

Inspection of The Broxbourne School

Badgers Walk, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire EN10 7FU

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Paula Humphreys. This school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Trew.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a highly purposeful and happy place to be. Pupils interact very pleasantly with one another around the school. At lunch, some pupils share conversation using their tablets, some play football and others sit out on the grass chatting. Pupils treat each other with the highest levels of respect and tolerance. This is because it is such an important part of school culture. Pupils take responsibility for doing the right things, including behaving well, even when no one is watching.

Pupils produce exceptional work and attain extremely well because they benefit from highly skilled and expert teaching. They develop a complex and deep understanding of the subjects they learn.

Staff care about forming highly positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils have lots of people they can talk to if they ever have any worries. Pupils know there is always someone they can turn to either for academic or personal reasons. This keeps them safe.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of wider opportunities that promote personal development. These include choirs, exchange visits, regular sporting fixtures and competitions and school productions. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils access all these opportunities equally.

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

Longstanding leaders have grown and developed the school over time. They have carefully nurtured staff and grown their expertise. Consequently, there is a consistency of excellence in teaching across the entire curriculum.

The school has developed an extremely ambitious curriculum. This curriculum enables pupils to study and achieve well in both academic and vocational courses. The school has also ensured the curriculum caters precisely for the local context. For example, as part of the 'super curriculum', pupils develop their understanding of vocational pathways, which prepares them highly effectively for apprenticeships or entering trades. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that sixth-form students can study courses that match their interests, even if this means small class sizes.

Pupils attain extremely well in both the main school and sixth form. However, in a small minority of subjects, pupils did not make the progress they might in the 2023 GCSE examinations. The school has precisely identified the reasons for this and taken the steps needed to address these fully. For example, the school identified that in languages, pupils' speaking skills were not as highly developed as other aspects. The school reviewed the languages curriculum and included extensive opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking skills. For example, in the sixth form, students speak in depth and detail in French about the complex novels they study. This means current pupils are achieving highly.

Teachers use the information they have about pupils with SEND precisely to ensure they achieve highly and access the curriculum fully. Teaching assistants support pupils with higher levels of needs to fully access residential trips. They ensure those pupils at the earlier stages of reading, including pupils with SEND, get the targeted support they need to become fluent readers.

Staff have created a culture where pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils participate fully in lessons. Staff regularly praise and reward pupils who show positive attitudes. This has created a culture of positivity right across the school where everyone respects each other. It is just part of the culture to behave well at all times. Consequently, pupils want to come to school and attendance levels are high.

Leaders have ensured pupils benefit from comprehensive careers education and guidance. Sixth-form students get precise guidance about their next steps. This involves careers fairs, one-to-one meetings and work experience. Many students have gone on to successfully complete studies at prestigious universities or apprenticeships as a result.

The breadth and depth of the school's work to promote pupils' personal development is a stand-out feature. Leaders promote raising aspirations, through working in partnership with colleges from Oxford and Cambridge University. They provide opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to work with post-graduate students through the 'Brilliant Club'. There is a wealth of opportunities that extend pupils' knowledge and cater for their talents and interests. For example, sixth-form students performed highly in a national mathematics competition. Leaders ensure sporting opportunities are available for all. School teams have achieved success in national competitions, which truly extends pupils.

Trustees have a precise understanding of the school. They have guided the school through the complexities of a site move and have worked with the headteacher to enable smooth changes in leadership. Leaders at all levels are highly effective due to the training and development they have had. School leaders are extremely mindful of staff workload and well-being. However, staff value the supportive culture, positive environment and development opportunities the most.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	136396
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10323701
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,332
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	230
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Trew
Headteacher	Paula Humphreys
Website	www.broxbourne.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 April 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- As the trust is a single academy trust there is no chief executive officer. The headteacher has responsibility for the school and the trustees for governance.
- The school uses one registered alternative education provision.
- The headteacher is retiring at the end of the academic year. The deputy headteacher has been appointed as headteacher from September 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To discuss governance and trust leadership an inspector met with a representative sample of trustees. This includes the chair and vice-chair of trustees.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinators, the head of sixth form, the designated safeguarding leads, the behaviour, attendance and personal development leads, subject leaders, pastoral leaders and staff. An inspector met with the head of careers to discuss careers provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology, languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects, including personal, social and health education, relationships and sex education, music, drama, computing, geography and religious education.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 also held dedicated meetings to explore attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey and Ofsted’s staff survey. They considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text messages.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Caren Earp	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Steven Hogan	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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