

Inspection of a good school: Bristol Brunel Academy

Speedwell Road, Speedwell, Bristol BS15 1NU

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

Bristol Brunel Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. Many feel privileged to attend. They feel a sense of belonging to the school. Bristol Brunel Academy is a place where diversity is valued and celebrated. Relationships between staff and pupils are mutually respectful. Pupils have a voice in the school which leads to positive change. For example, pupils have re-named their houses after inspirational figures and introduced sustainable cutlery to the refectory.

Through the 'BBA Backpack', pupils acquire the skills and qualities they will need in the future. For example, they develop self-esteem and a strong work ethic. Pupils' success is rewarded. They describe how this creates a real sense of achievement in all areas of school life.

Pupils know it is important to behave well in school and that bullying will not be tolerated. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons and around the school site. Pupils appreciate the clear rules and expectations. As a result, behaviour is good.

There are a wide range of clubs which pupils attend. Examples include, The Duke of Edinburgh Award, astronomy, cheerleading, engineering and learning Mandarin. Pupils say there is something for everyone.

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

Pupils follow an ambitious curriculum. It is designed to reflect the school's diverse cohort. For example, in history, pupils study Somali migration. Leaders have thought carefully about the design and organisation of the curriculum. This helps pupils to build on what they already know.

Leaders have created a strong reading culture in the school. Pupils read books regularly which develops their love of reading. Pupils enjoy selecting books which introduce them to diverse cultures and which challenge stereotypes. Those who cannot read well enough

are supported through a range of interventions. This ensures that most pupils catch up quickly.

Pupils benefit from clear explanations and expert subject teaching. They routinely re-visit what they have learned over time. Most of the time, teaching identifies any misconceptions or insecure knowledge. Where this happens regularly, pupils make rapid progress. However, this is not consistent. This means some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of the curriculum which persist.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. The large majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the full curriculum. However, the support they receive is not always adapted well enough to help them to learn subject-specific knowledge and ideas.

The proportion of pupils who study the English baccalaureate is growing. Leaders have worked hard to strengthen the curriculum and develop teachers' knowledge in the 'Ebacc' subjects. As a result, pupils learn more and take confidence from this. An increasing proportion of pupils choose to study a modern foreign language, for example.

Provision for pupils' wider development is strong. Leaders are determined to involve pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in a rich array of cultural and social opportunities. Participation rates are good. Alongside a range of other clubs, the school offers 'inclusion groups' including LGBTQ+, Young Carers, and a Social Action Group. All of this encourages pupils to engage with and embody 'The Brunel Way.' The planned opportunities reach into all aspects of pupils' lives: academic, social, professional, personal and within the community.

Leadership, at all levels, is a strength of the school. Governors know the school well. They support leaders and hold them to account for the impact of their actions. Teachers appreciate the steps leaders take to reduce workload and support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff are well trained to identify concerns and to respond appropriately. Leaders work closely with safeguarding partners outside of the school.

Leaders have a detailed knowledge of the complex issues that pupils and their families might face. They use this intelligently to provide high-quality support. Pupils feel safe in school and have a trusted adult they can talk to. The school is a vital safe space for its most vulnerable pupils.

Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teaching is not consistently well informed by checks on pupils' understanding. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of the curriculum which persist. Leaders should ensure that teaching addresses any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge so they can build on their prior learning successfully.
- The needs of some pupils are not always fully understood. As a result, the support for such pupils does not do enough to meet their needs in different subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is adapted successfully, so that all pupils learn challenging content in each subject.

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 June 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

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| Unique reference number | 135300 |
| Local authority | Bristol |
| Inspection number | 10267016 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,340 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Professor Paul Olomolaiye |
| Headteacher | Jon Jones |
| Website | www.bba.bristol.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Cabot Learning Federation.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school uses 11 registered alternative providers.
- 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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the senior special educational needs co-ordinator, curriculum leaders, members of the academy council and members of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, history, modern foreign languages and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors

discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Tong, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Naylor

Ofsted Inspector

Anna Mills

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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