody works collaboratively to help pupils make progress emotionally and academically. Parents speak positively about the school and the work they do to help their child. A small minority of parents commented that avenues of communication could be better.

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

School leaders are exceptionally good at giving pupils opportunities to develop good, unique and valuable personal characteristics. Pupils show good improvements in their desire to learn. This is sustained as they move on to further education establishments after the age of 16 and 18 years. School leaders have ensured that in all subjects they have woven in learning and knowledge that will help prepare pupils for their next steps and for adulthood. The curriculum is enriched to ensure pupils learn skills that prepare them for life. Teachers take great care to enrich individual timetables, so that pupils get time to shine. For example, pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme or learn equestrian skills. In lessons, teachers are astute in dealing with highly sensitive subjects to build confidence and knowledge. Leaders view the identification and meeting of pupils' individual needs as especially important. They have ensured suitable numbers of learning mentors and special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinators. Pupils receive regular impartial careers guidance, which meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, to support them in their decisions for the future.

A reflective and evaluative leadership team have planned the curriculum differently at different sites to meet the diverse range of pupils' needs. At sites where pupils are only registered at Becton School the curriculum is carefully planned, so that pupils can develop knowledge and skills over time. Teachers work collaboratively with the schools that pupils come from. They use assessments to help plan learning and identify areas which need to be revisited and learned more securely. Pupils at these sites are placed in class groups by their academic and emotional needs and

not specifically by age. These pupils are all of secondary age. Teachers ensure that pupils improve their reading skills through the exploration of a wide range of texts appropriate to their reading and comprehension skills. When required, teachers use an appropriate phonic scheme to help pupils read successfully. Pupils' knowledge becomes more complex over time. Teachers subtly probe whether pupils have fully understood prior learning as they move on to explore new knowledge. Teachers are excellent at adapting their language and focus in lessons. They carefully consider pupils' immediate medical or mental health needs. Pupils spoke positively about their growing understanding and confidence in subjects, particularly, for example, in mathematics and art.

On the other sites, leaders have ensured that the curriculum is planned according to the needs of dual registered pupils. At these sites, learning mentors and teachers work closely with home schools. They ensure that the curriculum delivered at Becton School complements what is taught at the home school. At these sites, teachers ensure that pupils have fidelity to the home school phonic scheme where possible. Those who teach phonics generally do so well. However, school leaders recognise that more expertise would be beneficial and more staff are being trained in the teaching of phonics. A different planning and assessment system is used proficiently to identify these pupils' needs. These pupils get regular opportunities to speak about any concerns they may have, this is not the case across the school for all pupils.

The school senior leadership team and the Nexus multi-academy trust directors are in the process of building a larger leadership team. This is in response to the recent rapid growth of the school. The trust directors have a clear strategy and vision. They know what they have to do to secure further improvement and maintain standards achieved. Although in hand, senior leaders have not completed recruitment for all posts. Senior leaders acknowledge that there is a lack of clarity over roles and accountability in this new leadership structure. This leads to some uncertainty over responsibility for quality assurance, planning and curriculum development in some areas. A minority of staff lack enough knowledge to confidently deliver some of the curriculum. Senior leaders know what they must do and have already made some plans. For example, they are in the process of recruiting further subject specialist teaching staff.

Staff feel well supported. They feel that senior leaders look after them well. Some learning mentors get regular opportunities to review and discuss their practice, others do not. Some staff commented during the inspection that the rapid growth of the school had led to an increase in their workload. However, most staff spoke positively about how senior leaders take steps to make sure workloads are reasonable, realistic and manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture is strong. Everybody knows who the designated safeguarding leads are and that they must report any concerns they may have.

Many more staff in roles such as learning mentor, have the same level of training, so that they are skilled and knowledgeable in safeguarding. Staff spoke about the genuine open-door policy. They felt extremely well supported when they asked questions or raised any issues with leaders. These open communication channels are also apparent with the work the safeguarding team do with other professionals. Senior leaders can improve safeguarding further by ensuring that all pupils, staff and parents have formal communication channels in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some communication systems are not in place fairly and equitably across the school. This means that pupils, parents and staff receive different levels of opportunity for support. For example, some pupils and parents get opportunities to speak to staff every day. Other pupils and parents rely on an informal open-door regime to have their say. Some learning mentors receive regular meetings with senior leaders to support their work, others have an ad-hoc arrangement. Senior leaders need to ensure that avenues of communication for pupils, parents and staff are firmly in place for all, while still taking account of individual pupils' circumstances.
- Staff with leadership positions are not clear about what their role requires them to do. Subject leads are unclear if they should be quality assuring or planning the subject across all sites for all pupils. Leaders with management responsibility state they are responsible for the curriculum delivery at their site. However, they do not know if that means organising teaching or checking curriculum suitability and quality. This means leadership actions, such as quality assurance, are not being completed as well as they should be at some school sites. Senior leaders need to clarify all leaders' roles in developing and evaluating the curriculum consistently across the school.

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	147136
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10200733
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Childs
Headteacher	James Gibson
Website	www.becton.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Nexus multi-academy trust in April 2020 when the predecessor school closed. The predecessor school's overall effectiveness was judged good prior to its closure.
- The school has recently seen a rapid growth in pupil numbers from 58 to 205.
- Becton School caters for pupils aged 5 to 18 years with a wide range of acute and chronic medical and emotional needs over six different sites.
- Some pupils attend the school on a part-time basis for short periods of time. These pupils are generally dual registered.
- Pupils at two of the sites attend on a full-time basis generally over several years and are solely registered at Becton School.
- The trust directors are in the process of possibly splitting the school into two different schools. One school meeting the needs of the dual-registered pupils and one meeting needs of the sole-registered pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors visited five of the six school sites.
- The inspectors met with the executive head teacher and the two heads of school throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in reading, mathematics and humanities. The curriculums in art, the wider world and the personalised curriculum were also studied. Both inspectors visited lessons, spoke to pupils, looked at books and spoke to teachers and curriculum leads in these subjects.
- The lead inspector held meetings with members of the interim governing body, trust directors and representatives of the local authority.
- Parents, pupils and staff completed Ofsted online surveys. The results of these surveys were taken into account.
- Inspectors held meetings, considered documentation and spoke to a number of staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Mills

Her Majesty's Inspector

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