

# Inspection of a good school: The Boswells School

Burnham Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 6LY

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

## Outcome

The Boswells School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at The Boswells School. They move calmly around the school and show consideration for others. They feel safe and bullying is unusual. Pupils are confident that, if bullying happens, staff will deal with it well.

In lessons, pupils concentrate and work hard. They behave well and want to learn. Pupils have respect for their teachers and know how well they are taught. They appreciate the support they receive for their well-being. High expectations are set for pupils. They thrive on meeting these in the way they behave and their commitment to their learning.

Pupils enjoy a variety of high-quality clubs and visits, which broaden their experiences and enhance the content of the curriculum they are taught. They participate enthusiastically and work as a team to be successful, for example, in the volleyball teams and school productions.

Many pupils continue their studies at the school's sixth form. Sixth-form students have good attitudes to their learning. They take up responsibilities to lead and support activities and learning across the school. They are positive role models for younger pupils.

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

Leaders have a clear vision about how they want to continue to improve the quality of education. They are ambitious for pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn the knowledge they need to achieve well. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities through a broad and inclusive curriculum. This also includes in the sixth form, where the curriculum ensures students follow courses that help them to be successful when they leave school.

The curriculum is coherently planned. Leaders identify what pupils should learn and when. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit knowledge and concepts they

have learned before and practise their skills. This means most pupils build up what they know and can do so they are able to apply it effectively to their next stages of learning.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Teachers correct misconceptions as these arise. Pupils with SEND are well supported. Teachers adapt activities well for these pupils. This helps them take part fully in lessons, accessing the same curriculum as their peers and, consequently, being successful.

Leaders place importance on reading. They prioritise time in the curriculum for pupils to read. The class reader texts are thought-provokingly linked to the personal development programme. These help pupils to explore such issues as being different and the effects of crime. The weakest readers get effective support, which helps them to become more confident and fluent readers.

Leaders' personal development programme for pupils is well considered. For example, important themes pupils need to know are helpfully revisited each year. This includes a wide-ranging programme of careers education, which enables nearly all pupils to move on to further education, employment or training. Students in the sixth form value the careers talks they receive and feel well prepared for their next steps. Form time and assemblies help to secure pupils' understanding. This means pupils are supported effectively to develop their character and improve their well-being and life skills.

Most pupils attend school regularly. That said, a number of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are persistently absent and miss a lot of learning. Leaders support the well-being of these pupils. However, despite their efforts to date, leaders have not ensured that pupils get the support they need to keep up with the curriculum. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Staff feel valued, as leaders listen and are mindful of their workload. Staff appreciate the training opportunities offered through the trust. Staff, like pupils, enjoy being a member of The Boswells School.

Governors and trustees know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They support and challenge leaders effectively. They make regular checks on the well-being of pupils and staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have built a diligent culture of safeguarding. They have a thorough understanding of how to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained. Procedures to report concerns are clear. Pupils at risk of harm are identified quickly and receive appropriate help.

The curriculum provides pupils with the information they need to stay safe. For example, pupils learn to understand risks such as harmful sexual behaviours and knife crime. Pupils know who to speak to if they are worried about something.

The trust and governors regularly check that the school fulfils its safeguarding duties.

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

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

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils who are absent get the support they need to keep up with their learning. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged. As a result, many pupils with high absence are not achieving well. Leaders need to make sure that pupils with persistent absence get all the help they need to keep up with the curriculum.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

## **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>	137874
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211469
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<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>	1,492
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	267
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Roger Blundell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Mansell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.boswells-school.com">http://www.boswells-school.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Boswells School is part of the Chelmsford Learning Partnership.
- The school roll in the sixth form is growing.
- The school uses five alternative providers for a small number of pupils. One of these is registered, and four are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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 held meetings with the chief executive officer and the chair of the trust. They also met with governors, the headteacher and senior leaders. They spoke to a local authority representative and leaders of alternative providers.
- Inspectors did deep dives in English, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and science, as part of this inspection. Inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils for these subjects. Inspectors looked at the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and during breaktimes. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, including single-sex groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including those related to curriculum planning and development, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, exclusions and the school's development plan. They also looked at minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors talked to staff, including some early career teachers, about their experience of the school, including their workload. They also talked to them about the amount and quality of training and support they receive from leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 273 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 173 free-text comments from parents. Inspectors also considered 81 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Kathryn Herlock, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Loneragan	His Majesty's Inspector
James Shapland	Ofsted Inspector

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