

Inspection of an outstanding school: Bradstow School

34 Dumpton Park Drive, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1BY

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Outcome

Bradstow School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a lively place where pupils and staff spend a lot of time communicating. Often, this is just a reassuring smile or a wink. Body language is important here. Staff know and understand pupils well. Behaviour is generally excellent because staff have sensible strategies in place when heightened anxieties get the better of pupils. When pupils need space, exits and re-entries to classrooms are handled well. This enables learning to continue without undue disruption. It also provides pupils, all with deeply complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with the support they need to cope when a little time and patient understanding is needed.

Pupils who met inspectors were very positive about their school. Some were keen to talk about their friends, the 'stories' they knew, and the things they had learned. Others were inquisitive about inspectors' work, especially after their initial apprehension linked to the 'new people' in their classrooms had worn off.

A large part of the school day is spent ensuring that pupils feel safe and confident to learn. Teachers know that small steps of progress do not come about unless pupils are ready and willing. Classroom visits showed patient staff facilitating giant strides over time.

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

Leaders understand the needs of pupils at this school extremely well. They have designed a curriculum that is relevant and responsive to individuals' needs. Much of the teaching takes place in small groups. Pupils also learn much in the time they spend with their individual support staff, mostly on a one-to-one basis.

The curriculum is constantly under review. A new English curriculum is in its second year after being rewritten by the current English lead. Pupils on each of the school's three formal pathways of learning follow a clear plan that builds their knowledge and skills over time. Set texts linked to the English scheme enable pupils to experience a broad range of genres. Books are also carefully chosen to support pupils' personal development and

understanding of people, different cultures and life in modern Britain. Key to the new English curriculum is leaders' collective desire to increase expectations of pupils to achieve more academically if at all possible. The mathematics curriculum has also been reviewed to ensure that staff are clear about starting points and where pupils' learning will take them next. Much of the mathematics taught at the school relates to real life, helping pupils on their varied journeys to independent living.

The wider curriculum is designed to support pupils after they leave the school. This might be to go on to residential provision, supported living, or a wide range of other training or education opportunities, including college placements. The employability programme helps some pupils with key aspects to support their understanding of the world of work. All pupils benefit from the school's 'friends, relationships and community' programme, which includes road safety and shopping in local supermarkets. Most parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the school. One parent was very focused on the pastoral care provided here. She shared that she feels her child now 'has a future, has made friends, because the school is teaching him to go successfully into wider society'.

Pupils' personal development is also supported well by a bespoke personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. This includes age-appropriate relationships and health education.

Specific and very focused pieces of work to support individual pupils are common. These might be to keep pupils safe online, or to help their understanding of the complexities of consent, or appropriate and inappropriate touch. The programme also supports pupils' clearer understanding of equalities, different cultures and beliefs. The school council is a further forum to this work, allowing pupils to express opinions on how to improve their school.

Classroom visits showed staff to be knowledgeable about pupils and what support is needed to secure their learning. Staff, including those who deliver a range of therapies, have a wide range of knowledge and understanding, which they put to good use. Some have additional expertise that provides pupils with experiences beyond the norm. Dropping in on a 'weekly library session' sounded slightly dull before the lead inspector put his head around the door. The library includes an interactive story room. This proved to be a riot of high drama and gleeful participation as staff delighted pupils with tales of Traction Man and a galactic bus. Not quite the story time that was expected, pupils came to life in this sensory session, where light, sound, wind and water served as props in a performance that would grace any professional theatre.

There were very few responses to Ofsted Parent View. The staff survey did reveal some concern about the potential impact of the current consultation to restructure the workforce. Members of the governing board are aware of this as they work strategically with the local authority to seek to stabilise the long-term financial viability of the school. What is clear is that the school continues to offer high-quality education and care, despite the impact and legacy of COVID-19.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff give the welfare, health and safety of pupils the highest priority. Staff are trained well. They know what to do when they have concerns. Safeguarding records, including those linked to the complex behaviour of pupils, are concise. Those in positions of governance understand their statutory duties well. Leaders' work with external professionals linked to safeguarding is open and reflective. All staff who work at the school understand the additional risks pupils who attend this school face, be that through pupils' own actions, or the risks inherent in society more generally to pupils with complex SEND.

Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in February 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	101095
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10268832
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorraine Hiller
Principal	Penelope Doswell
Website	www.bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bradstow is a special school for pupils with severe learning, behaviour or communication difficulties. A high proportion of pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with appropriate careers information, education and guidance.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has 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 held meetings with senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the co-chairs of the governing board. He also held a telephone conversation with a representative of Wandsworth local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and PSHE. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. An inspector also met formally with the school council on day two of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted's confidential staff survey. Inspectors also considered emails sent by parents and talked to a number of parents or carers on the telephone.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Sackett

His Majesty's 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