

Braunton Academy

Barton Lane, Braunton EX33 2BP

Inspection dates	14–15 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal provides a clear vision that is helping to raise standards. His determined leadership has ensured that the areas that required improvement at the previous inspection have been tackled.
- The school's motto of 'Aspire and Achieve' is central to all aspects of the school's work. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities in and out of school.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is now good. Teachers take careful account of what pupils already know, understand and can do when planning learning.
- Pupils are well prepared for their future. They are able to carefully consider the options open to them as a result of a wide range of high-quality activities, careers advice and work experience.
- Pupils are polite and respectful of one another, adults and visitors.
- Behaviour is good and very few pupils are excluded from school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are well cared for and have good support in place to help them when they need it.
- Teachers and other adults benefit from training which carefully focuses on the school's improvement priorities. They work well together to share good practice across departments.
- Governors bring a range of skills which allow them to support the school and challenge its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's analysis and evaluation of information on pupils' achievement is not always precise enough. Consequently, leaders have not always been swift in their intervention to improve outcomes for specific groups of pupils, such as boys or children of Armed Forces personnel.
- Not all teachers implement the school's policy on marking and feedback equally well, or insist that work is complete and well presented.
- Teachers do not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils to attain the highest grades in all of their subjects. Homework is not used effectively to support this.
- Some disadvantaged pupils and the few with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend regularly enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work, including homework, that is challenging and engaging to enable and motivate all pupils, especially the most able, to deepen their understanding and achieve the highest grades possible
 - intervene swiftly to tackle any identified underachievement among groups of pupils, such as boys and children of Armed Forces personnel
 - implement the school's policy with regard to marking and feedback equally well so that pupils complete their work and know how to improve and present it well.

- Sharpen the evaluation of the school's work so that it enables leaders and governors to:
 - target strategies for improvement on the areas of greatest need and measure the impact of their actions
 - improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities so it is in line with their peers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has a clear vision to improve the quality of teaching, pupil achievement and the support for pupils. He is well supported by senior and middle leaders. Since joining the school, he has systematically tackled the school's shortcomings, addressing the areas that required improvement at the previous inspection. There has been significant improvement under his leadership. Every member of staff who completed the online survey said they are proud to work at this school.
- The school's motto, 'Aspire and Achieve', is increasingly apparent in every strand of its work.
- Senior and middle leaders work effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievements. Teachers benefit from the training they receive and say there are frequent opportunities for staff to share good practice across subjects.
- Middle leaders are being held to account for the progress pupils make. They share responsibility for pupils' academic achievement and personal development. The school's emphasis on improving the quality of teaching as well as promoting pupils' personal development and welfare can be seen in rising achievement and the good behaviour of pupils. However, senior leaders have not ensured that teachers implement school policies on marking and feedback and presentation of work by pupils equally well.
- Leaders have introduced more regular assessment of pupils' progress and subject leaders are beginning to make better use of this data. However, there is more work to do to make the best use of assessment and other monitoring information available. This will allow school leaders to identify and remedy any underachievement or weaknesses in provision.
- Pupils are better prepared for the next steps in their education or employment as a result of recent changes to the curriculum. More pupils are studying a range of academic subjects which will allow them to follow a wider range of courses when they leave school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and tailored to meet pupils' individual needs.
- Subject leaders have revised the courses pupils follow. Leaders' careful choice of texts that are studied in English and the topics studied in geography are engaging boys more in their learning.
- Pupils enjoy an extensive range of extra-curricular activities which enhance both their learning and their personal development. This includes the opportunity to attain qualifications, such as a GCSE in astronomy and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Levels of pupils' participation are high.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities both in and out of school to help them prepare for their future. The school site, including the 'outdoor classroom', is well used to develop pupils' skills and understanding.
- Careers education is a strength of the school. Older pupils speak of how the school has helped them to identify career ambitions and what they need to do to realise them. They are aspirational in their desire to progress to prestigious universities. Not only do they know which are the most appropriate universities for their area of study, they know the particulars of the course they wish to follow.
- Pupils show a good understanding of British values. For example, they are tolerant and respectful, as shown in a drama lesson where they looked at the views and emotions of World War 2 evacuees. Pupils drew on this work to understand how empathy can prevent conflict. Pupils vote in school elections and work with local magistrates to develop their understanding of democracy and the rule of law.
- Leaders give very careful thought to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils show respect for other cultures. For example, those who recently took part in an exchange project with schools in Italy and Austria spoke of how this had improved their understanding of other cultures, as well as developing their self-confidence. Links to a school in west London help pupils to understand the diversity of the United Kingdom.
- Staff know how to keep children safe from abuse, extremism and radicalisation as a result of their training. This helps them to identify indicators of risk that children may show. While pupils generally grasp the risks of extremism and radicalisation, they find it difficult to articulate their understanding of these sensitive issues.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Heads of house and pastoral staff know their pupils and their families well. Parents receive accurate termly reports on the progress of their children, although a few said they would like to know more about how they can help their children and receive swifter responses to any issues they raise.
- The school has commissioned external support to check how well the school is doing. However, the

