

Inspection of The Beacon School

Picquets Way, Banstead, Surrey SM7 1AG

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy school, but they do not all feel safe here. Although there have been some very recent improvements, poor behaviour has become accepted, with some fights still happening around school. Low-level disruption in classes interrupts learning. Truancy from lessons is frequent.

Pupils know who to go for help if they are being bullied, but some lack confidence that staff will deal with it effectively.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' academic achievement, but this is not fully realised. Pupils do not get a consistently good deal across different subjects. In some subjects, they are supported to build knowledge and skills over time. In other subjects, where the curriculum is not as well developed, pupils struggle to remember and apply what they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get reasonable individual support. Their needs are not, however, consistently met well in class.

Pupils' personal development is given a high priority by the school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They learn about different career options. There is a varied range of enrichment opportunities. Leaders endeavour to make sure all pupils participate.

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

Leaders know the community very well and want the best for pupils. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, they started to review the curriculum to increase its ambition, including in the sixth form. This work is not yet complete.

Leaders are gradually improving the curriculum. Pupils follow the national curriculum, and students in the sixth form have appropriate courses. Plans are in place to increase the number of pupils taking the English Baccalaureate. Subject leaders are considering carefully how to organise the teaching of knowledge and skills to build pupils' learning over time and make sure that they retain key information. In some subjects this is clear and in place. In other subjects it is still a work in progress.

Teachers generally have sound subject knowledge. In some subjects, it is strong, but not consistently so across all subjects. Staff have received important training about how best to support pupils' learning. In some subjects, careful planning and carefully selected teaching and assessment strategies mean that important knowledge builds up logically. Teachers and pupils use feedback well. Pupils can remember and use what they have learned. In other subjects, where these strategies are not as well embedded, pupils are not as confident or resilient in their learning. This affects their attention in lessons.

There are clear processes for identifying and assessing pupils with SEND. However, beyond this point these pupils have a mixed experience. Those with an educational, health and support plan tend to get effective support in lessons. Support is not as consistent for others.

Leaders are improving how pupils' reading skills are developed across the curriculum. However, there is still much to do. In particular, strategies for pupils who cannot read fluently are weak. These pupils need more support.

The way in which some pupils are allowed to behave around school and in lessons is unacceptable. Leaders know this. The trust is adding extra capacity and expertise to tackle the problem. They have taken decisive action in recent months, which has reduced fighting. Nevertheless, many staff are losing confidence and do not feel supported. Pupils do not universally respect the school's sanctions or have faith in the way behaviour is managed. The space available for pupils removed from lessons is frequently full, which means some wander the site.

Pastoral staff are overwhelmed. The pandemic has led to an increase in the number of pupils who need support to manage their emotions. Persistent absence is high and too many pupils are not punctual to lessons. Yet, leaders promote pupils' personal development well. The programme for personal, social and health education is well planned from Years 7 to 13. Leaders have selected age-appropriate content and resources. They have considered the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils appreciate time in their tutor groups, as they are a 'safe space' to discuss different themes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is carefully woven through the curriculum.

The school's careers programme is effective and pupils value it. Most students go to university or pursue apprenticeships after sixth form. Leaders prepare pupils with SEND well for their next steps.

Trust leaders and trustees understand the challenges facing the school and understand the priorities. They are providing significant help to senior leaders. This help is contributing to improvements. However, senior leaders' communication to staff, pupils and parents about what they expect, the actions they are taking and what is changing is weak. Because of the work left to do, staff do not always feel supported or well led.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Oversight of safeguarding is rigorous. Staff receive regular training and updates. The new designated safeguarding lead ensures that training needs are responded to quickly. Supported by the trust's human resources team, safer recruitment practices and procedures are appropriate. Trustees and members of the school's strategic board are knowledgeable and understand their roles and responsibilities. Effective action on fights is starting to improve perceptions of safety. Pupils understand how

to keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders work tenaciously with safeguarding partners to support individual pupils with complex challenges.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects and areas, including reading, leaders have not implemented and embedded their new plans. Where this is the case, teaching is not effective and pupils are not able to remember and apply their learning securely. Leaders should ensure that the quality seen in the stronger departments and modelled by the extended leadership team and the trust is implemented rapidly across the whole curriculum.
- Leaders' expectations of behaviour are not high or clear enough, and actions to improve things have not had enough impact. As a result, poor behaviour and attitudes to learning persist. Leaders must make sure that policies and procedures are understood and are implemented consistently and with reliable support from senior leaders.
- Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of what it is like to be a pupil at the school. As a result, their actions tend to be reactive and the impact limited. Leaders should ensure that they have access to, and use, appropriate and timely evidence to evaluate the experience of those who attend school. They should devise proactive and targeted strategies to bring about improvement and to monitor the impact of those actions.
- Communication with staff, parents and pupils is poor. As a result, stakeholders are not clear about leaders' expectations, the actions they are taking or whether they are having a positive or negative effect. This means that many do not understand what the school is trying to achieve and are not confident that change will happen. Leaders should ensure that communication is proactive, varied and clear for all.

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	137735
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10226993
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1296
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	117
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynne O'Reilly
Headteacher	Keith Batchelor
Website	www.thebeaconschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of the GLF Schools multi-academy trust.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2017.
- 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.
- The school uses five registered alternative providers and two unregistered providers.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, languages, history and drama. 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 visited lessons in many other subjects that were taking place at the time of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, trust leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors held discussions with four providers of alternative provision to discuss the safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and progress of pupils attending these provisions.
- Inspectors observed pupils' arrival to school, tutor time and breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised behaviour and bullying records.
- Inspectors scrutinised meeting minutes of the school's strategic board.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. They visited lessons to look at the support these pupils were receiving. They also visited the school's inclusion and isolation rooms.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and comments made by those who responded.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's website and policies, met with leaders and spoke with pupils and staff. They scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with members of the governing body. They scrutinised a selection of electronic child protection records.

Inspection team

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