

# The Beaconsfield School

Wattleton Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 1SJ

## Inspection dates

12–13 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Leaders have not effectively evaluated the impact of teaching over time on the learning and progress of pupils.
- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. Overall, teaching does not carefully target next steps that are suitably challenging from pupils' starting points.
- The governing body has not held leaders to account effectively enough for the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The attendance of a small group of disadvantaged pupils, while improving, is not high enough.
- Pupils' achievement has not improved quickly enough, particularly for boys.
- Despite improving outcomes, progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not improving at the same rate as for other pupils.
- There are not enough opportunities for the best teachers to share their expertise and skills.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have improved attendance and behaviour since the last inspection.
- The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students achieve well and are role models for younger pupils.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is a high priority in the school. Staff know pupils very well and consequently pupils feel safe.
- Pupils are polite and supportive of each other and enjoy school.
- The most able pupils achieve well and make good progress, particularly in English.
- Governance has recently been strengthened. It is now more rigorous in holding leaders to account for all aspects of pupil progress.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen leadership at all levels by ensuring:
  - rigorous and accurate evaluation of actions taken to improve the school, particularly by being more sharply focused on the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' progress
  - that the difference the pupil premium funding is making to disadvantaged pupils is evaluated carefully so that the progress of these pupils accelerates.
- Improve rates of disadvantaged pupils' progress, so that differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminished, particularly in mathematics.
- Further embed and develop strategies to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers use information about pupils more effectively to plan learning that challenges all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have not ensured that certain groups of pupils across the school make the progress they are capable of. This is the case for disadvantaged pupils across a broad range of subjects, particularly in mathematics.
- Senior and middle leaders have not accurately evaluated the impact of teaching over time on the learning and progress of pupils. They have not made sure that teaching is of consistently high quality.
- Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that teachers' planning leads to teaching that challenges all groups of pupils rigorously. They have amended their programme of professional development and training to address this, but it has not had time to make a difference to pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have not ensured that progress for pupils with previously low attainment is accelerating fast enough. The Year 7 catch-up premium (additional government funding for pupils who did not reach the expected levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6) is used well to improve progress in mathematics and in reading. However, it has been less effective in improving writing.
- New teachers to the school are well supported in developing their skills through a thorough programme of induction. Underperforming staff are challenged strongly to improve.
- Leaders have not ensured that the expertise of teachers whose pupils regularly make good progress is shared effectively with those whose pupils make less progress.
- Leaders' changes to the curriculum have ensured that pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Pupils now study a broad range of academic GCSE qualifications, and the proportion of pupils studying modern foreign languages and humanities subjects has increased.
- Leaders' use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has begun to be more effective. These pupils are attending school more often and now making more progress over time. However, pupils who are eligible for special educational needs and/or disabilities support are not making progress in line with pupils nationally.
- Leaders do not evaluate fully the impact of pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The funding is used in many different ways; however, it is not always targeted to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' work to improve the attendance, behaviour and welfare of pupils has been effective for the majority of pupils. More pupils now attend school more regularly than at the last inspection, and incidents of disruptive behaviour are fewer. However, attendance for disadvantaged pupils is not high enough.
- Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve the performance of boys at the school. Inspectors saw the 'boys' champion' having an impact on improving boys' behaviour and attitudes to learning during morning mentoring sessions.
- Pupils' learning in class is enriched through a range of additional activities. Pupils have

