

# Inspection of an outstanding school:

## Bradfields Academy

Churchill Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME5 0LB

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Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

### **Outcome**

Bradfields Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

### **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a kind and caring school where pupils flourish. They arrive at school each day smiling and keen to find out what they will be learning. They develop respectful relationships with staff and form positive friendships with each other.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well because staff understand and address every individual pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities. Expectations are high. Staff are dedicated to giving each pupil the knowledge they need to succeed academically. Leaders are determined that all pupils will have the skills and character needed to continue learning or to get a job when they leave school. Therefore, pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Highly skilled, caring staff consistently use thoughtful approaches to help pupils manage their own behaviour effectively. Jenson, the therapy dog, plays an active role in helping pupils develop their self-esteem and confidence. He participates in sessions which help pupils with their communication and social skills.

Pupils feel safe and secure, and they love learning. Staff notice pupils' talents and interests and create opportunities to showcase and nurture them. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and describe the school as 'a supportive community that goes above and beyond for everyone'.

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

Leaders have devised a range of curriculum pathways that are designed to meet the variety of needs of the pupils. Teachers have carefully planned out the learning. High levels of knowledge and expertise mean staff are confident in making appropriate adaptations to plans to deliver highly effective and personalised learning.

Pupils' education, health and care plan targets are thoughtfully broken down to form achievable smaller steps. These are woven throughout a full range of subjects. In all

classes, activities and tasks for learning are carefully sequenced to meet the specific needs of each learner. This ensures that they meet the targets teachers set and achieve their full potential.

Staff feel valued by leaders. This has created a culture of mutual support and collaboration among the staff team. Passionate subject leaders share their specialist expertise with other staff. As a result, learning is engaging and interesting for all pupils.

In the primary phase, pupils enjoy learning through stories and topics. This enables them to develop their skills and knowledge in all subjects. Reading, writing and communication are prioritised. Reading lessons enhance pupils' knowledge of different phonics sounds. If pupils need more opportunities to practise, leaders quickly identify this and put targeted support in place. All teachers share a determination to promote a love of reading. The special, whole-school 'drop everything and read' days are a highlight. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about the range of books they study in school.

Staff focus on building positive relationships with pupils. This helps to motivate pupils who, in return, show high levels of engagement. Lessons are carefully structured to support pupils to be ready to learn. When moving around the school, pupils are sensible and respectful. Staff know pupils extremely well. They strive to understand the communication that lies behind some behaviours. When needed, pupils have access to appropriate sensory equipment to help them learn to self-regulate their emotions effectively.

Careers guidance is focused on expanding pupils' knowledge of what is possible. Pupils gain meaningful qualifications and training that will help them to take their next steps in employment, education and training. Teachers support students in the sixth form to take part in interesting work placements, both in the community and school. For example, some pupils work as teaching assistants with younger pupils. These experiences give pupils confidence and a range of useful skills for their future lives.

Leaders expect all pupils to grow into responsible citizens. They are taught about respect and equality. In line with leaders' aspirations, over time, pupils develop a strong self-identity. This has resulted in older pupils being able to express empathy for those who are victims of discrimination. Pupils were able to describe resolving issues where there had been differences of opinion in a respectful and polite way. Responsibility is taken seriously by everyone. Opportunities to become lead students, complete the sports leader qualification and help younger pupils are valued.

Trustees know the school well. They are focused on working closely with leaders on building and expansion projects. Leaders have a strong moral focus on improving outcomes for pupils, both within and beyond Bradfields. Close links with other local schools and services create a valuable opportunity for staff to share excellent practice.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know and understand pupils exceptionally well. Leaders make sure that everyone has high-quality safeguarding training. This means staff are well prepared to notice signs that something may not be right, including for pupils who are less well able to communicate this for themselves. Staff report any concerns, and leaders make sure the right support is put in place quickly.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and outside of school. Pupils are confident that there is always a trusted adult to talk to in school who will listen to them and help them.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140701
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200540
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	341
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Peter Martin
<b>Principal</b>	David Waters
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bradfieldsacademy.co.uk">www.bradfieldsacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Bradfields Academy provides education for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, autism spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulty. All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- Bradfields Academy is part of the Fortis Trust, which consists of this school, the Fortis Trust Outreach service and the Forward2Employment specialist post-16 institution.
- 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 does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 principal, the chief executive officer, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust board, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and the arts. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum planning in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and policies, speaking to staff and trustees and discussing this with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and trust board minutes.

## Inspection team

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachel McDonald-Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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