

Inspection of Bradon Forest School

The Peak, Purton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 4AT

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March, and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Bradon Forest benefit from a good quality of education. Since the last inspection, leaders have strengthened the school curriculum. It is now more ambitious. This has led to pupils learning and achieving well in most subjects.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. There are numerous trips and visits throughout the year, including to universities and to watch plays. Pupils are taught to be tolerant of others. Leaders have prioritised this. They have invited people into school to deliver workshops to help pupils understand the world they live in even more, which the pupils enjoy.

Pupils are safe at Bradon Forest. Teachers care about pupils. There is a calm atmosphere around the school and most pupils behave well in class. Parents agree with this. Some pupils say behaviour in lessons is not as good as it could be, and leaders are working on this. Some vulnerable pupils do not attend school as often as they need to.

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

Pupils at Bradon Forest benefit from a well-planned curriculum and teaching that helps them learn and achieve in most subjects. Teachers use good ways of helping pupils to recall important knowledge and remember more over time. In most subjects, teachers use questioning skilfully so they can identify gaps or misconceptions in pupils' learning. Some teachers have higher expectations than others of what pupils can achieve. Leaders in the school know where further improvements need to be made.

Pupils have access to a library, which is a welcoming space. Some younger pupils have very recently started to benefit from shared reading lessons. Pupils also read with their tutors. However, there is less focus on how to help pupils who are at the early stages of reading. A shared approach to teaching reading across the curriculum is less well embedded than other aspects of the school's work in this area.

Pupils behave well and calmly before school and at social times. They greet staff and other pupils pleasantly and respectfully. Behaviour in lessons is generally good, although there are some examples of off-task behaviour when learning is not planned well. Pupils also told inspectors about this. Leaders are aware of what needs to be done and are making further improvements. Any unkind behaviour is not tolerated and where it does happen, leaders work well with pupils and external groups to help prevent any recurrence. Parents agree. Some pupils said that leaders could do more in this aspect and leaders are listening to this feedback.

Increasing the attendance of pupils, in particular vulnerable pupils, is rightly a high priority for leaders. Good work with families is helping with this, as is adapting the curriculum for pupils who have been absent for a long time.

Pupils have recently enjoyed visits from a range of organisations. These have included workshops on progressive masculinity and diversity. Leaders are committed to the social and moral development of pupils at the school. Pupils have lessons in 'global citizenship' every fortnight. A few pupils have negative attitudes towards these and feel that the lessons do not prepare them for life in modern Britain. Leaders have recognised this and have very recently introduced a new curriculum.

The school has a strong careers programme. Pupils attend careers fairs and universities. Year 11 pupils are well informed about their next steps. They attend a number of local colleges and sixth forms when they leave Bradon Forest.

The school has recently improved the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons. When teachers have accurate information about how to support pupils with SEND, many do this well.

Leaders work in the best interests of the pupils. They work with families to support pupils with complex needs. Staff at the school enjoy working there and the headteacher has created a sense of common purpose. The school is well supported by the trust. However, many leaders have recently taken on new roles. A number of positive actions have been taken, but some areas of the school's work need to improve. For example, plans to ensure better achievement of disadvantaged pupils are not developed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained well to ensure that they remain alert to potential signs of harm and neglect. They are confident in using systems to report concerns promptly regarding pupils who may be at risk of harm. Pupils feel safe. They are safe in school as well as learning how to keep themselves safe outside it, especially when online. There is careful oversight of those pupils spending time away from the school site to help with their learning and development.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The approach to supporting pupils who have fallen behind in reading or how to help teachers teach reading across the curriculum is not fully embedded. This means that some pupils are not receiving the right kind of support. Leaders must

introduce effective strategies to help pupils to read well and prioritise reading across the curriculum, especially for pupils who have fallen behind.

- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND attend school less frequently than their peers. This means that they are missing out on opportunities to learn and be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders must further develop their strategic approach to supporting these pupils, and their families, so that they attend school regularly.

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](#)' 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	142316
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10240158
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	912
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Boggis-Rolfe
Headteacher	Sarah Haines
Website	www.bradonforest.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bradon Forest School is part of The Athelstan Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative provision settings and three unregistered alternative provision settings for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.

- Very occasionally, Ofsted's quality assurance process may suggest gaps in the inspection evidence base, which will cause Ofsted to conclude that the inspection is incomplete. This happened at Bradon Forest School. One of His Majesty's Inspectors returned to the school on 29 March 2023 to gather additional

information to secure the evidence base. In such cases, the inspection report is not published until Ofsted is satisfied that the inspection is secure.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with three representatives from the local governing body, the chair of the Athelstan Trust and the chief executive officer of The Athelstan Trust.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, art and religious studies. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors met with pupils in all year groups. Inspectors also observed and spoke to pupils at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including recruitment checks made on staff.
- An inspector checked the school's arrangements for those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jo Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Antell	Ofsted Inspector
James McNeillie	His Majesty's Inspector

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