Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Braunton Academy

Barton Lane, Braunton, Devon EX33 2BP

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

Braunton Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Fay Bowler. This school is a standalone academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Fay Bowler, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julie Fry MBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the community at Braunton Academy. They feel safe, nurtured and valued. The school has high expectations for pupils' academic, social, emotional and physical development. Pupils aspire to achieve well. They have positive attitudes to learning. In lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. They demonstrate kindness and empathy towards each other.

Pupils relish the breadth of sporting opportunities that the school offers, such as athletics, golf and football. A large proportion of pupils participate in extra-curricular sports clubs and events. Pupils are enthused by the opportunities provided by the performing arts events in the school. This enables many pupils to develop confidence and skill in public speaking. For instance, through the development of drama skills, pupils were enabled to voice their views about the school's homework policy and effect change.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop an informed understanding of citizenship and their roles in the world around them. For example, pupils in the eco-club gathered the views of their peers about a potential offshore wind farm in the area. Pupils experience the process of democracy through voting for the school council representatives. They develop leadership skills and inform the development of the school.

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

Leaders' vision for the continued development of the quality of education is shared by staff. They work hard to ensure that pupils study a well-designed curriculum, enabling pupils to build progressively on their prior knowledge. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Routinely, pupils review what they know before they move on to more complex concepts. For example, pupils revise their knowledge of deforestation and desertification in geography in preparation for more complex study. Pupils are supported to discuss their ideas about the topics they are studying to deepen their thinking.

Staff identify the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Despite some turbulence in the staffing for pupils with SEND, the school has now established clear and effective procedures to ensure that pupils' needs are met in most areas of the curriculum. However, in some areas, staff do not adapt the teaching of the curriculum to enable pupils with SEND to learn successfully. In some areas, staff do not check that pupils fully understand the topic they are studying before progressing to more complex knowledge.

Reading is prioritised across the curriculum. The school checks pupils' reading skills routinely to identify those who may struggle with decoding or comprehension. Pupils' reading needs are identified with precision, and support is put in place. Reading for enjoyment is a key feature of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading a breadth of texts. Weekly, older pupils read a part of the class novel to younger pupils. The school immerses all pupils in the study of Shakespeare's plays. Pupils told the inspector how much they enjoyed reading and performing 'Romeo and Juliet'.

The personal, social and health education programme prepares pupils well for life beyond school. Pupils learn about the importance of consent and healthy relationships. The school supports pupils to develop an impressive understanding of other cultures and ways of life. For example, some pupils raise funds to visit Uganda as part of a charity project. Pupils' knowledge about the subjects they study is enriched through a breadth of trips and visitors. For instance, pupils experience professional drama productions with the National Theatre. They visit London to enhance their understanding of their cultural and political heritage. Pupils receive strong careers guidance, which informs them about further education, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

Pupils attend school well. Through strong relationships with staff, pupils are supported to manage their behaviour well. In lessons and around the school, pupils learn in a calm, harmonious environment. Consequently, the proportion of suspensions is decreasing.

Governance is very strong. Through forensic scrutiny of the work of the school, trustees pose effective challenge and support in equal measure. Trustees' work aligns with the improvement priorities of the school. Staff are positive about the ways in which leaders support their workload and promote their 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)

- In some curriculum areas, staff do not adapt the ways they teach the curriculum to address the learning needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn well in these areas. The trust must ensure that staff adapt their teaching approaches so that pupils with SEND learn with confidence and success.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in June 2016.

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	138041
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344629
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	810
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Fry MBE
CEO of the trust	Fay Bowler
Principal	Fay Bowler
Website	www.braunton.academy
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Braunton Academy is a standalone academy.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- 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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal and members of the leadership team.

- An inspector held discussions with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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 considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff from the Ofsted online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nic Blunsum	Ofsted Inspector

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