

Bradon Forest School

The Peak, Purton, Swindon SN5 4AT

Inspection dates	19–20 April 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 headteacher, supported by a strong senior team, has raised the aspirations of staff and pupils at the school.
- Pupils across different year groups and subjects achieve well. Pupils leave the school with high levels of attainment.
- Behaviour has continued to improve since the last inspection and pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection so that it is now good.
- Pupils are fiercely proud of their school and its recent journey of improvement. They are well looked after and feel safe in school.
- The school benefits from being part of the Athelstan Trust, which has provided it with effective support and challenge that have improved leadership and teaching.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to think more deeply and do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils are not yet making enough progress in modern foreign languages.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their understanding and appreciation of other cultures and international issues.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of the most-able pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers have appropriately high expectations of what these pupils can achieve
 - teaching consistently challenges pupils to think deeply.

- Improve the achievement of pupils in modern foreign languages by:
 - continuing to use external support to improve the quality of teaching
 - closely monitoring the progress of pupils and providing effective support for those who fall behind.

- Provide more opportunities to broaden pupils' cultural experiences to develop a better understanding of other countries, cultures and global affairs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has worked diligently to act on the recommendations made at the last inspection to improve the school. He and governors have steadily strengthened the leadership of the school so that the pace of improvement has been rapid. As a result, both the quality of teaching and the behaviour of pupils are better, which has led to higher levels of achievement.
- The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils and, as a result, they now have greater self-belief. Inspectors noted the buoyancy and enthusiasm with which staff and pupils spoke about their school. This is because the headteacher is actively shaping a culture that nurtures ambition and aspiration.
- Senior leaders have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their self-evaluation is informed by honesty and transparency; leaders are appropriately self-critical when aspects of their work do not meet their exacting standards. They are clear about the school's areas for improvement and are fixed firmly on the right priorities.
- The deputy and assistant headteachers are effectively taking the lead in improving teaching. They are ably supported by middle leaders. All leaders passionately believe that the development of teaching should be a creative, inventive process but one that is also underpinned by quality assurance and accountability. This approach is helping to ensure that the improvement of teaching is firmly linked to the progress pupils make.
- The well-thought-out curriculum ensures that pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Until recently, pupils could potentially study up to 14 GCSE subjects. Recent refinements now mean that pupils study fewer courses and have sufficient time to study a range of subjects in depth. Pupils choose courses that are more appropriate for them and leave the school with a broad range of qualifications.
- A range of extra-curricular activities are on offer to pupils. However, leaders acknowledge that many of these provide academic support for subjects and that pupils would benefit from participating in a wider range of enrichment activities.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. A dedicated senior leader has responsibility for monitoring the attendance and progress of every individual pupil, and intervening where necessary to ensure that these pupils achieve their potential. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is rising over time and gaps are closing between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school.
- All parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) reported that they would recommend the school to others. Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school, as are school staff. One member of staff stated, 'The head has brought energy and enthusiasm on what can be a difficult journey.'
- Leaders have effectively promoted certain aspects of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education effectively. Pupils treat each other with respect and understand the difference between right and wrong. This is evident in classrooms and around the school site as pupils work and socialise collaboratively with each other. An example of the school's work to promote British values is the art department project to create poppies placed at the Cenotaph to commemorate the life of every soldier who fought in World War I.
- Leaders acknowledge that pupils do not have a sufficiently broad understanding of other cultures and international matters. The school does not currently provide enough opportunities for pupils to consider the world beyond the South West and develop 'broader horizons', a more outward-looking perspective.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The local governing board shares the headteacher's ambitions for the school. Governors are supportive and loyal, but they also understand the importance of challenging the headteacher and holding leaders to account for their work. As a result, governors take an objective view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are clear about the priorities for development.
 - The school has benefited from recently becoming part of the Athelstan Trust, which includes two other secondary schools. The exchange of staff and ideas between these schools has strengthened leadership at different levels and enabled support to be put in place for underperforming departments, specifically modern foreign languages.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school keeps appropriate records and checks to