reports received are insufficiently robust in their analysis of strengths and weaknesses and in identifying what the school needs to do to improve further.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors are committed to the school and use their wide range of skills to support and challenge leaders. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium is spent and have checked its impact on improving the achievement of particular groups of pupils.
 - They oversee the performance management process effectively. They link convincing evidence from school leaders that pupils' achievement is improving before they agree whether teachers receive salary awards.
 - Governors have a full understanding of all of their responsibilities, including for safeguarding, by commissioning appropriate training.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies to keep children safe are in place and effective. Pupils were confident in saying who they could go to if they did not feel safe. School staff are quick to identify children who are at risk of harm and swiftly arrange support for them. The designated safeguarding leaders actively work with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that any identified pupils are kept safe.
- The school undertakes thorough checks for those pupils who attend off-site provision for part of their studies to ensure they are safe and make good progress.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. In addition, they use high-quality questioning effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and provide challenge.
- Pupils say they usually enjoy their learning. They particularly enjoy lessons in mathematics, science and technology.
- Typically, pupils use time productively and focus on their learning well because teachers' planning takes account of pupils' existing knowledge and skills.
- Teachers track pupils' progress in their subjects. In art, drama, mathematics and music, teachers make particularly good use of the information they have on pupils' prior attainment when planning learning.
- Pupils value the feedback they receive in many of their subjects, which shows them precisely how to improve. The comments teachers make are helpful in making pupils think more deeply. However, not all teachers follow the school's policy with equal success and, as a result, pupils' understanding is not always secure.
- There is a clear, coordinated approach to the teaching of reading, writing and communication in all subjects. This has been supported by the provision of effective training and resources. The library is a well-used resource and pupils value the services it provides. The teaching of mathematics through other subjects is now beginning to have more of an impact on improving pupils' mathematical skills and ability to solve problems.
- Leaders arrange intervention quickly to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, such as in mathematics. This work is highly effective in helping pupils to catch up. However, leaders have not identified the needs of some groups of pupils quickly enough, such as the most able and boys. As a result, interventions have been less effective in some subjects, including science and history.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the help they need to enable them to successfully overcome barriers to learning. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and help these pupils develop the skills they need to be successful.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged well enough. While these pupils are making more rapid progress than in the past, the level of challenge is not always as high as it needs to be to ensure they always achieve the high grades they are capable of.
- Homework is not being used effectively to support pupils' learning. Pupils and parents commented that the setting of homework can be erratic. As a result, pupils cannot see clearly how it supports and develops the work done in school or prepares them for work to come.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders have forged a strong relationship with the nearby Royal Marines barracks, where a number of pupils live. Through additional funding that leaders have secured, the school is able to employ mentors to work with these pupils. Pupils value the support highly and enjoy a range of activities that it provides. However, this support has had less impact on their academic achievement than on their self-esteem and welfare.
- All pupils benefit from the school's good working partnership with the Army and local charities. They enjoy the challenges that are set for them, including problem solving and public speaking. This helps to develop their self-confidence and self-awareness.
- The physical and emotional well-being of pupils is a priority for the school. Pupils recognise the importance of living healthy lives. They are able to achieve this by accessing the school's range of sporting activities and teaching. The vocational outdoor learning environment provides an outdoor classroom which is used, in part, to help pupils develop and manage their mental health. Pupils in Year 11 commented positively on how useful this has been at stressful times, especially in preparation for public examinations.
- The great majority of pupils who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and all of the pupils spoken to by inspectors said they feel safe. They know which adults they would talk to and were confident that they would be helped.
- Pupils are well supported by the school's 'Skills Centre' where they receive support to develop their self-esteem and social skills. Many also participate in the social skills club at lunchtime, which helps them in lessons and out of school.
- Pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the normal times are warmly welcomed to the school and settle in quickly.
- Leaders use assemblies effectively to raise pupils' self-confidence, their awareness of the world around them and the risks they may face in it. Pupils understand the risks associated with drug and alcohol abuse.
- Pupils look smart in the new uniform, which they wear with pride. They expressed their view of how the uniform has helped them develop better attitudes to work and speak of 'walking taller' when they wear it.
- Careers work is a strength. Pupils receive a wide range of opportunities in school and have access to impartial information and guidance which is helping them to prepare for their next steps.
- Pupils are punctual to school and lessons. They have the equipment they need to be prepared for their learning.
- The site is well maintained and there is an absence of litter. There has been much work done in recent years to improve the quality of the accommodation. The road crossing between the main campus and the sports facilities poses a potential risk. The school invests significant resources to ensure pupils cross safely at the start and end of every lesson. The same is true at the beginning and end of the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite. They usually move around the site in a calm and orderly fashion. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms is generally attentive but occasionally there is off-task chatting which can distract others from learning.
- Pupils enjoy their learning but do not always show initiative or a sense of urgency in their attitudes to work.
- The work of the attendance officer and pastoral leaders has been fundamental in improving the attendance of all pupils. Overall attendance is now in line with national figures. However, persistent absence has increased for some disadvantaged pupils. The school is aware of each individual case and is drawing on the support of a number of agencies to improve this. For example, recent work by the school has significantly improved the attendance of disadvantaged girls.
- The number of pupils who have been excluded has reduced as a result of the strong care that pupils at

