

Inspection of Benjamin Britten Academy of Music and Mathematics

Blyford Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4PZ

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteachers of this school are Dr Anna Ridley and Imogen Thurbon. This school is part of The Hartismere Family of 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 (CEO), Dr Jim McAtear, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marion Ravenhill.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are encouraged to make a difference to their own lives and the lives of others. The school actively seeks ways to improve pupils' life chances and develop their character.

Music and the performing arts are at the heart of the exceptional programme of enrichment activities. Almost all pupils participate in the huge range of clubs, which includes audition technique, British Sign Language and cryptography. Pupils raise considerable sums of money for charity. The school organises numerous educational visits. Pupils appreciate how these experiences aim to help them become responsible and well-rounded members of society.

The school sets high expectations for learning and behaviour. Pupils are focused in lessons across the broad curriculum. This includes a range of academic and creative subjects. Most pupils achieve well in their examinations.

Pupils understand the rules and the consequences of not following them. They behave well and move calmly around the large site. They are safe in school, knowing staff will act promptly if they raise concerns. All have a trusted adult to talk with. The action the school has taken to improve pupils' attendance is having an impact.

Pupils are guided to value the differences between themselves and others. They learn to treat others with respect.

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

The school has planned an ambitious curriculum that caters well to the interests and aspirations of all pupils. It has sequenced subjects in a way that increases pupils' knowledge progressively over time.

In the past, academic outcomes have been low in some subjects. Pupils now learn well across the curriculum. This is because teachers receive extensive, well-planned training to develop their strong subject knowledge and ensure high-quality teaching. Teachers systematically check learning in lessons and address pupils' misunderstandings as they arise. The school is also determined in its plans to increase the proportion of pupils studying subjects that contribute to the English Baccalaureate at key stage 4.

The school intervenes early to ensure that the individual needs of all pupils are met. It collaborates with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to provide the support the pupils need to access the full curriculum. Pupils who need help to become fluent readers receive well-targeted, effective help and support.

The approach to managing behaviour has created a calm learning environment. Pastoral care has been planned well to ensure pupils are supported and valued. As a result, most pupils behave well. The number of suspensions and removals from lessons has fallen considerably. Any instances of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively by staff.

The clear plans to reduce pupils' absences have had some success. Attendance has improved. However, some pupils still do not attend regularly enough. Through their absence, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. They do not benefit from the school's strong pastoral support and wider personal development opportunities.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exemplary. There is a clear emphasis given to developing pupils' character. This is complemented by an impressive range of extra-curricular activities. Nearly all pupils attend at least one activity. The well-designed enrichment programme enhances the taught curriculum. Through its carefully designed careers strategy, the school ensures that pupils understand the full range of options available to them after Year 11. Pupils are ready for their next steps.

Assemblies and form time are woven carefully into the relationships, health and sex education curriculum. The school has planned this with great precision. Pupils learn to respect and understand diverse cultures and perspectives. They understand what it means to be a citizen in modern Britain and how to contribute positively to their community.

The trust and local governing body have established rigorous systems to check the quality of education provided by the school. They have a strong understanding of what the school does well. Trust and school leaders share a clear vision for the school's future and are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils.

Staff know leaders' decisions and actions will take their workload and well-being into account. They are proud to work at the school.

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 attend school regularly enough. These pupils miss out on key learning and important personal development. They achieve less well than their peers. The school should prioritise and implement the actions they have planned to improve the attendance for all pupils who need it.

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	142759
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10345424
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,266
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marion Ravenhill
CEO of the trust	Dr Jim McAtear
Headteachers	Dr Anna Ridley Imogen Thurbon
Website	www.benjaminbritten.school
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019

Information about this school

- The two headteachers took up their posts in June 2023.
- Benjamin Britten Academy of Music and Mathematics is part of The Hartismere Family of Schools Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- 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

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 evaluation 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 met the headteachers, deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers. The lead inspector met members of the local governing body. He also met the trust's chief executive officer and spoke with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and drama. 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 met with leaders to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance, careers information and guidance, pupils' personal development and bullying.
- Inspectors met with pupil groups to discuss behaviour, bullying and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors reviewed the 147 responses and 64 free-text comments to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to a small number of parents. They also reviewed the 81 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 100 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Peter Whear, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Gammons	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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