

Inspection of BFC School

Seasiders Way, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 6JJ

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Blackpool Football School (BFC) welcomes pupils who have not benefited from a positive experience in their previous schools. Some pupils join the school having not attended their previous school for a significant length of time. Leaders aim to provide pupils with the chance to get back on track. Most pupils attend regularly.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects, with most leading towards recognised and appropriate qualifications. However, staff do not check carefully enough that pupils are learning suitable subject content in the right order. This means that pupils struggle to build on earlier learning.

Pupils are positive about the difference that BFC has had in improving their life opportunities. For example, some pupils shared with inspectors that they have learned more since they joined the school.

Sport forms a big part of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy trying out a wide range of different sporting activities. They understand the benefit of doing regular exercise. Pupils are also taught how to handle their emotions sensibly.

Pupils feel safe in school and free from bullying and harassment. They are confident that staff will address any concerns. There have been improvements in these areas since the school first opened. While leaders set high expectations for pupils, these are not always met, especially in relation to pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

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

The proprietor body and leaders are determined to make a positive difference to pupils' lives. However, despite their efforts, some aspects of the school's work require improvement. This is particularly the case regarding the curriculum.

Some curriculums are not ordered effectively or delivered well. Staff have received little training and support in this area. For instance, in mathematics, some of the curriculum content is taught out of order. This is due to weaknesses in how the curriculum is designed. As a result, on occasion, pupils tackle tasks that are not matched to their learning needs.

In some subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is further developed. For example, examination courses in English are thought out well by leaders. This results in pupils knowing more and remembering more over time. Pupils are proud of their achievements in the subject. However, this is not the case for those pupils who have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Leaders have not ensured that there is a well-structured and systematic phonics programme in place. Added to this, some teachers do not take sufficient account of pupils' reading ability when designing learning in phonics. As a result, for some pupils who struggle to read, there are times when they are unable to access the texts that teachers select for them.

In most subjects, teachers have set up useful assessments to check whether pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Most staff use the information from these assessments well to adapt their teaching for the different groups of pupils represented, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff ensure that pupils gain from a valuable range of opportunities and enrichment experiences. These activities broaden pupils' horizons through work-related experiences as well as visits and visitors to the school. Staff ensure that the relationships, health and sex education (RSHE) curriculum is taught effectively. For example, they help pupils to learn about the features of healthy relationships and lifestyles through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. However, leaders have not ensured that these opportunities are planned well or shared with pupils in a logical order.

Pupils learn about equality and differences, for example by learning about different religions, beliefs and values. This is where pupils understand what it means to be valued citizens in modern Britain. Visits to the local museums and historic sites deepen pupils' awareness of the wider world. During the inspection, pupils showed great empathy with Syrian refugees who are housed locally. They are keen to raise funds to support those charities who work with refugees locally.

Pupils' behaviour is improving. However, the school behaviour policy is not implemented consistently well by staff. When staff follow the guidance in the policy, they help pupils to manage their own behaviour. That said, when staff do not follow appropriate guidance, there are times when their actions can exacerbate the situation. The proportion of pupils suspended from school, while reducing, is too high.

The attendance rates for most pupils improve considerably once they join the school. This includes those pupils who have previously been out of education for some time. They arrive on time each day ready to engage in learning. Staff quickly follow up any absence.

The proprietor body has ensured that the school complies with the independent school standards. Together with other school leaders, they are committed to ensuring that pupils have a chance to succeed. However, their checks on how the curriculum is designed and delivered have not been effective enough.

The school meets its statutory requirements, including those of the Equality Act 2010 and implementing the guidance on RSHE. The safeguarding policy reflects current government guidance. It is available on the school's website. Leaders ensure that pupils receive impartial careers advice. Staff confirmed that the leaders and the proprietor body are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A strong safeguarding culture exists in the school. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and understand the risks that pupils face in their day-to-day lives. Staff take every opportunity to talk with pupils and help them learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff are alert for any signs of concern.

Leaders act quickly when a concern is reported. They work closely with external agencies, such as the police and youth offending team, to ensure that pupils get appropriate support.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Subject leaders have not received sufficient training to help them to plan a logical sequence of learning in all subjects. This means that pupils do not learn or remember subject knowledge as well as they should. Leaders should provide staff with suitable training to help them to plan the content of each subject curriculum effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils benefit from a well-designed phonics curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not catch up with reading as quickly as they should. This is hampering some pupils' access to the curriculum as they are struggling to read. Leaders should introduce an effective programme for the teaching of phonics and ensure that staff are trained to deliver this well.
- Not all staff follow the school's behaviour policy and make full use of appropriate de-escalation strategies. This means that some pupils become confused by the inconsistent approaches used by some staff, leading to some challenging behaviour from pupils. Leaders should ensure that all staff implement the behaviour policy 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.

School details

Unique reference number	148646
DfE registration number	890/6011
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10243500
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	12
Proprietor	Blackpool Football Club Community Trust
Chair	Wendy Swift
Headteacher	Gemma Trickett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,000
Telephone number	01253348691
Website	www.bfcct.co.uk/
Email address	gemma.trickett@bfcct.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the school's first standard inspection. The school was registered by the Department for Education on 5 October 2021.
- The school provides alternative provision for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream secondary schools in Blackpool.
- The school buildings are situated in the north stand area of Blackpool Football Club.
- The school is registered to admit up to 32 girls and boys, aged between 14 and 16 years old. There are currently twelve Year 11 pupils on roll. They attend full time. There are 10 Year 10 pupils who attend part time for two days each week.
- One pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 spoke with the headteacher, subject leaders and staff. An inspector spoke with the chair of the proprietor body and the chief executive officer of Blackpool Football Club Community Trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. As part of this, an inspector toured the school's premises accompanied by school leaders.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, such as school policies, risk assessments, school improvement plans, and behaviour and attendance records.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, PSHE and sport. 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mike Hewlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Hampson

Ofsted Inspector

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