

Inspection of Bramley Oak Academy

Horsham Road, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0BJ

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of this school is Peter Forrest. This school is part of London South East Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sam Parrett CBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rama Venchard MBE. There is also an executive headteacher and deputy chief executive officer of the trust, Neil Miller, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school changes many pupils' lives and gives them and their families renewed hope. Pupils often arrive with complex needs after a much-disrupted education. Caring staff seek to rebuild and nurture pupils to believe they belong and are safe.

The expectations for all have risen as a result of the school's ongoing, impressive work. Clear rules and structures guide pupils in how to behave, interact appropriately and regulate their behaviour and emotions. The trust's therapy team positively complements pupils' restart in education by supporting good mental health and well-being. This in turn enables pupils to access their academic education.

Each morning, staff greet pupils with a smile, and each class has breakfast together. During this time, pupils share their feelings, learn to play games together positively and take on classroom responsibilities. This settles pupils so they are ready for their education. The school is ambitious for pupils to learn a wide range of subjects.

The school's enrichment offer develops pupils' character. Pupils enjoy choosing activities, such as sport, cooking and art, to develop their talents and interests. The school actively promotes pupils' personal development and experiences of the wider world. Pupils love the school trips and celebration assemblies, where they share each other's learning successes.

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

The trust has been instrumental in making significant improvement in this school. Opening the school amid the COVID-19 pandemic and beginning a complete rebuild of the school has been no mean feat. The school has galvanised a committed staff team to live out the school's vision of preparing pupils for a successful pathway to adulthood.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and they arrive with different educational starting points. The school works intensely with families and other professionals. On entry, leaders assess pupils carefully in literacy and numeracy.

The school's well-thought-out, positive behaviour support plans identify what pupils need in order to self-regulate. The school trains staff skilfully in agreed techniques for de-escalation. Over time, pupils pick up the right habits to learn and to focus in lessons, and there are planned movement breaks when needed. The high staff-to-pupil ratios mean that if pupils do struggle with their behaviour, adults can provide immediate care. In addition, pupils' attendance is on the rise because of the school's effective support.

The curriculum is well sequenced and carefully planned in the core subjects. Content meets the ambition of the national curriculum, with learning steps clearly identified. However, in some other subjects, the school has not finalised the precise knowledge

that pupils should learn. Furthermore, some education targets in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are not as well aligned with the planned curriculum. This impacts on pupils' successful learning across subject areas.

Staff use meaningful, hands-on experiences to teach pupils new ideas and content. These engage pupils well and enable them to discuss their observations with each other. Nevertheless, some teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge in designing tasks that best match what pupils need to learn. Some work set is not as ambitious as it should be, which hinders pupils' achievement.

Learning to read is prioritised daily, with extra sessions for pupils who need these the most. A highly effective phonics programme is developing pupils' reading skills and confidence. Individualised reading sessions are helping pupils to read with greater fluency and quickly close any knowledge gaps. The school is passionate in wanting to inspire pupils to read for pleasure.

The personal development programme is well crafted to prepare pupils for future destinations. Up-to-date content teaches pupils how to keep safe outside school. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility, optimism and teamwork. Pupils enjoy eating the freshly cooked hot lunches and learn to think smartly about physical health. Pupils show appreciation of, and respect for, differences in others.

Trustees maintain a clear line of sight of the school's development priorities. Robust accountability systems ensure that trustees have an excellent insight into how well the school is performing. They rigorously challenge and scrutinise what they are told.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum in some non-core subjects needs further refinements. This includes embedding the academic starting points of pupils' EHC plans. This means that currently, pupils are not learning as well as they could across the entire curriculum. The school should continue with its consideration of each pupil's personal curriculum pathway so that pupils achieve as well as they can in different subjects.
- Some staff do not have the specific subject knowledge to teach the curriculum well. This can lead to planned activities that do not help pupils practise and master the knowledge and skills they need. The school should ensure that staff expertise is consistently strong so that pupils build knowledge securely over time.

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

Unique reference number	147943
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10288091
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rama Venchard MBE
CEO of the trust	Sam Parrett CBE
Headteacher	Neil Miller (Executive Headteacher) Peter Forrest (Head of School)
Website	www.bramleyoakacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bramley Oak Academy opened under London South East Academies Trust in October 2020. When the predecessor school, Wey House School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- A new chair of the board of trustees started in September 2023.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many pupils have additional diagnoses along with adverse childhood experiences. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is currently using five unregistered alternative providers.

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 had 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 senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector held video calls with five trustees (including the chair), the CEO of the trust, a group of parents, representatives from the trust’s therapy team and the CEO of Schools Alliance for Excellence, an organisation that works with the local authority. He also spoke to two alternative providers on the telephone.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and geography. To do this, they met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils’ work.
- 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.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff and parents and carers were gathered through discussions, Ofsted’s online surveys and the school’s internal processes for gathering parents’ feedback.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school and the trust. This included the school’s self-evaluation and school improvement priorities, policies, curriculum documents, the scheme of delegation, minutes of governance board meetings, behaviour records, pupil profiles and EHC plans.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Caroline Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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