

Inspection of Brixham College

Higher Ranscombe Road, Brixham, Devon TQ5 9HF

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

The principal of this school is Mark Eager. This school is part of the Thinking Schools 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, Stuart Gardner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gerard Newman.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. However, the teaching that pupils receive does not always enable them to learn effectively. Some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. Pupils cannot always apply what they know in new contexts.

The school knows it needs to improve the behaviour of pupils. Expectations of pupils are now higher. New systems are in place to manage poor behaviour. Nevertheless, low-level disruption continues to interrupt learning. This is not always well managed. Pupils' conduct around the school site is loud and disorderly. As a result, a significant minority of pupils do not feel safe.

The school's values are integral to all it does. Leaders are committed to helping pupils to develop their characters and become good citizens. Pupils learn about other faiths and views that differ from their own.

Extra-curricular opportunities enable pupils to develop their talents and interests. Some pupils have leadership roles. Pupils are proud of the support that they give to charities. Sixth-form students have the support and opportunities they need to develop personally, as well as academically.

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

The curriculum is well planned. The school is clear about what pupils need to learn, and when. The key stage 3 and sixth-form curriculums are broad and ambitious. There has been a significant decrease in the proportion of pupils who continue to follow a strongly academic curriculum in key stage 4.

The 'Brixham Way' has led to a more consistent approach to teaching the curriculum. This particularly supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, the approaches taken to teaching, particularly at key stage 3, do not always help pupils to learn as much as they could. Pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. This prevents them building their knowledge and deepening their understanding. Pupils' gaps in knowledge and misconceptions are not always identified. Pupils with SEND attending mainstream lessons do not get the precise support they need to learn the curriculum. The specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (special resourced provision) helps pupils to integrate well with the rest of the school.

The curriculum is taught more effectively in key stages 4 and 5. Students in the sixth form recall what they have learned and can apply this learning in different contexts.

Pupils who have fallen behind with their reading get help to become more fluent readers. Pupils in key stage 3 read regularly in tutor time. However, this is not done

consistently well and so does not ensure that all pupils learn new vocabulary and develop their confidence as readers.

The school identified that pupils' behaviour was not good enough. There are now clear systems to help teachers to manage pupils' behaviour. However, not all staff use these systems to ensure that pupils meet the expectations set for them. Pupils' learning is disrupted by the behaviour of their peers, including those who arrive late to lessons.

The school adapts the curriculum to ensure that it prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, there has been a recent increase in the time pupils have to study different religions. Pupils learn about personal, social, health and citizenship (in PSHCE), partly delivered through 'values' lessons. The school helps pupils and their parents understand how to stay safe.

Pupils learn about careers and further education. Sixth-form students are supported well in planning their destinations after they leave school. Younger pupils would appreciate more information on careers options and how subject choices link to them.

The school has already made significant changes, with the aim of improving the quality of education and pupils' behaviour. This work is at an early stage. It has not yet brought about the improvements that leaders intend.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Low-level disruption is not managed well enough. As a result, it persists and learning time is lost. The school and trust must ensure that staff manage low-level disruption consistently.
- The curriculum is not taught consistently well. Pupils do not learn well. Many cannot remember what they have been taught. The school and trust need to make sure that teaching is effective so that pupils know and remember more.
- Staff do not always adapt learning well enough to meet the learning needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. The school and trust must ensure that staff know how to successfully adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs.
- The school's monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision is not yet strong enough. As a result, it does not always have a clear and coherent picture of all aspects of the school. The trust needs to develop systems that enable the school to have a more thorough view of all aspects of its provision.

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	137755
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10268725
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,091
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	124
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gerard Newman
CEO of the trust	Stuart Gardner
Principal	Mark Eager
Website	www.brixhamcollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.
- The school uses nine unregistered alternative providers and two registered alternative providers.
- 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.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provides education for 22 pupils with autism.

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 carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education.
- 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 spoke to pupils who attend alternative provisions, to a local authority representative and to some of the unregistered providers used by the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders from the school and the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- An inspector met with the chair of trustees and members of the local governing bodies.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and around the school site.
- Inspectors also visited PSHCE lessons, reading time and lessons in the specially resourced provision.
- Further sixth-form lessons were visited in subjects beyond those included in the six deep dives.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nic Blunsum	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Mills	Ofsted Inspector
Iain Freeland	Ofsted Inspector

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