

# Bluecoat Beechdale Academy

Harvey Road, Billborough, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 3GP

## Inspection dates

8–9 February 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The principal has been very successful in improving the quality of education that the school provides since his arrival in September, 2015. The executive principal has provided very effective support to the school.
- Governors have an accurate and well-informed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's plans for improvements tackle the right issues.
- Leaders and governors are passionate about ensuring that pupils receive the best possible standard of education. They give high priority to ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities get the opportunities that they should.
- Middle leaders play a key role in ensuring that pupils make good progress. Previously underachieving groups, such as middle-ability students, are now catching up with others. In mathematics and geography, progress is less consistent than in other subjects.
- Leaders have created an engaging curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils and parents value the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. These give pupils the chance to try things that they might not otherwise experience.
- Leaders make sure that teachers receive high-quality support and training. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Effective explanations and skilful questioning promote good learning. Very occasionally, however, work set is too easy or too hard. When this happens, a few pupils can lose concentration and disrupt the learning of others.
- The school is particularly effective in supporting pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. All adults in the school work as a team to ensure the well-being of pupils at risk of harm.
- Staff set high standards for pupils' conduct. This has led to improvement in pupils' behaviour. However, a minority still need to be reminded of the school's rules. Pupils are very friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now close to the national average. However, the attendance of some groups of pupils has not improved as rapidly as the attendance of others.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the rapid improvements made in pupils' outcomes so that they at least match those of other pupils nationally by:
  - ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics and geography
  - ensuring that the progress of middle-ability pupils continues to accelerate
  - ensuring that work set for all groups offers just the right amount of challenge so that instances of low-level disruption are eradicated
  - ensuring that pupils' presentation of their work is of a consistently high standard
  - ensuring that all pupils meet the school's high expectations regarding behaviour
  - ensuring that the attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities rise to at least the national average.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and governors, supported by an extremely committed staff, have created a school that parents want to send their children to. As a result, the numbers on roll at the school have risen and continue to rise.
- The principal has established a culture of ambition for pupils in this area of high deprivation. Many pupils arrive at the school with low self-esteem and lack the confidence that they need to do well. The school supports pupils' emotional needs well, and most now believe that they can succeed.
- Leaders, with the support and challenge of governors, make good use of the extra funding available to them. Additional funding, to support disadvantaged pupils and those who join the school with attainment below average, is used effectively to remove the barriers that can stop these pupils from doing well. For example, there has been a drive to improve pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills. This is ensuring that pupils make the most of their time at school and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, work or training.
- Leaders have ensured that the small number of the most able disadvantaged pupils at the school are benefiting from work with universities and businesses to raise their aspirations. Partly because of this, the numbers choosing to progress to higher-level qualifications when they leave school are increasing. Additional funding also helps leaders to provide extra-curricular activities, which broaden pupils' horizons and enable them to consider different options for their futures.
- Leaders make appropriate use of additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The achievement of this group of pupils is now improving. Leaders have ensured that teaching assistants, who support pupils who require additional help, have appropriate expertise. There remain, however, occasions when tasks set for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are too difficult for them to complete.
- Published information on the school's website does not reflect its good work, particularly in relation to its use of targeted funding, such as the pupil premium. Some of the information that academies are required to publish is missing. The school is quickly addressing any omissions.
- Leaders are working tirelessly to improve the quality of teaching. This commitment was clear during meetings with staff, in most lesson observations and in feedback discussions after observations. The school's partnership work with its sponsor school, across a range of subjects, has been important in improving teaching. Teaching has now improved to the point where the sponsor school is starting to benefit from Bluecoat Beechdale's areas of strength, including those in science.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance rigorously. School leaders use the information they gather on the quality of teaching to help them to decide on teachers' salary progression. The school's leaders are still working to achieve complete consistency in the quality of teaching. When leaders have concerns about standards being achieved by individual subjects or teachers, they provide high-quality support and challenge.

- School leaders have made sure that parents can be involved with their child's school life. A parents' forum has been established to inform the work of the school. Parents are able to access helpful information about their child's experience at school through the school's website.
- The principal has made considerable changes to the school's curriculum, and these have created improved opportunities for pupils. The curriculum now in place meets the needs of pupils. It gives pupils, of all abilities and aptitudes, the opportunity to do well and to progress to appropriate placements when they leave.
- The curriculum is leading to improvements in the progress of middle-ability pupils, who have previously made less progress than they should at the school. There is a good mix of academic and work-related learning options for pupils to choose from. The school's records show that the numbers of pupils who do not go on to education, employment or training are similar to the national picture. Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive and exemplary. School leaders review these opportunities regularly to engage more pupils. They have set an ambitious target of 100% pupil involvement.
- Leaders promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development successfully. School leaders are aware that some of the school's pupils do not have as many opportunities outside of school as others of their age. They are passionate about compensating for the inequalities that any pupils experience.
- Pupils are well prepared to take their place in modern Britain. This is because the curriculum offers pupils opportunities to learn about democracy and tolerance. It does not shy away from consideration of potentially contentious issues in order to help pupils to understand the dangers of extremism.