the opportunity to engage in a variety of sports and performing arts clubs as well as those designed to raise awareness about global issues such as the Amnesty club.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Inspectors saw an assembly where pupils were skilfully encouraged to reflect on the theme of tolerance and injustice through considering the music of Bob Marley and the actions of the 'Black Lives Matter' campaigners.
- The wider curriculum ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in their community. They feel safe at school and know who to talk to if they need help. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of people's differences. Pupils in key stage 3 had a deeper understanding of the dangers of radicalisation than some older pupils.
- Alternative provision caters well for those pupils who need a more bespoke curriculum to meet their needs. Learning is skills-based and supports the emotional and behavioural well-being of pupils well.
- Advice and guidance help pupils to make informed choices about their next stages in education. The 'just like you' wall proudly highlights the achievements of former pupils, increasing numbers of whom go on to attend university. However, some pupils would appreciate advice about a broader range of career options earlier in their time at school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have not challenged leaders effectively enough about the difference that the use of pupil premium funding has on progress for disadvantaged pupils. Plans to ensure that governors have a better understanding of the progress of this group of pupils across a range of subjects have not yet had an impact.
- Governors have wide-ranging expertise and skills which they have used effectively to hold the headteacher to account for some aspects of the school's work, such as improving the behaviour, attendance and safety of pupils and monitoring differences in achievement in subject areas.
- Governance has strengthened recently. The new chair of the governing body has already identified that progress for all pupils, and in particular for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has not improved enough.
- Governors' work has been refocused to increase levels of challenge and rigour in governance and ensure that the impact of the school's work to improve is assessed.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have had training in safer recruitment and there are robust procedures in place to ensure that the staff working in the school are suitably trained and checked.
- Leaders have acted on advice from risk assessments carried out to ensure the safety of pupils on the school site. Staff visibly patrol entrances to the school at break and lunchtimes, and fire drills and lock-down procedures are practised.
- Clear and appropriate systems are in place to ensure the health, well-being and safety of pupils. Leaders liaise effectively and in a timely manner with parents and outside agencies that support pupils' welfare. Pupils know who to speak to if they have any concerns, and staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school and parents agree.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable across the school. Not enough teaching challenges pupils from their starting points, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers are not using the information they have about disadvantaged pupils to help these pupils make rapid progress. Although planning has improved since the last inspection to include a broader range of different types of activities, these are not always well matched to pupils' starting points and do not challenge pupils effectively. Too often, the quality of questioning does not encourage pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Where pupils' progress is strong, pupils are set tasks which provide opportunities to deepen their learning. For example, during a Year 11 geography lesson, pupils were keen to share their ideas when considering the rights and wrongs of deforestation.
- Teachers provide a range of additional support for Year 11 to help to prepare them for their GCSE examinations. However, this is not consistently well targeted to the pupils who need it.
- The new assessment policy, which sets high expectations for pupils' achievement, is understood well by pupils because they know the targets they are aiming for. The vast majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, appreciate the information they receive about pupils' progress. However, feedback on pupils' work has an inconsistent impact on helping them know what precisely they need to do to improve. In some subjects such as English and history, pupils are very clear about how to improve their work, but in others this is not as well developed.
- The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is usually good, and pupils feel well supported by their teachers. Pupils are often engaged in their learning, for example in a Year 7 music lesson pupils worked well together to invent ways of recording musical notation, and in one Year 9 English lesson pupils enjoyed making progress because activities were well matched to their starting points.
- Learning is held back because too often teachers mistake compliant behaviour for good learning. Sometimes pupils do not fully concentrate on their learning, particularly when work is not challenging or they are given too long to complete a task.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by extra teaching outside of lessons which helps build confidence and improve learning. In-class support from teaching assistants is especially effective in practical subjects. However, in some academic subjects, teachers do not successfully plan learning which meets these pupils' needs. Support from teaching assistants is of varying quality as a result.
- The school's work to improve literacy is having a positive impact, particularly in key stage 3. The use of a well-structured reading programme and frequent opportunities to read in lessons mean that most pupils can read fluently. Writing, particularly in English, is improving due to more effective teaching and assessment.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good and valued by pupils and parents.

- Staff receive regular, appropriate training which helps them to understand the needs of pupils in their care and act appropriately to keep pupils safe. External agencies support pupils who need additional help to stay safe. A counsellor visits school regularly to support those with emotional vulnerabilities. Pupils value groups such as the 'Chill Club' which supports pupils in developing their emotional well-being.
- Pupils of all ages support each other well. Older pupils mentor younger pupils in 'The Hub' to help them build confidence in their abilities and focus on their learning. Older pupils are proud to be making a difference by offering this support, and younger pupils appreciate the advice from those who have recently been in their position.
- Alternative provision is used well to support pupils with high emotional needs, particularly those whose high anxiety levels prevent them attending school regularly. These pupils are well cared for, and regular updates are provided on the progress these pupils are making. They follow a bespoke curriculum which focuses on skills development. Attendance for these pupils has improved as a result.
- Leaders' work to improve the self-confidence of pupils is helping them to believe they can achieve more in their learning. Several parents who commented on the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, praised this aspect of the school's work. However, inspectors noted that in some lessons pupils often rely on the direction from the teacher rather than having the confidence to direct their own learning.
- Pupils at key stages 4 and 5 generally value advice about their next stages and future career choices. A small number of pupils told inspectors that they do not receive enough information early enough about the breadth of options available to them when they leave school.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The core beliefs of 'ready, respect and responsible' pervade the school.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, moving around corridors in a calm and orderly manner. Inspectors found pupils to be mature and respectful, communicating with each other and with adults well. Pupils and parents who responded to the Ofsted online surveys agreed that instances of bullying were rare. No bad language was heard during the inspection. Pupils report that they do not use racist or homophobic language 'because we celebrate diversity'.
- Leaders have worked extensively to improve levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils so that they have improved over time. A more rapid response to absence and increased contact with parents have resulted in fewer instances of absence, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs. 'Late gates', where leaders take swift action with those who are late to school, are reducing lateness. Work is ongoing to improve the attendance of pupils who qualify for free school meals and those who are persistently absent.
- Behaviour logs show that incidents of disruptive behaviour in lessons, and exclusion rates as a whole, have reduced significantly. This is as a result of the school's new behaviour policy, which focuses on reinforcing positive behaviour while having a 'zero tolerance' attitude to repeatedly disruptive behaviour. Pupils who have needed help to improve their behaviour especially like the 'red card' system which helps them to reflect on how to best behave. However, some pupils felt that there is not enough positive reinforcement of good behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally positive, and they are polite to each other and

