

Inspection of Beths Grammar School

Hartford Road, Bexley, Kent DA5 1NE

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |

This school was last inspected 10 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe in school. Parents and carers typically value the school and described it as 'caring' and 'supportive'.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Through the school's values of excellence, responsibility, respect and nurturing, leaders aim to encourage all pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals who are prepared for their next steps.

Pupils are articulate and support each other in their learning. They are polite and kind to adults and their peers. Behaviour is exceptional. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and self-control. They are proud to be members of the school's community. Incidents of bullying are rare. If it should happen, leaders act swiftly to resolve it.

Leaders set up the house system to encourage pupils to work together and to build a strong school community. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work alongside pupils across different year groups. For example, in a recent musical production of 'The Wizard of Oz', older and younger pupils worked closely together in their respective dramatic roles.

Leaders create opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. Pupil leaders collect the views of their peers on topical issues such as the school uniform. They feed these views back to leaders to inform future planning.

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

Leaders make sure that pupils have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects in school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study the whole curriculum. In the sixth form, students can choose from an extensive range of subjects. They appreciate this broad offer which includes a selection of modern foreign languages, including German and Chinese Mandarin.

Leaders ensure that the majority of subjects are sequenced in a way that helps pupils to build and extend their knowledge over time. Teachers have high aspirations for pupils. For example, in English, pupils in Year 7 begin by learning about myths and legends and the origins of English. Pupils use and build on this knowledge when they start to analyse key concepts in a variety of literature in later years. However, this coherent thinking is not in place for all subjects of the curriculum. In a very few subjects, where leaders have not thought about what they want pupils to learn and in what order, the development of pupils' knowledge and skills in these subjects is hindered.

Teachers are typically knowledgeable in the subjects they teach. They present subject matter to pupils clearly. Teachers encourage pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary accurately across the curriculum. For instance, in Year 10 economics,

pupils used academic terms such as 'revenue' and 'profit' competently when learning about competitive markets. In Year 10 biology, pupils could confidently define and use key terms such as 'parasitism'. This focus on vocabulary helps pupils to build their subject-specific knowledge over time and achieve well.

Teachers generally break new learning down into smaller, manageable steps so that all pupils can fully access it. Teachers make timely checks on pupils' learning and use the information to inform and adapt their teaching. They encourage pupils to draw on previous learning to help them access new learning. For instance, in Year 13 geography, students recalled what they already knew about shield volcanos. They used this knowledge to support them in their revision of geographical hazards.

Support for pupils with SEND is variable. Occasionally, teachers are not provided with the information and guidance they need to support pupils with SEND, meet their needs and help them to access the curriculum and keep up.

Teachers create opportunities in class for pupils to talk about new learning, which encourages them to tackle complex and demanding tasks. For example, in Year 10 English, pupils discussed poetry drawing on knowledge of poems taught previously in the English curriculum. Pupils take part in in-depth discussions because they show high levels of respect for one another. They support each other in their learning and behave exceptionally well at all times.

Leaders create opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure. In Year 7, pupils read about the experiences of children and young people in other parts of the world who face challenging circumstances. Leaders are in the early stages of linking wider reading topics to curriculum subjects.

In the sixth form, students recently took the initiative to raise money for a local charity. Leaders provide extra-curricular opportunities, including robotics club and songwriting club. All pupils receive purposeful careers information, education and guidance to inform their next steps.

Staff feel well supported. Leaders listen to them and have put initiatives in place that take their well-being into consideration. Staff can access helpful opportunities to extend their own professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding where pupils and parents readily speak to leaders if they have any safeguarding concerns or worries. Leaders provide staff and governors with up-to-date safeguarding training. All staff understand how to identify possible safeguarding risks and the subsequent next steps they would need to take.

Leaders are knowledgeable about the safeguarding risks that pupils may face that are particular to the local context. For instance, these include the possible risks of gang crime and county lines illegal drugs transportation. Staff and pupils have training so that they know how to safely manage and mitigate these risks.

Through the curriculum, leaders teach pupils about sensitive relationship issues, such as the importance of consent, and encourage them to look after their mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers do not receive accurate and helpful information from leaders to help them tailor support for pupils with SEND in class. This means that some pupils with SEND do not receive the most appropriate support. Leaders need to sharpen systems for sharing information with staff so that all staff know and meet the needs of all pupils with SEND effectively.
- A very few curriculum subjects are not planned coherently and securely over time. This means that it is difficult for pupils to build and extend their knowledge in certain subject areas. Leaders should make sure that the curriculum in all subjects is carefully designed and delivered coherently so pupils develop and deepen their knowledge over time.

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

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| Unique reference number | 136334 |
| Local authority | Bexley |
| Inspection number | 10214526 |
| Type of school | Grammar (selective) |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Boys |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,740 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 777 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Christopher Hares |
| Headteacher | Richard Blyghton |
| Website | www.beths.bexley.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 23 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- 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.
- Pupil numbers at the school have increased considerably since the last inspection in 2018.

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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, other senior leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography, art and design and business studies including economics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a sample of lessons in other subject areas.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' priorities for school improvement.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at the effectiveness of the school's work on safeguarding by reviewing the record of pre-employment checks for staff, speaking to staff, governors and pupils and meeting with the safeguarding team.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments, as well as responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lucy Bruce, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Jonathan Newby | Ofsted Inspector |
| Fiona Abankwah | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sam Hainey | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Jasper Green | Her Majesty's Inspector |

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