

Inspection of a good school: Bedminster Down School

Donald Road, Bedminster Down, Bristol BS13 7DQ

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Louise Davies. This school is part of the Futura Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andrea Arlidge, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Malcolm Broad.

What is it like to attend this school?

In lessons, pupils focus on their learning. The school has high expectations for behaviour in lessons, and pupils understand and follow these. Yet, some pupils do not behave well during social times. Staff maintain a high presence at these times so that incidents are promptly dealt with.

Pupils feel safe at school. They have an adult they can talk to when they have concerns. The school makes sure there is support for looking after pupils' well-being. However, reports of bullying incidents are not unusual. The school follows up and acts on these. To reduce this, a new anti-bullying pilot scheme prioritises training for staff and pupils.

Pupils attend a wide range of clubs and activities. Promoted through freshers' fairs, the school runs many sports, arts and well-being clubs. It responds to pupils' interests, such as setting up a Warhammer club. Pupils perform in showcases, such as the Christmas show. The school plans for pupils to have experiences they may not otherwise have. For example, all pupils camp on Dartmoor during their time at the school. From Year 7 onwards, the school hosts many speakers and performers at events. Many of these are careers events.

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

The school has planned a sequenced and well-mapped curriculum. To support pupils to remember their learning better over time, teachers check frequently what pupils can

recall. Pupils revisit and improve their learning regularly with guidance from their teachers. Teachers model work and provide structures to support pupils. In key stage 4, only a minority of pupils choose to study a language. This means very few pupils study the full suite of English Baccalaureate qualifications.

The school ensures pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read have the precise support for their specific reading need. The school tracks this carefully to make sure every pupil receives the help they need.

The school has implemented a new strategy to support pupils to improve their attendance. When pupils do not attend, they have gaps in their knowledge. They do not keep up with their peers. The school plans intervention to support these pupils. However, this strategy has only been introduced recently. Published outcomes for pupils with poor attendance were low in 2023.

The school makes appropriate use of alternative provision for pupils who need it. The school carefully checks to make sure the provision is meeting the needs of the pupils who attend. The off-site provision for pupils, 'The Lamp', has been relocated back on the school site. Pupils who need it receive intervention and support.

Teachers have the information they need to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities appropriately. Teachers use common approaches to teach the curriculum. These strategies makes sure all pupils who need extra support get the input they need in a timely way.

The school makes sure the personal, social and health education curriculum is appropriate and timely for pupils' needs. The school enhances the curriculum to make it relevant to pupils. For example, pupils learn about knife crime, or misogynistic language. Pupils learn how to keep safe and behave safely, both online and in the wider community.

The careers programme ensures pupils from Years 7 to 11 hear about careers and further education from a wide variety of providers. Work experience, careers fairs and university visits give pupils a broad knowledge to support them in their next choices. All pupils can speak with a careers adviser.

The school has experienced changes of leadership in recent years. The trust supports and provides resource to ensure sustainability. Governors have the detail they need to ask challenging and pertinent questions. Staff say they feel this is a growing time of stability.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not act respectfully during social times. This results in incidents of poor verbal and physical behaviour. The trust needs to ensure that the high expectations for conduct seen in lessons are replicated across the whole school day.
- Attendance at school, particularly of disadvantaged pupils, is low. As a result of missing lessons, pupils have gaps in their learning. They are unable to keep up with their peers. The trust needs to ensure the new systems to improve attendance are embedded.

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 November 2014.

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	138204
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10298003
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,027
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Broad
CEO of the trust	Andrea Arlidge
Headteacher	Louise Davies
Website	https://bedminsterdown.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bedminster Down School is part of the Futura Learning Partnership.
- The school has had many changes of leadership in the last five years. The current headteacher took the post in August 2022.
- The school has an off-site provision called 'The Lamp'. This is currently closed, and pupils attending 'The Lamp' now attend provision within the school.
- The school uses two registered and eight unregistered 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.

Information about this inspection

- 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 in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and art. 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, 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 held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, the CEO and trust leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from key stages 3 and 4 about their experiences of school. They met with groups of pupils, as well as speaking to them in lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the pupil survey and the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David New

Ofsted Inspector

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