

Inspection of The Beacon School

Picquets Way, Banstead, Surrey SM7 1AG

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

New leaders at the school have raised expectations significantly. They are committed to ensuring that the school's values of 'excellence' and 'respect' are understood and demonstrated by all. There is, however, still more work to be done to achieve this fully. Most pupils, staff and parents say that leaders listen to their views more. They are benefiting from the clear vision and plans that are now in place to make positive changes for the school community.

Pupils say that behaviour is 'much better', although it is still not yet good enough. Most pupils enjoy school, and learn in a calm and safe environment. However, some pupils continue to disrupt lessons and do not fully engage in learning. Pupils feel much safer in school, particularly at social times, as adults supervise them regularly. Incidents of physically aggressive behaviour still occur, but these are much less frequent since leaders have taken robust action to address this. Bullying occurs occasionally, but most pupils know that staff will act quickly if it happens.

There is a range of clubs on offer. Some pupils say that these are not always well matched to their interests. Leaders track those who attend extra activities so that they can be sure that those who would benefit the most take part. Pupils enjoy exciting visits to enrich their learning, for example they go to NASA in Florida and to Iceland. Some pupils are looking forward to a trip to Tanzania, which they are fundraising for themselves. Leaders are working to broaden this offer to make it more accessible for all. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, benefit from a well-organised careers programme so that they are well informed about their next steps in education, employment and training.

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

This school is improving because leaders have raised standards and expectations for behaviour and the curriculum since the last full inspection. They have used expertise from within the trust to develop and implement a new and ambitious curriculum. New curriculum plans are well sequenced to ensure that pupils build on and revisit their learning regularly. However, this important work is not yet finished in some areas. This means that pupils do not currently access a high-quality curriculum in all subjects. Expectations for learning are not realised in lessons where poor behaviour and disengagement continues and changes in teaching staff are frequent.

Subject leaders and staff are continuing to receive specialist training to develop their expertise further. Pupils learn well in lessons where they are asked challenging questions that check the depth of their learning. Some teachers change their plans to address any gaps that they identify. When teaching is more expert, pupils are given many opportunities to recall and apply knowledge and concepts from previous topics. For example, in geography, Year 8 pupils explain in detail how fair trade links to the cycle of poverty. However, this practice is not yet consistently embedded across the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make as much progress as they should. Leaders have recently implemented new systems to ensure that pupils with SEND are identified quickly and get the specific support that they need. However, some teachers do not make the necessary adaptations to ensure that pupils with SEND successfully access the same curriculum as their peers.

Students in the sixth form receive expert teaching in small classes. They talk enthusiastically about their experiences at the school and appreciate the guidance and advice they have been given to prepare them for when they leave school. Achievement in the sixth form is not as high as it should be. It is affected by the continued absence of a number of students.

Leaders have prioritised reading through the tutor reading programme which has been embedded this year. The selection of texts sometimes lacks ambition as leaders have been focused on developing cultural capital rather than challenge. The weakest readers in key stage 3 are identified quickly, and targeted intervention has had a positive impact on their progress. This practice is not yet as secure for key stage 4 pupils.

Leaders have introduced a clear set of rules for classroom behaviour. Staff work hard to enforce these, but some do not fully follow the processes that are in place. Poor attitudes to learning and the disruptive behaviour of some pupils prevent others from learning in these lessons. However, many pupils want to do well, and talk enthusiastically about their learning.

Absence rates remain high overall. Leaders' actions are beginning to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent. They know that there is still work to do to improve this further. Pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not access the full curriculum or make sufficient progress as a result.

Pupils learn about important issues such as healthy relationships and consent through the personal development programme. They have some opportunities to develop leadership skills through work in primary schools and as sports leaders. Leaders supplement the curriculum with talks from outside speakers on a range of important issues, such as violence, sexual harassment and mental health and well-being.

Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know that there is still much work to be done to improve the school further and have specific plans in place to achieve this. Most staff feel supported through this period of change. They have confidence that new leaders will take the necessary actions to address significant areas of concern.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make the necessary checks to ensure that staff are safe to work in the school. They provide ongoing training so that staff have secure knowledge of when to identify and refer a pupil who may be at risk. Leaders seek help from outside agencies quickly when they are concerned about pupils. They keep clear and accurate records so that they can monitor pupils' welfare carefully.

Pupils learn about important issues such as online safety through the curriculum. Most pupils know whom they can report concerns to if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Behaviour and attitudes have improved significantly since the arrival of new senior leaders. However, incidents of physical aggression, although far less frequent, still occur. A number of pupils continue to display poor attitudes to learning and disengagement in lessons. This means that some pupils are prevented from accessing the curriculum fully and are still at risk of harm. Leaders need to continue to train and support staff in applying the behaviour policy more consistently. They should further develop their current work with parents and outside agencies to ensure a collaborative and robust approach to reducing poor behaviour swiftly.
- Too many pupils, including vulnerable pupils, do not attend school as regularly as they should. This affects their learning as they do not access the intended curriculum fully. Leaders should continue to intensify their actions to ensure that absence levels are reduced quickly.
- Leaders have worked alongside the trust to introduce a new, ambitious curriculum; however, this is not yet finished or fully embedded. As a result, pupils experience variability in the quality of lesson delivery. Leaders need to continue to develop the school's professional development offer, and support subject leaders and teaching staff, so that expert practice becomes the norm in all subjects.
- Pupils who are the most disadvantaged, including those with SEND, make significantly less progress than their peers. New leaders are aware, and must continue to monitor the progress of these pupils carefully, and take the necessary action, to ensure that these pupils are given the support and enrichment opportunities that they need to make more secure progress.

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	137735
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10284740
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	1,223
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	67
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynne O'Reilly
Headteacher	James Grant Duff (Head of School) Matt Duffield (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.thebeaconschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Beacon School is part of the GLF Schools multi-academy trust.
- The school currently uses seven alternative providers.
- The school runs its own on-site inclusion unit.
- 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 with approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- There have been changes to the school's leadership since the previous graded inspection in June 2022. The school is now led by a head of school and an executive headteacher, who both took up substantive posts in September 2022.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This was the first monitoring visit since the school was judged to be inadequate with serious weaknesses in June 2022.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in English, mathematics, drama and geography. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with leaders in languages and history to review curriculum plans and visited lessons in these subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement based on the post-Ofsted action plan.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees. They also met with the chair of the governing body.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's parent survey.

Inspection team

Zoë Harris, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jason Philipsz	Ofsted Inspector
Nicky Archer	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Fry	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Agley	Ofsted Inspector

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