

# Inspection of Bradford Forster Academy

Fenby Avenue, Bradford BD4 8RG

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

A significant minority of pupils at Bradford Forster Academy do not demonstrate positive attitudes to their education or to one another. Lessons are disrupted too frequently. Staff do not challenge this poor behaviour consistently. As a result, there is an unruly atmosphere in certain areas of the school.

The behaviour of some pupils has a negative impact on others' education. Derogatory, rude and offensive language is heard inside and outside of classrooms. Pupils say that bullying is common. Many do not have faith in staff to deal with incidents of bullying and disruptive behaviour. Consequently, some pupils have stopped reporting their concerns because they believe little will be done. Some pupils feel unsafe because of the actions and words of others. A significant number of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, shared these concerns.

Leaders have not taken effective action to address weaknesses at the school. Recently, minor improvements in the behaviour and attendance of some pupil groups have been achieved. Changes to the curriculum and new teaching strategies have begun to improve pupils' educational experience. However, outcomes of external examinations for many pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, are poor.

Pupils are increasingly involved in enrichment activities, including a 'Sports Academy' and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These opportunities are appreciated by those who take part in them.

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

Since the previous inspection, standards have declined at the school. This has had a negative impact on the behaviour and attendance of pupils and the quality of education they receive. Trust and school leaders have not taken swift enough action to address areas of concern. They do not demonstrate the capacity to bring about sustained school improvement. Those with responsibility for governance understand the severity of the challenges that leaders face to improve the school. However, governors do not understand well enough the effect of leaders' actions to improve behaviour or the quality of education that pupils receive.

The school's own information highlights that a considerable number of behaviour incidents occur each day. Pupils are regularly removed from lessons and many are suspended. A significant number of pupils have been permanently excluded. Extra support for those pupils with the most challenging behaviour is in place. This is beginning to have a positive effect on a small number of pupils. However, the education of many pupils is still disrupted too frequently by poor behaviour.

Despite some pupils being part of a whole-school diversity group, encouraging inclusion and tolerance, the use of derogatory and intolerant language by some

pupils is common. Pupils told inspectors that homophobic and racist language is a regular occurrence. Leaders' records show a slight decline in these incidents over time. However, pupils continue to experience intolerant language too frequently.

The personal, social and health education curriculum at the school is relatively new. The important messages it contains are not well understood. Pupils lack tolerance and respect for those who are different from themselves. Older pupils, especially, have not benefited from an effective personal development curriculum that could prepare them better for life in modern Britain.

Leaders have devised a curriculum in other subjects that is well planned and sequenced. It is broad and meets the ambition of the national curriculum well. In English, for example, pupils study a diverse and well-considered choice of texts. Some pupils are beginning to remember more of the important knowledge they have been taught. However, this is not consistent across all curriculum subjects.

Teachers ask questions that help pupils to develop a deeper understanding of what they have been taught. There are opportunities for pupils to practise what they have previously learned. However, pupils' learning experiences are too varied. Staff do not have high enough expectations of them. This has a negative impact on pupils achieving their full potential. Staff do not use assessment consistently to identify what pupils remember. This contributes to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Leaders ensure that pupils who need additional support to improve their reading receive the help that they need. This includes phonics teaching for those at an early stage of learning to read. This has led to some pupils becoming more confident readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive additional support from staff with specialist training. In some curriculum subjects, pupils with SEND have their needs met well. However, not all staff make suitable adjustments for pupils with additional needs. This has a negative impact on some pupils' learning.

Independent careers advice, work experience and opportunities to visit colleges help pupils in Years 10 and 11 make informed choices about their futures. Almost all pupils continue in education, employment or training on leaving school. However, younger pupils do not have a secure understanding of their career options.

The majority of staff are proud to work at the school. They say that they are well supported by leaders who consider their workload and well-being. However, some staff shared their concerns about poor behaviour and how it is managed at the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are confident to pass on any concerns they may have about the welfare of a pupil. Leaders' records show these concerns are acted on quickly to protect pupils from harm. The safeguarding team works closely with external agencies to seek the relevant support for children and their families.

Leaders recognise that, over time, some significant improvements have been required to systems and processes for safeguarding at the school. These improvements have been acted on to ensure that pupils are not at risk of harm. However, behaviour and attitudes at the school continue to be a significant concern for staff and pupils. There is more to do to ensure that pupils are confident to report any concerns they may have. Leaders know that this is the case.

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

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

- Some pupils display extremely poor behaviour and attitudes. Staff do not consistently challenge inappropriate behaviour. Learning is disrupted by pupils who are openly defiant and show disrespect towards staff. There is an unruly atmosphere within parts of the school. Trust and senior leaders should take urgent action to bring about improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes within the school. Further support is required for some staff so that they have confidence to challenge unacceptable behaviour among pupils.
- Pupils experience derogatory language and some are bullied on a regular basis. Pupils do not have confidence in leaders to address these issues. As a result, some pupils feel unsafe or uncomfortable around their peers. Leaders should urgently review their systems and processes for the reporting and recording of such incidents so that pupils have confidence to share their concerns and that these will be acted on swiftly. Furthermore, leaders should act swiftly so that fewer pupils use derogatory language or bully others.
- Too many pupils are absent from school on a regular basis. Leaders' actions have had little impact on improving attendance over time. This means some pupils regularly miss out on learning and have significant gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should review their approach to improving attendance to secure a rapid and sustained improvement to rates of attendance across the school.
- A broad and balanced personal development curriculum is not well established across the school. Pupils' appreciation and understanding of other cultures and British values is weak. Pupils do not regularly engage in extra-curricular activities. Leaders should ensure that the new personal development curriculum is securely embedded across the school and that pupils understand the important messages it contains, taking up every opportunity afforded to them to experience and engage in extra-curricular activities.

- The quality of education that pupils receive at the school requires improvement. What pupils will learn, and in what order, has been carefully set out by leaders. However, pupils' learning and assessment of what pupils know are inconsistent. This means that pupils are not learning and remembering the important skills and knowledge intended. Outcomes for pupils are weak. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand how to implement the curriculum consistently and that assessment is used to inform next steps in teaching.
- School and trust leaders do not have the capacity to bring about swift and long-lasting improvements at the school. There are several entrenched weaknesses across the school that have a negative effect on pupils' learning and their day-to-day experiences. School and trust leaders should urgently seek additional leadership capacity with the relevant experience and track record to bring about urgent improvements at the school.
- Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 140429   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Bradford   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10267558   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary Comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 991  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Tessa Mason  |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Mrs Cath Proud   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.bradfordforsteracademy.co.uk">www.bradfordforsteracademy.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 14 and 15 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005                        |

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the principal is new to post. She joined the school in September 2020.
- The school opened in 2015 as part of the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust.
- The school has a resourced provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Three pupils currently attend this provision.
- The school makes use of three off-site providers of education. Two of these are registered providers and subject to inspection by Ofsted. One is an unregistered provider.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives of the local governing body. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in science, English, history and physical education. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for careers education at the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experience in lessons, enrichment opportunities and what it is like to attend the school.
- Inspectors examined the school's behaviour records, spoke to pupils who had been suspended from school and spoke with providers of alternative education.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and individual learning plans. Inspectors also checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons. One inspector visited the nurture classroom within the school.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come onto the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

**Inspection team**

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