

Inspection of Brompton Academy

Marlborough Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5HT

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value their time at school. Staff focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. In personal development lessons, pupils explore topics around human rights. Assemblies are a time to celebrate each other's achievements, such as sporting successes in local tournaments. Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being and safety. Pupils trust adults to look after them and know that bullying will be dealt with quickly if it happens.

Leaders' expectations, however, have not been high enough to ensure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to study a broad and ambitious curriculum. For example, too few pupils can study a modern foreign language. This means that the future opportunities for some pupils are more limited.

Many pupils recognise the importance of learning and behaving well. These pupils understand the rules that leaders put in place to keep them safe and enable everyone to learn. A minority of pupils find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. Leaders know this but do not always take appropriate action to provide effective support. This can lead to extended and repeated periods of suspension where pupils become even more disengaged with their learning.

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

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is ambitious enough. It does not give all pupils the knowledge and experiences they need to be successful. The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 does not cover the full breadth and depth of the national curriculum. Only a select number of pupils are able to study Spanish in Year 7 and Year 8. Others miss out and so do not have the appropriate knowledge they need to study a modern foreign language at GCSE. The number of pupils studying the full range of subjects as part of the English Baccalaureate continues to decline steeply. Leaders have not enacted plans quickly enough to resolve this.

Furthermore, leaders have not ensured that pupils have the time to study the full content of the national curriculum in sufficient detail in subjects such as history. So, for example, pupils struggle to connect important episodes in history or consider the causes and consequences of different events. In other subjects, such as science, some learning activities are not thoughtfully planned. Pupils therefore struggle to remember what has been taught and apply it to new learning.

Yet in other subjects, such as dance and English, leaders do carefully organise learning so that pupils' knowledge builds over time. Teachers deliver lessons which motivate and enthuse pupils to want to know and do more. They use assessment effectively to identify and close gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders have carefully selected a wide range of texts to explore social issues with pupils, such as racism and respect. Leaders ensure that weaker readers get additional support to develop their confidence and fluency.

Many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support to help them access the curriculum. Staff skilfully adapt learning using pupil profiles that explain the help that individuals need. Specialist teachers in the Eliot Centre present learning in a way that helps pupils to remember more. However, leaders do not ensure that the minority of pupils who need support to manage their behaviour get the right help. Consequently, some pupils miss out on experiencing the same education as their peers because of lengthy suspensions and a lack of targeted support.

The personal development curriculum is relevant and engaging. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and take care of their mental health. They are confident to talk to the school counsellors about any worries and know they will be listened to. The school's clean and calm learning environment reflects leaders' dedication to teaching pupils about responsibility and respect. Extra-curricular opportunities further develop pupils' interests and talents.

Students in the sixth form are complimentary about the pastoral support that they receive. Leaders are taking appropriate actions to improve attendance. Students enjoy a wide offer of subjects. They have high aspirations to go on to study at a university and receive good support when making applications. Each year group receives purposeful careers support and advice. Leaders are keen to help students see the benefits of each subject they study as they move into further education and employment.

Governors and trustees understand their important role of holding school leaders to account for the standard of education in school. They actively engage with school leaders and use a range of information to ensure they are clear about the priorities and direction that leaders need to take.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are acutely aware of the safeguarding context of the pupils in school. This means they know who may be at risk and are swift to provide effective and timely support. Regular training means that all staff know how to identify and report concerns about pupils. Detailed records illustrate the sharp actions and clear lines of regular communication that leaders maintain with professionals who are supporting pupils and their families.

Leaders are rigorous in ensuring the right checks are made when recruiting new staff to the school. Governors and trustees understand their statutory responsibilities and regularly audit safeguarding processes.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key stage 3 curriculum is not ambitious for all pupils. This limits the future opportunities for some pupils. Leaders should urgently implement their plans to provide all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Leaders have not ensured the curriculum in some subjects matches the aims of the national curriculum in enough depth. This means that pupils do not learn well across every subject. Leaders should ensure that there is enough curriculum time for staff to follow well-sequenced plans that emphasise the most important content and then check that pupils have learned and remembered it.
- Leaders have not put in place effective strategies to support pupils with challenging behaviour. Consequently, these pupils are not helped to meet the school's expectations for behaviour so that they can focus on their learning. Leaders must ensure these pupils have the targeted support they need to prevent them disengaging further from education.

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.

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	136107
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10211458
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1398
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kim Lowe and Georgina Randsley de Moura
Headteacher	Jennifer Best (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.bromptonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017

Information about this school

- There have been changes in the senior leadership of the school since the last inspection in February 2017.
- The school is part of the University of Kent Academies Trust multi-academy trust.
- The school has a specialist resource base called The Eliot Centre. This provides support for pupils who have speech, language or social communication disorder and pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages, dance and history. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about other subjects in the curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the 152 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 96 free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with representatives from the board of trustees and the local governing body, including the chairs. An inspector also spoke to the chief executive officer and representatives from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding leads, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school, and spoke with trustees and governors.

Inspection team

Michelle Lower, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Foster	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Norman	Ofsted Inspector
Rupert Prutton	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Garvey	Ofsted Inspector

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