### **Governance of the school**

- The local governing body has been well supported by the multi-academy trust and now confidently uses the powers that the trust has given it to make sure the school meets the needs of pupils.
- Governors know the school's context well and are aware of difficulties that high levels of social deprivation cause for pupils. They are determined that the school will overcome any barriers to the success of its pupils.
- Governors ensure that they are knowledgeable about what goes on in the school. This means that they work effectively with leaders and make well-informed decisions.
- Governors support and challenge the school, helping to direct the vision of leaders. They make sure that additional resources are used effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All school staff understand the importance of their roles in keeping children safe.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to deal with the local and national risks to their well-being which pupils face. Staff told inspectors that this training was of a high quality. Training has included how to protect pupils from the dangers of

extremism.

- Leaders have developed their own computer-based systems for monitoring the welfare of all pupils they are concerned about. This is very effective at making sure that those involved in keeping pupils safe can keep a watchful eye on issues, both in and outside of school, that are relevant to the safety of individual pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and support good learning. Teachers use these positive relationships to reinforce the school's expectations regarding attitudes to learning. Staff use humour and rewards well to encourage pupils to do their best.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to enthuse pupils. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and work hard to ensure that pupils share these aspirations.
- Feedback to pupils, especially in English, is very helpful and supports pupils to make better progress.
- Teachers have good questioning skills, which they use to dig down to deeper levels of meaning. The most-able pupils at the school particularly benefit from being pushed to think harder about difficult topics they encounter.
- Comments on Parent View, and the school's own records of what parents think, indicate that parents are happy with the quality of teaching that their children receive.
- The school has introduced a project to develop pupils' thinking and communication skills; a significant number of pupils still need help to develop these skills when they join the school. Teachers promote reading for pupils of all abilities, and the most able readers are encouraged to attempt increasingly challenging books. The atmosphere in the library celebrates the pleasures of reading. Pupils are encouraged to spend time there regularly.
- Pupils who leave primary school with reading skills that are below the national average receive effective additional support to help them to catch up. This support is proving successful in improving the reading comprehension of the relatively high numbers of pupils who are weak readers when they first join the school.
- Teachers prioritise the development of pupils' vocabulary. Through activities such as 'word of the week', pupils explore the meanings of new or unfamiliar words. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed learning about the different meanings of the word 'epiphany'.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to help pupils who have complex learning needs. During the inspection, teaching assistants were particularly effective at helping pupils to persevere when they found work difficult.
- Teachers ensure that lessons offer pupils the chance to consider how fair the world is. For example, a class was observed discussing social inequality while studying the play 'An Inspector Calls'.
- The school has kept up to date with developments in the teaching of English and mathematics. Teachers are working with colleagues across the Bluecoat Multi-Academy

Trust to make sure that assessment remains accurate as national examination requirements change. Teachers across the trust are also developing the best teaching approaches to the new, more demanding types of examinations in English and mathematics.

- Many staff are good at adapting their plans to suit the needs of pupils. Inspectors saw an example of this in a work-related learning lesson, in which the teacher responded quickly when pupils did not find it easy to complete a task.
- In several lessons, including some mathematics lessons, the level of challenge was not well matched to pupils' abilities, which meant that they struggled to complete the tasks set. When pupils found it difficult to do what was asked of them, they became disruptive. This included some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers do not set consistently high standards for pupils' presentation, and too much of the work seen in lessons was presented untidily. This is not consistently challenged by teachers.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff cater well for pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Most parents are very positive and appreciative about the care that their children receive while at school.
- Communications with the parents of pupils judged to be at risk are very effective and help to secure the welfare of these pupils. Parents told inspectors how reassuring they find these contacts.
- Staff are well trained and vigilant in identifying pupils experiencing difficulties. School staff always act swiftly to ensure that pupils receive the help that they need. Partnership work between the school and external agencies, to support pupils having difficulties, is strong and effective.
- Most pupils are self-confident, particularly orally. They are taught explicitly by the school how to be successful learners and many benefit from this.
- Independent careers advice and guidance are a strength of the school. The high quality of the careers advice that the school provides helps pupils to understand why they need to work hard in school and do well.

