

Inspection of BEP Academy

62–64 Western Road, Romford RM1 3LP

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils succeed at this school. They study a suitable curriculum and receive effective support. Staff work well to help pupils overcome the many challenges they may face. Pupils appreciate the support they receive. They particularly enjoy the vocational qualifications they can choose to work towards, including in construction, sport, art and design and childcare.

Pupils enjoy being at school, but many struggle to attend regularly. Attendance rates have significantly worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders and staff are doing all they can to encourage pupils to attend school more regularly.

Pupils feel cared for, and safeguarding is effective. Over time, they learn to trust that staff will help them. Staff understand pupils' needs. They skilfully balance patience and flexibility with high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves over time. Bullying is not a problem and is dealt with well when it arises.

Leaders are particularly successful in developing pupils' social, communication and numeracy skills. The current 'mind-your-language' approach is working well. However, pupils' reading is not promoted as effectively.

Staff keep in close contact with parents, carers and placing authorities. Almost all those who contributed to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, said they would recommend the school.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is fit for purpose, as it meets pupils' needs and interests. Pupils study all the required areas of learning and have a choice of four vocational pathways. In most subjects, leaders have worked with subject-specialist staff to think about what they want pupils to learn and in what order. This sequence is reflected in the school's bespoke learning support resources. These are implemented well and provide helpful consistency to pupils. Staff use ongoing assessment checks appropriately, adapting resources and lessons as necessary. Staff provide personalised support whenever pupils need additional help. This enables pupils to continually build on their prior learning. Almost all pupils achieve a range of useful qualifications, often within a short space of time. Almost all make successful moves to further education colleges or onto apprenticeships.

Leaders ensure that teaching across the curriculum helps pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge. However, leaders' work to encourage a love of reading is underdeveloped. Leaders have not put in place a suitable programme to develop the reading fluency of the very small number of pupils who may join the school at the early stages of learning to read. In a very few subjects, staff focus too much on getting pupils to pass examinations, instead of

thinking through what knowledge and skills they want them to learn. This is partly due to the relative lack of professional subject training.

Leaders provide a strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. It prioritises teaching pupils about healthy relationships, looking after their mental health and treating everybody equally. Regularly, pupils are taught about fundamental British values, the criminal justice system and strategies to keep themselves safe. The relationships and sex education requirements are met. The school provides mentoring and counselling. Leaders also organise more specialist, personalised support for those pupils who need it.

Pupils enjoy visits linked to the subject curriculum, including to football stadiums, museums and parks. However, there is a lack of extra-curricular options. This restricts opportunities for pupils' wider social and cultural development.

Typically, staff use successful strategies to help pupils to re-engage in education and to help them attend school more regularly than they have done in the past. For example, leaders are currently rethinking the timings of the school day and how to strengthen the arrangements for breakfast and lunchtimes. They are also in the process of employing a second attendance officer to provide greater capacity to support pupils' families.

Leaders and staff manage any challenging behaviour well. They have high expectations and rules relating to mobile phones in school, punctuality to lessons and respectful communication which are established and effective. Staff use a range of rewards to reinforce positive behaviour. The use of sanctions, including suspension, is proportionate. As a result, pupils typically behave well throughout the school day. Leaders are rightly working hard to tackle issues such as the wearing of hoods and hats in class and to reduce the disruption and missed learning arising from pupils who are in school but not attending classes.

Proprietors and leaders work hard in challenging circumstances to provide effective alternative provision. Staff are positive about working at the school. They feel supported by leaders. Proprietors and leaders have ensured compliance with statutory requirements. These include all the independent school standards and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. However, proprietors and leaders receive limited external support and scrutiny. The proprietors are in the process of introducing more formal arrangements for accountability.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders face multiple challenges in keeping pupils safe. The safeguarding team work effectively to keep pupils as safe as possible. They routinely manage a range of concerns well. The school's rigorous procedures are implemented well to refer, manage and monitor concerns. Leaders work effectively with other professionals, including those in youth offending, substance abuse and social care teams. They are

persistent in ensuring that suitable actions are taken as quickly as possible when concerns are raised.

All staff regularly complete safeguarding training. The staff recruitment process reflects statutory requirements. The safeguarding policy reflects current guidance and is published on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Curriculum thinking is not always focused on pupils learning subject-specific knowledge and skills. Subject planning is sometimes overly focused on teaching pupils to pass examinations, and there is a gap between the school's curriculum roadmaps and learning packs. Proprietors and leaders should ensure that a well-sequenced curriculum enables pupils to learn consistently well in all subjects. They should provide staff with more high-quality, subject-specific professional training to help them with this.
- Leaders are not doing enough to encourage pupils to read or to promote a love of reading. They have not put a suitable phonics programme in place to help any pupils who may join the school and struggle to read. Proprietors and leaders should ensure that arrangements are made to implement a phonics programme, provide regular reading-practice opportunities and develop a whole-school approach to promoting reading.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to explore and broaden their interests and talents. Proprietors and leaders should realise their plans to review and enhance the school's extra-curricular offer.
- Proprietors and leaders have not put formal, consistent systems in place to check the effectiveness of leaders' work. Proprietors and leaders should realise their plans to introduce accountability measures and ensure that rigorous procedures are put in place to provide support and hold leaders to account for the quality of their work.

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	145192
DfE registration number	311/6002
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10254682
Type of school	Secondary alternative provider and day special school
School category	Other independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Number of part-time pupils	6
Proprietor	Business Education Partnership (UK) Ltd
Chair	Steve Wilks
Headteacher	Kelly Sims (Executive Headteacher) Jo Green (Principal)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,636 to £35,000
Telephone number	01708 436440
Website	www.bepgroup.net
Email address	info@bepgroup.net
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 November 2018

Information about this school

- BEP Academy is registered to admit up to 90 pupils between the ages of 13 and 16 at 62–64 Western Road, Romford, RM1 3LP and 4 Repton Court, Basildon, SS13 1LN. It operates as both an alternative provider and a special school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is currently full. Of the 90 pupils on roll, over half attend on a dual-roll arrangement with their mainstream secondary schools.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in November 2018. Since then, a material change inspection considered the school's change in main premises in November 2019.
- The school makes no use of 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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas: English, mathematics, design and technology (construction), and PSHE education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, observed and listened to pupils and considered evidence of pupils' learning.
- Inspectors visited both premises. They met with the chair of the proprietor body, the chief executive officer and other senior leaders throughout the inspection. They also met with a group of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with two representatives with experience in placing pupils at the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of evidence to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards and Equality Act 2010.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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