to adults. The large majority work effectively in groups and when under the direction of the teacher. However, some off-task discussions and low levels of disruption were seen during the inspection, particularly when lessons were poorly planned to engage and challenge pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- For the past three years, pupils have not made enough progress across a broad range of subjects, particularly those with low and middle starting points. Boys do not achieve as well as girls. While some improvement is evident, this has not been rapid enough or achieved across a wide range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils in particular have not made enough progress by the end of key stage 4, particularly in mathematics. Rates of progress for this group in English GCSE have declined since the last inspection.
- Disadvantaged pupils in other year groups are not making the accelerated progress necessary which will enable them to catch up, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making enough progress. However, they are making better progress than previously, and key stage 4 results for this group in English and mathematics show a three-year improvement.
- The most able pupils are suitably challenged by their work, and an increasing proportion of pupils in English, science and mathematics achieved the top grades in 2016. Those who studied further mathematics at GCSE achieved very well.
- Across the school, English performs more strongly overall than other subjects. However, there is variation between subjects and year groups. For example, current pupils are achieving well in modern foreign languages, but performance in science is weaker. Early signs are that pupils in Year 7 are achieving well.
- An increasing number of pupils end key stage 4 with the appropriate skills and knowledge for their next steps. Proportions of pupils staying in education or going on to employment or other training are increasing as a result and are above national averages.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision off the school site achieve well because the courses they study are carefully matched to their interests and level of ability. Leaders are rightly proud of the achievement of these pupils.
- Improving literacy and numeracy skills for those pupils who enter school with low starting points is a priority for the school. Additional funding for those who need to catch up is used effectively in mathematics and to improve reading. Pupils read fluently throughout the school and enjoy reading.
- Pupils' writing is starting to be developed through a more consistent focus on writing in depth. Early signs are that this is starting to have an impact, particularly for Year 7 pupils.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Good

- The school met the academic and vocational minimum standards in 2015. Students achieved broadly in line with expectations and made particularly strong progress in vocational subjects. Provisional 2016 results show that pupils have continued to make

progress in both academic and vocational subjects, with the proportion of A\* to C grades increasing still further.

- The sixth form offers a bespoke range of academic and vocational courses, the majority of which students study on site, and some of which are offered in conjunction with a local school as part of The South Bucks Partnership Consortium. The school has changed the curriculum choices in response to student suggestions, and students appreciate the broader choice.
- The school has set high entry requirements to the sixth form in line with the local school, so that students can cope with the demands of the subjects they study. Students appreciate the small class sizes because they feel that they get a more personalised experience and high levels of support from teachers.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. During the inspection, inspectors saw students undertaking challenging activities and using key vocabulary with confidence. High levels of independence were seen particularly in psychology and drama, where teachers' skilful questioning supported students' self-direction of their learning.
- Leaders' implementation of more regular, rigorous assessments helps students to know how well they are doing and how to make more progress. Teachers' regular checks of students' study logs ensure that their good work ethic in school is mirrored at home with the completion of additional study and research. As a result, students are developing independent learning skills that will help them succeed in their immediate and long-term future.
- A small number of students who have not achieved a grade C or above in English or mathematics GCSE resit these subjects in the sixth form. Results have been variable and consequently leaders have devoted more curriculum time for these students.
- Students spoke enthusiastically about the strong contribution teachers make in helping them develop into mature, knowledgeable young adults who know how to stay safe in modern Britain. They particularly valued the recent debate about Britain's exit from the European Union and the programme of memorable assemblies covering issues such as safe driving.
- Students enjoy life in the sixth form, particularly the opportunities to make a difference to their community, such as through running the school Amnesty group and by writing the school play.
- The school helps students make informed choices about their next steps, for example by holding an annual careers conference which includes advice about apprenticeships as well as university education, and by ensuring that Year 12 students find work experience placements. As a result, retention rates are high, and all students who leave school go on to further education, employment or training, with increasing numbers of students progressing to university education.

## School details

Unique reference number	139367
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10019916

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	854
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Harrison
Headteacher	John Fletcher
Telephone number	01494 673450
Website	<a href="http://www.beaconsfield.bucks.sch.uk/">http://www.beaconsfield.bucks.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@beaconsfield.bucks.sch.uk">office@beaconsfield.bucks.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 October 2014

## Information about this school

- The Beaconsfield School is a smaller than average, non-selective secondary school and sixth form, in an area where there is selection.
- Pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provision at Aspire.
- The school achieved above the floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 34 lessons and 12 part-lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors took account of 47 responses to the confidential questionnaires received from staff. They also telephoned leaders of alternative provision.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school's strategic planning documents, minutes of meetings, reports of attendance and behaviour, and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work and observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and during breaktime.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 140 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 132 free text responses. Responses to the online questionnaire completed by 57 pupils were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gerard Strong	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Beamish	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Phillips	Ofsted Inspector

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