risk of exclusion receive. The 'Skills Centre' provides high-quality support to help these pupils.

- Most pupils who responded to the online questionnaire said that, while there is occasional bullying, teachers are good at resolving it. This was confirmed by the majority of parents.
- The school effectively monitors the personal development, welfare, behaviour and attendance of pupils who attend off-site provision for part of their studies. This ensures they are well cared for and behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in the majority of subjects. This is confirmed by the school's accurate data and inspection evidence. Leaders, at all levels, have worked hard with current pupils to ensure that, in the main, pupils' achievement matches their capability. They are making particularly good progress in art, mathematics and music.
- In 2015, the same proportion of Year 11 pupils made and exceeded the expected progress in English and mathematics as found nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics was slightly above the national average.
- The focus on the development of literacy skills throughout the curriculum is improving the quality and depth of written work in many subjects, including the humanities. In geography, for example, pupils confidently explained their understanding of world trade both verbally and in essays. However, pupils are still not careful enough with the presentation of their work.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely. The new library has been a catalyst to embed a reading culture across the school. A wide range of strategies are being used to develop this further, including the use of older pupils as buddy readers which is helping pupils in Year 7 read more fluently.
- The most able pupils are not achieving the highest grades of which they are capable. This is due to the lack of challenge and low expectations in the past which teachers are beginning to tackle. As a result, more pupils are now on track to reach the highest levels.
- The gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is closing. However, they still achieve less well than they should in some subjects. The school's personalised approach to intervention is having an impact so that in mathematics, for example, disadvantaged pupils are making slightly better progress than their peers in some year groups.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in most year groups make very good progress. They are exceeding their targets due to the effective support they receive which focuses on their academic achievement as well as their care.
- In some year groups, boys and the children of Armed Forces personnel do not do as well as their peers. This is because the school's analysis is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the support they need is provided with the precision that is required.
- Pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal times catch up quickly with other pupils and make good progress as a result of the support they receive when they arrive.
- Pupils who studied for part of the week at alternative off-site provision were able to secure pass grades in the vocational qualifications they followed. Senior leaders have discontinued these courses as they did not allow pupils to achieve higher grades.
- Pupils who have left the school at the end of key stage 4 in recent years have all moved on to sixth forms, apprenticeships or employment. The vast majority of pupils continued their studies at the local further education college. A small number attend sixth forms at local schools. In addition, the school has also successfully supported pupils in securing bursaries to attend sixth forms at independent schools.

School details

Unique reference number	138041
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10009403

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	655
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jennette Baxter
Principal	Mr Michael Cammack
Telephone number	01271 812221
Website	www.braunton.devon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@braunton.academy
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2014

Information about this school

- Braunton Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is lower than most schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average.
- Pupils' mobility is higher than average. The school experiences a larger-than-average proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the normal times.
- At the time of this inspection, there were 10 pupils in Year 11 who had recently completed some of their studies at Petroc, a local further education college, and one pupil who was undertaking an extended work placement.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 34 lessons or parts of lessons across a wide range of subjects. Some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- They visited the school's breakfast club, assemblies and tutorial periods.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- They took account of the views of 45 members of staff through Ofsted's online survey.
- Meetings were held with governors and one inspector had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the current action plan, reports of attendance and behaviour, risk assessments and records relating to pupils' safety and academic progress.
- They also scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break, lunchtime and the end of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally and formally. They considered the response of 115 pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of the 105 responses from parents on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

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