

Inspection of Baylis Court School

Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire SL1 3AH

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 March 2022

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

Ofsted has not previously inspected Baylis Court School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 because, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Baylis Court have a strong sense of fairness and respect. They appreciate the emphasis teachers and leaders place on understanding and respecting others from different backgrounds and faiths. These are common themes throughout the curriculum. Pupils feel safe in school and they are confident that staff will help them if they have concerns or worries.

Bullying is not a major issue at school. Leaders react sensibly and swiftly if bullying happens. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils behave well in lessons and show dedication to their studies. Sometimes issues occur between pupils at social times. Leaders deal with these and help pupils develop strategies to sort these out.

Many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities, including sports, drama and dance clubs. Pupils value the leadership opportunities available to them. For example, sixth-form students support younger pupils in improving their reading. Students and pupils can apply to be part of the pupil/student leadership team where they can have a say on school issues.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and broad curriculum. They are committed to teaching pupils about equality, respect and diversity. Pupils in Year 7 to 9 study the full range of national curriculum subjects. The proportion of pupils taking the English Baccalaureate subjects has declined over the past two years. However, leaders have firm plans in place to increase this proportion. Languages and humanities are becoming more popular with pupils as an option choice in key stage 4. In the sixth form, students study a wide range of academic subjects.

Subject leaders have organised the knowledge they want pupils to learn carefully. In some subjects, such as religious education (RE), content has been recently added to the curriculum. For example, Year 9 pupils now learn about non-religious world views. Staff adapt the curriculum effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide helpful support for these pupils.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard. Pupils concentrate very well in lessons. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In subjects such as RE and languages pupils achieve well because teachers provide demanding work that precisely matches the needs of pupils. In subjects such as English, mathematics and Media, teachers are experts in their field and the curriculum is very well established. In these subjects, pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils read regularly. Leaders assess how well pupils read on a regular basis. Leaders use this information to identify pupils, including pupils with SEND, who need

extra support to improve their reading. Pupils embrace frequent opportunities to read a wide range of books during the week. Leaders often encourage pupils to read books with themes around equality and diversity. Pupils also deepen their learning in lessons due to the frequent opportunities to discuss freedom, respect, fairness and differences.

Leaders plan many opportunities for pupils to develop personally. A well-considered personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is delivered in tutor times and through 'deeper learning days'. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, learn about issues such as maintaining a healthy lifestyle, the dangers of illegal substances and issues related to knife crime. Pupils find these topics relevant and interesting. They feel that these opportunities help them to understand more about the outside world. Leaders use extra funding well to support disadvantaged pupils effectively, including in the sixth form.

Pupils receive effective careers education all the way through the school to the end of Year 13. Leaders ensure that sixth-form students understand the breadth of opportunities that are available to them. For example, students hear from providers who offer apprenticeships. Pupils feel well informed about future career paths and are prepared well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Staff feel that their well-being is important to leaders. Most staff think that leaders consider their workload effectively, and that leaders take action with this in mind. For example, leaders introduced a new policy about marking and assessment. Some staff feel, however, that there are times in the school calendar when pressures are felt more sharply.

Trustees are experienced and knowledgeable. They use this to challenge leaders about their actions in school. Trustees have a keen sense of the importance of safeguarding and their responsibilities in ensuring that leaders support staff well and promote equality and diversity.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' safety extremely seriously. Leaders provide high-quality training for staff. This ensures that staff know how to report concerns they have about pupils and are clear about the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders monitor safeguarding concerns closely. They respond swiftly and involve external agencies if needed. Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe online in PSHE and assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Overall, pupils achieve well across the curriculum. In some subjects, such as English, Media and mathematics, pupils achieve exceptionally well. In some other

subjects, such as RE and languages, recent changes to the curriculum have not yet been fully embedded. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is strengthened further so that pupils, including pupils with SEND and students in the sixth form, achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum.

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	137259
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10211896
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	941
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan McNaughton Reekie
Principal	Christine MacInnes
Website	www.bayliscourt.slough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 October 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal joined the school in September 2021.
- The school joined The Thames Learning Trust in August 2011.
- The school's sixth form is linked with the sixth form at Herschel Grammar School. A proportion of pupils from Baylis Court School attend sixth-form lessons at Herschel Grammar School.
- 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 educational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- A very small proportion of pupils attend an alternative provider, The Link provision based at Manor Green Primary School.

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 meetings with the principal, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, trustees, and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- On the first day of the inspection, inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, RE, media studies and languages. This meant that in each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 38 staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 43 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parents' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Harry Ingham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Zoe Harris	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Marande	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Haynes	Her Majesty's Inspector

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