

Inspection of The Bewdley School

Stourport Road, Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 1BL

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This welcoming and inclusive school is wholeheartedly focused on its pupils. Pupils settle in quickly when they arrive. They understand that staff care for them and want them to succeed. Pupils feel safe and know they have support around them when they need it. They go on to do well in the subjects they study and appreciate the help they get to achieve.

Lessons are purposeful. Pupils behave well in classrooms. There is a healthy buzz on the corridors and in the dining hall. Pupils are respectful, kind and polite as they move around the site. They appreciate the importance of being on time to lessons. Strong and effective pastoral care is available. This helps those who need support to engage positively with the life of the school.

Pupils experience a range of different activities and opportunities that aid their personal development. Built on 'The Bewdley School' values, the school uses outside speakers and internal expertise to help pupils grow towards their next steps in education or into the workplace. For example, sixth-form students have benefited from attending international trips and being involved in local charity work. Pupils take advantage of the range of clubs on offer, particularly those in art, music and sport.

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

The school has strengthened the curriculum to ensure that it is more ambitious from Year 7 to the end of the sixth form. In all subjects, the learning is carefully sequenced. Pupils and students in the sixth form benefit from this and do well. Staff give pupils opportunities to regularly revisit work. However, on some occasions, teachers move pupils on to new learning before their knowledge has been checked. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding not being addressed or pupils not being ready for what they are asked to do next.

Pupils benefit from the school's focus on reading. They make use of the school's 'reading hub', which provides a purposeful and calm environment to enjoy books. The school has expanded the support for pupils at the earlier stages of reading. Pupils are helped to become more fluent readers and enjoy a range of literature.

Recent changes in the school have improved the experiences of disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school understands their needs and assesses accurately what help is required. However, there is some variability in how well the curriculum is adapted for disadvantaged pupils. For example, some pupils with SEND, particularly those who do not have an education, health and care plan, do not consistently receive the help they need to successfully access the curriculum.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development has been very carefully planned to ensure that all areas of pupils' wider development are supported. Pupils learn age-appropriate content in terms of relationships and how to keep themselves safe.

Students in the sixth form are well integrated into this and receive high-quality support with their development needs. They also make valuable contributions to the life of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is considered across the curriculum. They receive valuable input about other cultures and backgrounds.

The school is committed to providing a strong careers education. Through this, pupils engage with a wide range of employers and education providers. Pupils can talk about the experiences they have had. Disadvantaged pupils receive targeted support to have constructive encounters with the world of work. Pupils are supported appropriately to choose their next steps in education, employment or training. Students in the sixth form follow bespoke pathways to ensure they can aspire to and access high-quality destinations.

Leaders at all levels hold high expectations of pupils' conduct. When they are struggling, pupils are supported to reflect and self-regulate. Pupils demonstrate that they understand the expected routines, particularly as they move around the school. They treat staff with respect and work together well in the classroom.

Leaders hold an accurate understanding of their work in several areas. For example, they maintain a strong oversight of the behaviour and attendance of its pupils. However, in other areas the impact of the school's work is less well understood, for example with helping disadvantaged pupils succeed over time. This has led to pupils' experiences being sometimes inconsistent.

Governors have clear oversight of what the strengths and areas for development are. They act to support the school and help with strategic change over time. Leaders work together to bring in ideas which aid the school's development. This contributes positively to pupils and staff being able to work and learn in this inclusive community. Staff stated that they appreciate leaders' renewed consideration of their workload and well-being.

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 does not always ensure that learning is adapted to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. This means that they do not receive the support they need to make sustained progress through the planned curriculum. The school should ensure that adaptations to support pupils are implemented effectively and consistently.
- Sometimes, pupils' understanding is not always checked well enough before moving on to the next part of the curriculum. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, or the work given is not always well matched to their needs. The school

should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding consistently well, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, to build knowledge more effectively over time.

- The school's evaluation of its work in the past has not always been sufficiently accurate in terms of impact. This has allowed inconsistencies to develop in the pupils' experiences. The school should ensure that leaders at all levels hold an accurate view of the impact of their work in order to further develop the provision for all.

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 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	135035
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10343935
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	968
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Vaux
Co-Headteachers	Dhiren Chauhan Catherine McDougall
Website	www.bewdley.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five alternative provisions for pupils. Two of them are registered and three are unregistered.
- 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's headteacher was not present during the inspection, due to being on sabbatical. The two co-headteachers are responsible for the leadership and management of the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the two co-headteachers responsible for the running of the school, other senior and middle leaders, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, science and art. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of sixth-form lessons from different subjects.
- Inspectors visited form time and reviewed the extra-curricular activities with leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection.
- Inspectors met with pastoral staff and visited the areas used to support pupils during the school day.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- 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.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Reeves	Ofsted Inspector
Sukhbir Farar	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Robinson	Ofsted Inspector

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