

Inspection of a good school: The Broxbourne School

Badgers Walk, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire EN10 7FU

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

The Broxbourne School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Broxbourne School is an exceptional place for pupils to learn. They thrive due to leaders' expectation that everyone is 'respectful, responsible, aspirational and supportive'. Pupils experience a vibrant and caring community. Parents are very positive about the school and say it is 'a great environment for learning'.

Pupils are proud of the diversity which exists within the school. Those from many backgrounds mix together happily. From the moment they join Year 7, the curriculum teaches pupils in depth about areas such as difference. They quickly develop a rich and mature understanding of tolerance.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils feel safe and respected by peers. Bullying is very rare. If it happens, it is dealt with immediately. Pupils have high attendance and very strong levels of motivation for learning.

Pupils enjoy a vast range of extra-curricular opportunities. They talk with enthusiasm about the superb jazz band and enjoy multiple sports and trips overseas. Participation rates in activities are extremely high, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Many pupils continue their studies in the school's sixth form. Sixth-form students are excellent role models. They 'give something back to the school' by supporting younger pupils, as mentors, leading clubs or in lessons.

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

The curriculum is aspirational. Leaders aim for all pupils to achieve the same high outcomes. In the sixth-form students follow ambitious courses. This enables very high proportions to progress to the destination of their choice.

Leaders plan the curriculum meticulously. They identify the exact subject knowledge they want pupils to learn. Subject leaders skilfully ensure that new content spirals back to revisit prior learning. For example, in languages, pupils return to topics, learning more vocabulary, new tenses and more complex grammar each time. This supports them to become assured linguists. Teachers make regular and carefully considered links between subjects. As a result, pupils' understanding becomes a web of interconnecting strands of knowledge.

Teachers deliver the curriculum with high levels of skill. They have expert subject knowledge. Teachers are adept at helping pupils to understand new learning. For example, they ask challenging questions and rectify misunderstandings. Teachers model and check learning effectively. For instance, in design and technology (DT), excellent instruction and feedback leads to high-quality work. Consequently, pupils make exceptional progress. They build their knowledge in increasing depth and complexity.

Leaders are relentless in their ambition for all pupils to learn what they need to be successful. This includes the most disadvantaged. For example, leaders have put in place a highly effective reading programme. They check that pupils can read accurately and fluently when they join the school. The weakest readers receive high-quality interventions. This quickly helps them to read more confidently.

Pupils with SEND receive excellent support. Rigorous staff training ensures that pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately. Teachers have all the information they need to adapt learning effectively so that pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have a clear vision for how pupils should conduct themselves. Staff understand and implement this consistently and effectively. Consequently, standards of behaviour are very high. Pupils concentrate hard and participate enthusiastically in class.

The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is wide-ranging. Pupils develop a rich understanding of the importance of areas such as healthy relationships. Pupils, including in the sixth form, benefit from an extensive careers programme. This enables them to feel highly prepared for their next steps. As a result, pupils are effectively equipped to make informed choices about their adult lives.

Staff feel valued as leaders listen and are mindful of their workload. They have excellent opportunities for training.

Governors have a secure, relevant set of skills and support. They challenge leaders effectively. They make regular checks on the well-being of pupils and staff. They ensure that the school fulfils its safeguarding duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is embedded in the school's culture and community. Safeguarding actions are exceptionally robust and staff are well trained. Pupils know who to talk to if they have concerns. Staff have highly positive relationships with children and understand their responsibilities to act quickly. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve any issues they have.

The curriculum provides pupils with the information they need to stay safe. For example, pupils learn to understand risks such as the nature of consent and how this can be impacted by the use of drugs and alcohol.

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 November 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

Unique reference number	136396
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10268591
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1,340
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Trew
Headteacher	Paula Humphreys
Website	www.broxbourne.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Broxbourne School uses one registered alternative provider.
- The new school building has been open for two years.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher and senior leaders. They telephoned the school improvement partner and the alternative provider.
- Inspectors did deep dives in English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages, and DT, 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 met with groups of pupils, including single-sex groups of pupils, and spoke to pupils informally at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including those relating 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.
- Inspectors considered the 360 responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the 209 free-text comments from parents. Inspectors also considered 104 responses to the staff survey and 682 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kathryn Herlock, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Polly Lankester	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023