

# Inspection of BMAT STEM Academy

Velizy Avenue, Harlow, Essex CM20 3EZ

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Pupils enjoy learning at BMAT STEM Academy. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils say that the school is a good place to study because staff know them well and treat them as young professionals.

Pupils have chosen to attend the school to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. They benefit from the network of local and national employers with which leaders liaise. Pupils particularly enjoy doing project work with sponsor organisations.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are respectful to each other and to staff. Pupils know that staff deal with bullying instances quickly on the rare occasions that they happen. Pupils are happy and safe in the school.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, receive the information they need to help them with their next steps in education, employment or training. This helps them make well-informed decisions about their future.

Pupils feel valued. Their voice brings about changes in their school. For example, they changed the school menu to make it healthier. The school council organise fundraising activities that matter to pupils in the school. These include cancer charities and support for Ukrainian families.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and meets the needs of the pupils in the school. There is a range of academic and vocational subjects on offer, particularly for students in the sixth form. In most subjects, the curriculum clearly sets out the important skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they need to learn them. However, in a few subjects this information is not clear enough. Where this is the case, pupils do not routinely link their learning to what they have learned before.

Most lessons build pupils' understanding in small steps. This helps them to learn the important information that they need to remember. Teachers regularly check what pupils know in lessons and adapt their teaching to help address any gaps quickly. When done well, pupils develop a secure understanding of the information they learn. While pupils are able to talk about their learning in detail, their writing skills are less well developed. This means that some pupils are not able to communicate what they know as well as they should.

Reading is developing in the school. Dedicated time for reading encourages pupils to read from a variety of books, for example poetry and fiction. This includes materials that are relevant to their areas of study. Leaders identify pupils who have lower reading skills when they join the school, and they put support and strategies in place to help these pupils develop confidence and fluency in reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well catered for. They access the same learning and opportunities as other pupils. Leaders identify individual needs as pupils join the school and put appropriate strategies in place to help them do well. Training helps teachers to effectively support these pupils. Pupils with SEND, including those in the sixth form, told inspectors that they are well supported and that teachers are always willing to give up their time to help them.

Students in the sixth form, including those with SEND, study a range of STEM subjects. Teachers of sixth-form subjects have strong subject knowledge. They set demanding work that helps students to build on what they know already. This helps students to make progress. Students value opportunities to be leaders in the school. They take on the responsibility of these roles with pride, for example as members of the school council.

Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships through the well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum. Through these lessons, assemblies and visitors to the school, pupils learn about different cultures and sexuality. Pupils are tolerant of each other. They value and respect each other for being who they want to be.

Careers advice is highly effective. Pupils develop a secure understanding of opportunities that are available to them through engagement with employers. All pupils in Years 10 and 12 participate in work experience placements. The school was able to continue with these placements during the pandemic. Engagement from school sponsors, alongside the support from teachers, provide students with guidance with applications to higher education and apprenticeships.

Leaders support staff with access to training and networks within the trust. This helps to develop staff's expertise. Staff are proud to work in the school and feel well supported in managing their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust systems in place to enable staff to report concerns that they have about safeguarding. Leaders ensure that staff are regularly trained and updated to help them identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders swiftly and methodically follow up all concerns that are raised. They engage with external agencies to provide additional support where this is needed.

Pupils understand how to stay safe. They learn how to recognise risks in their local contexts, and when online, through the enrichment programme, which includes visits from external organisations such as the police.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, leaders have not clearly articulated the key information that pupils need to know and understand. Where this is the case, it is not clear for pupils how new learning connects with what they have learned previously. This limits how well pupils are able to deepen their understanding. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans clearly set out the sequence of learning that will most effectively support all pupils to know more and remember more over time.
- While pupils can usually verbally articulate what they know and remember with confidence, some pupils struggle to write down what they know. Expectations of pupils' writing is not high enough. This means that pupils do not accurately express what they know and understand. Leaders should ensure that there is a common approach to writing so that what pupils write is a more accurate reflection of what they know and remember.

## 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>	145931
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10254997
<b>Type of school</b>	Technical
<b>School category</b>	University technical college
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14 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>	199
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Drayton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dustin Schuyler
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bmatstemacademy.org">www.bmatstemacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- BMAT STEM Academy is sponsored by partner organisations. At the time of this inspection, the major partners included GlaxoSmithKline, Princess Alexandra NHS Trust and Pearson.
- The school opened in April 2018 and is part of the BMAT Academies Trust.
- This is a smaller-than-average size secondary school. The proportion of boys on roll is significantly larger than the number of girls.
- The school uses one registered 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 technical education 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science and computer science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, careers and personal development.
- The lead inspector spoke to representatives from the trust and the governing body.
- As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures. They spoke to leaders, pupils and staff about the arrangements for safeguarding. They checked the single central record.
- The lead inspector spoke to staff working at the alternative provision.
- The lead inspector considered the 22 responses and 16 free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector also reviewed the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the six responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Wayne Jarvis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Suzanne Thrower

Ofsted Inspector

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