The school's anti-bullying records demonstrate staff have taken robust actions when there have been instances of bullying. There has been a significant decrease in bullying incidents over time. The harmful effects of bullying are covered in detail by the school's curriculum. A small number of pupils and parents reported instances of bullying, but other pupils and parents told inspectors about the good work of the school in tackling bullying.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school has a clear behaviour policy, which sets high standards for pupils' conduct. Most pupils behave well, but the behaviour of a minority still disrupts some lessons and slows down learning for others. Staff are tackling this, and careful reading of the school's records shows that behaviour has improved considerably since the arrival of the current principal; however, it is still not good enough.
- A high staff presence around the school helps pupils to make good behaviour choices and ensures that pupils' movements around the school are orderly.
- Pupils are very sociable; they are courteous and friendly to visitors, holding doors open and offering to show guests where to go. Pupils care about each other and respect the different communities that are represented in the school.
- In the past, the school had higher than average numbers of exclusions, but this has now changed. Last year, the number of permanent exclusions fell. There have been no permanent exclusions this year. The number of fixed-term exclusions has also reduced considerably.
- Pupils who find it difficult to follow the school's behaviour rules can now attend a multi-academy trust unit, which has helped some to improve their behaviour and attendance. The unit has helped some pupils to stay in school, who might otherwise have been excluded. The pupils who attend the unit also attend the main school for part of the week, which helps them to feel included in the life of the school.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the school opened and continues to do so, with current attendance close to the national average. Leaders have put effective procedures in place to support good attendance. The number of pupils who are regularly absent has reduced considerably this school year. However, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend as regularly as pupils in other groups.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' progress is now improving rapidly. In 2015, pupils' outcomes were below floor standards. During the inspection, the school provided compelling evidence that the validated summary of the 2016 examination results will show that last year's leavers made progress closer to the national average.
- Pupils currently in the school are benefiting from stronger teaching. Their achievement in most year groups and in most subjects is now higher than previously. This better progress is particularly evident in the pupils' written work. Increasing proportions of pupils are working at the standards expected for their ages. However, in geography and mathematics, school records indicate that the progress of some year groups is less strong.
- Staff monitor carefully the progress of the unusually large numbers of pupils at the school who arrive with no information about their previous attainment. Pupils without attainment information are assessed promptly, and their achievement is tracked closely. Staff provide effective additional support for this group and these pupils make

good progress.

- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Most make strong progress from their starting points and meet their individual targets. Similarly, most disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress. This is a considerable improvement on the performance of this group in the past. However, the below-average rates of attendance of both of these groups remain a barrier to even better outcomes.
- The school has a higher proportion of lower-attaining pupils than most schools. Effective use of the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium helps them to learn the key skills required to be successful learners. The progress of pupils who join the school with attainment around the national average has also improved, but not as quickly as that of other pupils.
- In the past, the progress of White British pupils at the school has been slower than the progress of other groups. The achievement of White British pupils is now improving and, in some year groups, there is now little difference between their progress and that of pupils nationally.
- All pupils are being well prepared for next stage of their education, training and employment, because the school ensures that they leave with the skills they need to prosper. In particular, the leaders' ambition for the strong development of pupils' reading, speaking and thinking skills is preparing pupils well for their futures.

## School details

Unique reference number	140369
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10023080

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	621
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Lesley Lyon
Principal	Carl Elder
Telephone number	0115 913 5211
Website	<a href="http://www.bluecoatbeechdale.uk.com/">http://www.bluecoatbeechdale.uk.com/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@bluecoatbeechdale.uk.com">admin@bluecoatbeechdale.uk.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Bluecoat Beechdale is a smaller than the averaged-sized secondary school. The number of pupils on roll is rising rapidly.
- The school is part of the Bluecoat Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school receives support from Bluecoat Academy and this has supported a wide range of improvements in teaching, learning, pupils' progress and the use of resources.
- The majority of pupils are White British, although pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds attend the school. The school has above the national average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- A small group of pupils from the school attend the Bluecoat Multi-Academy Trust unit,

Aspire, for part of their education.

- In 2015, the school did not meet the current government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their websites about pupils' examination results.
- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of information about pupils' examination results.

## Information about this inspection

- This school has not previously been inspected as an academy. It opened in April 2014.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons across both key stages and a range of subjects. Some lessons were jointly observed with school leaders. In addition to examining work in lessons, one inspector examined books with subject leaders. Inspectors also undertook learning walks to evaluate pupils' progress and behaviour across a range of classrooms.
- Inspectors met with the principal and the executive principal, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and members of the Bluecoat Multi-Academy Trust. An inspector also spoke to staff at Aspire, a unit which provides off-site training for pupils across the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors looked at the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and at 13 free text responses from parents.
- The inspection team listened to the views of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 during discussions, and considered 74 questionnaire responses from pupils.
- Inspectors considered 30 responses to staff questionnaires and talked to staff after lessons to seek their views.

## Inspection team

Ellenor Beighton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Fulbrook	Ofsted Inspector

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