ensure that all staff are suitable to work with pupils. All staff have received appropriate training to ensure that they know how to keep pupils safe in school and the correct procedures to follow should they have any concerns. Staff responsible for recruitment are trained to ensure that all employees who join the school are suitable to work with pupils. Site security has been recently improved and one pupil who spoke to an inspector reported that she felt safer because of this. Pupils report that they know who to speak to should they have concerns, and feel comfortable approaching staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- There have been undoubted improvements to teaching since the last inspection, such as been the dedicated focus of school leaders. Teachers have responded positively to the challenge to improve aspects of their practice so that there is now greater consistency and quality across subjects.
- Pupils across year groups, classes and subjects demonstrate their readiness for learning because they are punctual to lessons, arrive well equipped and are quick to settle. Inspectors noted the 'warm' relationships that exist between teachers and pupils, a reflection of mutual trust and respect.
- Relationships and attitudes in class are positive because most teaching is informed by effective planning. As a result, activities and tasks interest pupils. This is reflected in the work that pupils produce, which is well presented (showing that pupils take pride in their work) and highlights the range of different skills pupils can apply.
- Pupils learn well because teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of what most pupils can achieve. This is particularly evident in English, where pupils show rapid progress because of the expertise of teachers coupled with the expectation that pupils will give of their best. For example, in a Year 11 English 'top-up' lesson, attended by pupils who need to catch up, pupils were applying unseen poetry criticism skills to challenging work from writers such as Ted Hughes, Emily Dickinson and Siegfried Sassoon. The work was ambitious but the pupils rose to the challenge and developed their skills accordingly.
- Pupils develop their literacy and communication skills well across the curriculum. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their reading, and they demonstrate that they have the techniques and resilience when they come across unfamiliar or tricky words.
- Teachers across all subjects correct mistakes in pupils' writing. For example, in physical education (PE) spelling errors are highlighted in pupils' books and pupils are required to practise the correct spelling as part of the marking and feedback process.
- Leaders consider that the feedback given to pupils from staff is important in helping them to improve their work. As a result, the school has prioritised improving the consistency and quality of feedback, in accordance with its policy. This has led to written feedback now being universally provided to pupils across subjects, which has helped them to improve their work and make more rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- The pupils at Bradon Forest are known as individuals and cared for by staff who value the relationships they share with pupils. These positive relationships reflect and nurture a warm, welcoming school where all are respected regardless of background or circumstance.
- The culture of the school fosters success and self-belief because leaders promote certain key values. These values encourage pupils to be responsible, to take advantage of opportunities and 'be the best you can be'.
- Pupils are confident, happy and articulate, keen to talk in an animated way about their school. Year 9 pupils who spoke to the lead inspector pointed out that they felt the school had improved over the last couple of years, while a group of Year 7 pupils stated that 'we now have more freedom and responsibility' at Bradon Forest.
- Pupils are commendably loyal to their school and are proud of its journey of improvement. An example of this pride is the delight pupils take in their new school uniform, which they helped to devise. One pupil said, 'It helps me to learn and feel part of a proper school.' Other pupils commented that they liked attending events where they could show off their uniform.

- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe in the school. Care for individual pupils and concern for the most vulnerable is woven through every aspect of school life. A range of staff have the expertise, training and responsibility to provide support to pupils who need it.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. There are no areas in the school where pupils feel they cannot go and bullying is rare. When bullying does occur it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Younger pupils reported to an inspector that the support from tutors is one of the best things about the school.
- From their work in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, pupils understand the dangers posed by the internet and social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The respect pupils have for each other, for staff and for their environment is evident. Pupils move around the school site in an orderly fashion, respecting each other's personal space. At break and lunchtime, pupils talk to each other calmly in groups or, if on the field or hard surface areas, play games safely. Pupils do not require a lot of supervision as they are able to regulate their own behaviour effectively.
- Pupils' respect for the environment is apparent in the absence of litter around the school site. Corridor displays are not mistreated and there is no graffiti on school furniture or buildings.
- The attendance of pupils generally is above the national average. However, absence and exclusions for disadvantaged pupils are above those found nationally, despite the school using all available resources at its disposal to reduce these figures. The school is now working more intensively with parents and the education welfare officer, monitoring pupils' attendance and using a wider range of rewards and incentives to improve attendance. As a result, absence and exclusions are falling but are not yet in line with the national average.
- The five pupils who attend training away from the school site are well served. These pupils receive a bespoke curriculum according to their needs, delivered on a one-to-one or small-group basis. Consequently, attendance and engagement for these pupils has improved. Regular monitoring by school staff ensures that the teaching of the courses and the care received by pupils is of a good standard.
- Pupils are provided with useful information, advice and guidance to help them decide their next steps when they leave school. Pupils are able to attend mock interviews, speak with a careers advisor, listen to external speakers and employers, and receive help with applications. Bespoke work experience is available for some pupils and local college staff attend school parents' evenings to provide information about the courses they offer. As a result, pupils move on from school with confidence and there are no pupils who are not in education, employment or training.
- Nearly all parents indicated in Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, that the behaviour of pupils at the school was good.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement is rising over time and the attainment of pupils leaving the school is now well above average. The school's own performance information indicates that attainment and progress for pupils leaving school at the end of this academic year will also be well above average.
- The attainment of pupils leaving the school in 2015 was significantly higher than the national average in both mathematics and English for the second year running. Almost two thirds of pupils achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. In 2015, pupils leaving the school made more progress than other pupils nationally, having risen from being significantly below average in 2013. The progress of girls specifically was above average in 2015 while that of boys was in line with the national figures.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 made progress in line with the progress made by other pupils nationally. Achievement for this group of pupils has risen over time from being significantly below average in 2013. There is still a gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of pupils who are not disadvantaged, but this gap is closing over time. The gap is not closing more rapidly because achievement is rising steadily for all other pupils.
- The progress made by Year 11 pupils in English was well above the national average in 2015 and demonstrates particularly notable and swift improvement in just two years. Pupils have also made strong gains in humanities over the last two years. The progress of pupils in mathematics and science was in line with the national average.

- Most pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are achieving in line with their peers and meeting expectations. This is because the school carefully attends to these pupils' needs, even though leadership of this department is in transition. Currently the department is being temporarily overseen by the deputy headteacher until the newly appointed coordinator for special educational needs takes up post.
- Leaders are keenly aware of pupils who fall behind and need to catch up. For example, additional English is provided as an option that pupils can choose at key stage 4 and teachers provide extra sessions at breaktimes and after school. Many extra-curricular activities support academic achievement. Pupils reported to inspectors that it was harder to fall behind academically, such were the effective monitoring mechanisms that school leaders had put in place.
- The work produced by pupils across year groups and subjects, including those who are disadvantaged, shows that most current pupils in the school are meeting or exceeding expectations. Work shows that pupils are given many opportunities to develop important writing skills through pieces of structured, extended writing, not only in English, but also in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Tasks and assignments across subjects are suitably demanding for most pupils. The knowledge and skills pupils acquire can be clearly charted through their work.
- The most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and, as a result, do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders acknowledge that expectations of what these pupils can achieve, given their high starting points, are not yet high enough and teaching does not stretch these pupils to think more deeply.
- Pupils are not making sufficient progress in languages, which is well below the national average and has been so for the last few years. Leaders are well aware of this underperformance and have taken actions to remedy this situation. Leaders have taken advantage of support from Malmesbury School, within the trust, to improve the quality of leadership and teaching in languages. Changes have also been made to the curriculum to ensure that pupils choosing languages are making appropriate choices.

School details

Unique reference number	142316
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10012438

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	856
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Richards
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Andrew Morrison
Telephone number	01793 770570
Website	www.bradonforest.org.uk
Email address	enquiry@bradonforest.wilts.sch
Date of previous inspection	1–2 May 2014

Information about this school

- Bradon Forest School is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to become an academy and joined the Athelstan multi-academy trust in September 2015. The trust is formed of three secondary schools: Bradon Forest School, Malmesbury School and The Dean Academy.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2013. Since that time there have been other key appointments to the senior leadership team.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than average.
- There are more girls in the school than boys, which is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is lower than the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site training organised by the Swindon Tuition Service, The Oakfield Project, The Riverside Centre and Academy 21.
- The academy met the government's current floor standards in 2015, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons, many of which were jointly conducted with leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, support staff, groups of pupils, and representatives from the local governing board and the Athelstan Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, attendance, behaviour and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 75 responses to the online survey Parent View and 35 staff questionnaire returns.

Inspection team

Stephen Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Harris	Ofsted Inspector
William Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Beverley Murtagh	Ofsted Inspector

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