

Inspection of a good school: Braunton Academy

Barton Lane, Braunton, Devon EX33 2BP

Inspection dates:

28–29 January 2020

Outcome

Braunton Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff live out the school's motto, 'Aspire and Achieve', well. Pupils engage fully in the day-to-day life of the school. Teachers encourage pupils to experiment and ask questions. Pupils appreciate their teachers' efforts. They enjoy school.

Pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare. Pupils behave well at breaktimes and lunchtimes. There are safe spaces for pupils who want to get away from the bustle. Pupils learn to be respectful. They develop good character and learn how to look after themselves.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities on offer, including several languages. Pupils have lots of opportunities for international travel. They develop a global outlook. Pupils fundraise for trips abroad, such as to Martinique. Groups of pupils and staff visit Uganda biannually, and the school hosts foreign visitors, such as exchange students from Chile.

As pupils get older, they become more and more resilient. Most pupils take responsibility for their own learning.

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

Senior leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects at key stage 3. The school's approach to planning sequences of work provides strong foundations on which pupils can learn. In many subjects, leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn and when. For example, leaders have planned when pupils will learn the 'big ideas' in each subject. Pupils revisit themes, such as population in geography, each year. As a result, their understanding deepens each time.

Teachers usually use their good subject knowledge to plan appropriate activities. However, some of the school's subject plans do not set out the essential knowledge pupils

should learn. This means that in some subjects pupils do not learn everything they should.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. Teachers make sure that these pupils learn the curriculum alongside their peers and see success. The curriculum meets these pupils' abilities well. Pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans are expertly supported.

Leaders have improved the mathematics curriculum. Teachers use the information they have about what pupils can do to plan new content. Teachers do not move on until they are sure that pupils understand. Pupils have plenty of practice so that they build up their mathematical knowledge well.

In English, the curriculum ensures that pupils are becoming better readers, writers and speakers. Pupils read widely. Pupils who struggle are supported well and catch up. In Years 10 and 11, pupils write with confidence and with the appropriate complexity. They feel well prepared for their GCSE examinations.

However, in key stage 3 the English curriculum focuses too much on training pupils in GCSE examination techniques. This reduces the necessary curriculum time available to deepen pupils' knowledge in English. This results in pupils' work being of mixed quality.

In other subjects, as pupils try out new vocabulary they make mistakes with the meanings and spellings of words. Teachers do not consistently put pupils right. When this happens, pupils work to a lower standard than they are capable of.

Pupils learn about other religions and cultures. Leaders invite interesting visitors to share different perspectives with pupils. Pupils are keen to take on leadership roles, such as within the school council. They also participate in a wide range of sporting and artistic activities. For example, many pupils take part in musicals such as 'Grease'.

Trust leaders and governors provide strong support to the principal in his effort to raise the aspirations of pupils. They hold leaders to account well by checking that the plans for improvement are having a positive impact on the quality of education pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff get to know the pupils well. They are alert to the signs of abuse and potential risks. They have up-to-date training covering a wide range of potential risks including those of extremism and exploitation. When staff report a concern, there is a follow up conversation. This tells staff that their concern has been acted on. Leaders are proactive in the identification of pupils who are at risk. Leaders' work with external agencies is timely and ensures that they secure the right support for pupils and families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders have carefully planned and sequenced the teaching of skills within the curriculum, their plans do not go far enough to identify the specific knowledge teachers must pass on to pupils. As a result, pupils' knowledge is insecure. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans make the essential knowledge explicit for teachers.
- Teaching in English is focused on training pupils for the specific demands of GCSE examination papers before it is necessary to do so. This leads teachers to prioritise the teaching of exam techniques rather than use this curriculum time to develop pupils' broader capabilities as writers and readers. Leaders should ensure that the approach to assessment in key stage 3 does not place undue emphasis on the GCSE examinations.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' written work in key stage 3 are inconsistent. Pupils' spelling does not improve as quickly as it should because some teachers overlook errors in the spelling and use of key subject words. Teachers should support pupils to make accurate use of subject vocabulary and ensure that pupils gain the subject-specific knowledge they should.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 14–15 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138041
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10122375
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	736
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Juby
Principal	Michael Cammack
Website	http://www.braunton.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 June 2016

Information about this school

- Braunton Academy is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British, although there are pupils representing 11 of the 17 ethnic groups on roll.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average. The proportion of pupils with an EHC plan is higher than average.
- The school uses one alternative provider, Petroc College.

Information about this inspection

- We carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and geography. As well as visiting lessons, we met with staff, scrutinised pupils' work, held discussions with groups of pupils, talked with pupils around the site, interviewed curriculum leaders and examined curriculum plans.
- We met with the designated safeguarding leader. We talked to groups of staff about the safeguarding training they receive and the processes and culture of safeguarding in the school. Inspectors discussed with pupils the extent to which they feel safe.

- During the inspection, we met with a group of governors and trustees, the senior teacher who leads on behaviour and the special educational needs coordinator.
- We considered 66 responses to the pupil survey, 126 responses to Parent View and 52 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ray Hennessy

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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