

# Inspection of Bower Park Academy

Havering Road, Romford, Essex RM1 4YY

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The principal of this school is Eddie Aylett. This school is part of the Empower Learning Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon London, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Keith Butcher.

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

Pupils enjoy the respectful rapport they have with staff at the school. They follow leaders' high expectations of them. Pupils know each other well and feel part of an extended family. Staff enable pupils to understand the importance of equality. Pupils said that staff take their views on board. For instance, pupils participate in 'change-maker' committees that provide feedback on aspects of the school, such as recycling. Pupils enjoy visits to school from theatre companies and external speakers.

Typically, pupils behave well around the school. In lessons, most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils have a trusted adult whom they can turn to if they have any worries. Staff do not tolerate any discriminatory language. Pupils are safe at school.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' academic achievement, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result of improvements to the curriculum, pupils improve their knowledge and understanding well. The school's aspirations are not reflected in current published examination outcomes.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils appreciated the recent addition of subjects such as Spanish and sociology. The school is equally ambitious for pupils with SEND. This curricular ambition has not yet filtered through to pupils' outcomes. Examination results at the end of 2022 were significantly below the national average. The school is addressing this through continued improvements to the curriculum. Leaders understand the impact of poor attendance on pupils' achievement. They are tenacious in their work with families to remove barriers to attendance.

Teachers and support staff work well together to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEND. Typically, teachers make helpful adaptations to their planning or to resources so that pupils can learn the curriculum successfully. Leaders draw on expertise from outside school, for example in the teaching of British Sign Language.

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced around important subject knowledge. Teachers revisit key content regularly. For example, in English, Year 9 pupils learn about the concepts of hierarchy and social class in their study of the play 'Blood Brothers'. They return to this knowledge in Year 10 when they read 'An Inspector Calls'. Teachers highlight and recap the key vocabulary that they want pupils to learn. For example, pupils were adept in their understanding of terms such as 'socialist' and 'capitalist'. On occasion, teaching does not identify and address gaps in pupils' learning precisely. As a result, pupils' misconceptions go unchecked and they struggle to embed new knowledge.

Pupils who need extra support in their reading receive targeted help so that they can catch up. Older pupils support younger ones to develop their reading fluency and confidence. There are many opportunities for reading whole texts and extracts in lessons. Staff promote reading for pleasure well across the school.

Typically, pupils' behaviour is positive across the school. Leaders have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour recently. As a result, working relationships between adults and pupils are respectful. However, not all staff follow the school's behaviour expectations consistently well. This leads to minor disruption to a small number of lessons, which affects pupils' learning of the curriculum.

Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully planned. Pupils learn about the rule of law through comparing countries such as the United Kingdom with others. All pupils, including those with SEND, take part in visits to London museums and to local theatres. These broaden their cultural experiences. Pupils value the range of clubs that the school offers. The school gives careers guidance for pupils a high priority. Pupils complete work experience and receive impartial careers advice. Pupils with SEND are given one-to-one support with college visits and applications.

Governors and trustees have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Members of the local governing committee seek stakeholder views regularly and know the school well. Staff are appreciative of the positive culture instilled by new leaders. They enjoy working in subject teams. Most staff feel happy and valued.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- On occasion, teaching does not make sure that pupils' misconceptions are identified and addressed with enough rigour and accuracy. This limits pupils' knowledge and understanding to prepare them for future learning. The school should ensure that checks on pupils' recall of their learning are used routinely and purposefully to plug any gaps so that pupils are fully ready to learn new content.
- The school's revised approach to behaviour management is not understood and implemented consistently by all staff. As a result, low-level disruption in a small number of lessons affects pupils' learning of the curriculum. The school should ensure that all staff have equally high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and that they apply the school's approach to behaviour consistently.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139307
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290226
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,033
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Keith Butcher
<b>Principal</b>	Eddie Aylett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bowerpark.co.uk">www.bowerpark.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 last inspection, there have been changes to the school leadership team, including the appointment of a new principal from April 2023.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for 20 pupils at four registered settings in addition to two tuition services.
- The school is opening an additional resourced provision for deaf or visually impaired pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders and staff in the school, including those responsible for the quality of education, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the trust and the local governing committee. These included the chief executive officer, the vice-chair of the trust and the chair of the local governing committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into art, English, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

### **Inspection team**

Lisa Strong, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Katerina Christodoulou	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Maguire	His Majesty's Inspector

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