

Inspection of Bradstow School

34 Dumpton Park Drive, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1BY

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 May, and 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Bradstow School has high aspirations for each pupil and pupils rise to this exceptionally well. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and supportive. Pupils learn in a calm environment and make excellent progress. The school knows its pupils and their behaviours and needs through and through. It provides the right support at the right time to enable them to flourish and be very well prepared for adulthood.

The school uses well-chosen strategies to help pupils to learn routines well. For example, visuals are used throughout the school to remind pupils what they need to do, such as when washing their hands. Pupils behave impressively and are taught about how to stay safe. Staff are very skilled at refocusing them when they struggle to regulate their behaviour and need to take a break from their learning. Pupils are confident that there is someone they can talk to if they have worries.

Despite this positive picture, parents and carers have mixed views about some aspects of the school. Several parents commented on how their children are thriving, and it has been a joy to watch this unfold. Some other parents have concerns about the lack of timely communication from the school.

Pupils feel safe and the school takes appropriate action when there are concerns. However, aspects of the school's safeguarding oversight and recording were found to lack rigour and thoroughness. The school has taken this on board. For example, it ensured that the recording of some recruitment checks was completed during the inspection.

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

The school has meticulously designed and refined every element of the curriculum to ensure the pupils learn what they need in readiness for adulthood. The school has an exceptionally well-detailed understanding of pupils' needs, possible triggers and likely useful strategies to manage these. Because of this, staff have the information and knowledge that they need to plan and adapt learning that supports pupils to flourish.

All pupils learn phonics at a level suitable to their complex needs. For example, they spend longer learning a sound until it is secure and then revisit this sound regularly. This has strong impact over time, with many pupils able to read and write at a much-improved level. Pupils read regularly and from a wide range of suitable texts. Some texts are excellently modified to meet pupils' stage of reading and special educational needs and/or disabilities. The writing curriculum is enhanced through pupils' study of carefully selected core texts. These are ambitious, interesting and supportive. They help to develop pupils' language and comprehension and do this very well. Other areas of the curriculum are equally effective in helping pupils to develop and apply knowledge. For example, excellent mathematics work enables

pupils to build their knowledge of numbers, fractions, addition and subtraction, and to use it impressively.

The curriculum for pupils' employment is exceptional. This includes work experience to broaden their horizons, for example through a local woodwork project. Sixth-form students receive an excellent curriculum with carefully thought-out accreditation and skills for independence pathways to equip them well for adult life. Along with the careers guidance offer, it provides them with the knowledge and skills that they need to progress successfully to their next steps.

Pupils behave very well and demonstrate the school's strong impact on their behaviour over time. The school has improved the managing and analysis of behaviour patterns. This has helped staff to put in the right level of support for pupils, and, in turn, has quickly reduced the need to use more restrictive practice. Absence is tracked and followed up quickly. This includes tenacious follow-up with parents and the relevant local authority.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is at the heart of the exceptional wider and personal development offer. It has a resolute focus on what pupils need in readiness for adulthood. It encourages pupils to be responsible and active citizens. Opportunities to have a voice in their class meetings, and through pupil surveys and the community council are facilitated with the use of communication aids and support. Pupils are given feedback on any changes made to the school following their input. Pupils have a wealth of trips and other enrichment opportunities. For instance, this year, they are working to press flowers, design a logo, advertise their product and then sell these at an annual enterprise event.

Leaders have been passionate and hugely successful in developing the educational provision at Bradstow School. It has benefited from their meticulous and creative approaches to maximising how well pupils learn. Leaders and those responsible for governance have been less focused in other aspects of their work, such as evaluating, auditing and assuring themselves about the quality of recording practice around safeguarding.

The school communicates regularly with parents about their children. Parents are mostly positive about the school, though a few comment on the need for more timely contact when there are any concerns. This mixed picture about the school's communication is also evident in the responses from staff. In the main, they value the support they receive in managing their work. Some comment, with good reason, on the need for leaders and governors to be more visible and more aware of concerns about their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is very much part of everyday life, where pupils learn in a safe way. Staff have appropriate and regular training. They understand the additional risks

that pupils face. They are not afraid to share information when they have the slightest worry that something might be wrong. The school takes timely action when there are concerns which require other agencies to become involved.

The recording of pre-employment checks on the suitability of agency staff to work at the school has not been as robust as it should be. This was resolved during the inspection, but it is symptomatic of shortcomings in the quality of assurance and monitoring over time. Leaders and governors have not exercised sufficient rigour in their oversight of safeguarding record-keeping and decision-making.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, do not have effective systems to assure themselves of the quality of safeguarding recording and decision-making. This means that some issues are not identified and rectified in a timely way. Leaders and governors need to establish effective systems to monitor and oversee this important aspect of the school.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have not given attention to the reasons why a small number of parents and staff have concerns about the quality of communication with them. For some parents this means that some communication has not been timely enough. For some staff it means that leaders and governors have not been sufficiently seen to seek out and act on their current views and experiences. Leaders and governors need to review what they can do to improve the timeliness of their communication with parents and their visible engagement with staff.

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	101095
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10347767
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	49
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gillian Bennell
Principal	Penny Doswell
Website	http://www.bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bradstow School caters for pupils with severe learning, behaviour or communication difficulties. A high proportion of pupils have a diagnosis of autism.
- All pupils are placed at the school by local authorities and have an education, health and care plan. Most are boarders.
- The school does not currently have younger pupils, those in key stage 1.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with appropriate careers information, education and guidance.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is governed by a local governing body, with the oversight of Wandsworth local authority.
- The principal was not present during the two inspection days in July.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspection started on 15 May 2024. Inspectors returned on 2 and 3 July 2024 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy. The evidence gathered from both visits was used to inform the final judgements. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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: PSHE education, English, and the employment curriculum. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited some 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, such as mathematics and the 'friends, relationships and community' programme.
- 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 considered the views of pupils, parents and staff, including through Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

John Kennedy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Aimee Floyd	His Majesty's Inspector
Adam Sproston	His Majesty's Inspector
Clive Close, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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