

The Beaconsfield School

Wattleton Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 1SJ

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders' determination and resolve have been pivotal in improving the school. Governors and staff are committed to the school's continued improvement. Leaders have high expectations and recognise that some aspects of the school still need development.
- The governing body is ambitious for the school. Governors hold leaders to account robustly and provide effective challenge on all aspects of pupils' progress.
- Leaders' actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement have proved effective. Pupils' progress in most subjects has improved and is set to increase further.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are effective. Pupils are taught how to stay safe and they feel safe.
- In general, teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan challenging lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs. However, some variability remains.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Pupils benefit from a well thought out curriculum. In addition, pupils' experiences at school are enriched by a range of trips, visits and extra-curricular activities.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and leaders work effectively with families of vulnerable pupils to improve attendance.
- Current sixth-form students are making strong progress due to teaching that consistently deepens thinking and develops knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Careers education is effective. Leaders' actions ensure that pupils are well prepared to make informed decisions about their next steps.
- Leaders' analysis of strengths and weaknesses is accurate but lacks sharpness and does not incisively evaluate the impact of actions in securing improvement.
- Most pupils have largely positive attitudes to their learning. However, pupils' learning, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is at times hindered because pupils do not pay attention well enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders evaluate sharply the impact of actions and initiatives introduced to raise standards, so they can further drive improvement more precisely for all groups of pupils.
- Eliminate any remaining variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that all pupils, and especially disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently challenge pupils to work hard in all subjects so that they make rapid progress from their starting points
 - making sure that all teachers have the highest expectations of how pupils behave and engage in lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, in partnership with committed governors, is resolute and determined in his ambition for pupils at The Beaconsfield School. Together, they work tirelessly to improve the school and place pupils' achievement and well-being at the heart of all that they do.
- Leaders have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are robust in their quest to raise achievement, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils. They have deployed an array of strategies to improve teaching and to inspire pupils to achieve well. Many of these strategies are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is detailed and thorough. They identify clearly areas for further development and incorporate these into their plans. However, at times their evaluations lack sharpness because leaders do not precisely analyse the impact of their actions on pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum aimed at ensuring that pupils have both breadth and depth in their learning. Leaders have responded appropriately to the challenges of new subject specifications at key stage 4 and modified the learning pathways for pupils. As a result, pupils are progressing through their learning well. Pupils build their knowledge, skills and understanding in a sequential and logical manner. This is now being replicated in key stage 3 as leaders review the curriculum to ensure that it is similarly strong.
- Leaders have made changes to the curriculum at key stage 4 in response to the low proportion of pupils taking subjects included in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure. As a result, the number of current pupils taking this suite of subjects has increased.
- Leaders' determination to secure sustained improvements in the quality of teaching is at the centre of their successful efforts to improve pupils' outcomes. They review learning through their regular visits to lessons and have developed a comprehensive programme of professional development for all staff. As a result, staff feel supported, motivated and proud to be part of the school.
- Leaders and governors' effective use of assessment information allows them to hold staff to account. They monitor this carefully to identify potential underperformance of subjects and of groups of pupils. Consequently, leaders' interventions are swift, effective and support pupils' progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Through the central theme of kindness, pupils learn about a wide range of topics, including the importance of fundamental British values and how to maintain good mental health. Pupils benefit from a variety of trips, visits, extra-curricular activities and external speakers that further enhance the curriculum. This work is pivotal in the school's efforts to ensure that pupils have respect for diversity and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have given high priority to ensuring that they address the historically weak progress of disadvantaged pupils and consequently the progress of this group of pupils

is improving. Governors check carefully that additional funding is allocated well and that it makes a positive difference to pupils' progress. They have ensured that plans are in place to improve the learning of disadvantaged pupils in lessons and that teaching staff know and understand these. Leaders, however, do not always evaluate the impact of classroom strategies sharply enough to ensure that they are having a significant impact on pupils' progress.

- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a firm understanding of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders make sure that there is strong provision to support the needs of these pupils. Therefore, these pupils are well cared for and make good progress.
- Leaders use the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium prudently to support pupils who have not reached the required standard at the end of primary education. Inspectors observed pupils in Year 7 showing confidence and resilience, taking risks and learning from their mistakes when attempting harder work. Consequently, they are making strong progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors are aspirational for the school and unwavering in their high expectations of both staff and pupils. The chair of governors has brought a heightened sharpness to the governing body and this has permeated more widely into the leadership of the school. Consequently, because of the effective collaboration between governors and leaders, there has been sustained improvement.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills and knowledge to the school. They have carried out a detailed audit of their expertise and experience and have aligned this closely to the areas for improvement. As a result, they hold leaders to account and provide strong support and rigorous challenge. They assure themselves that safeguarding and other statutory requirements are met well.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's context and an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. They use their regular visits to the school and frequent discussions with staff and pupils to understand better the information that leaders provide about pupils' performance. They ask searching and challenging questions and are able to analyse information about pupils' progress skilfully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous. They keep well-organised records and scrutinise these on a regular basis. Leaders carry out all necessary checks on staff and staff training is thorough and kept up to date.
- Leaders have fostered a culture within the school that enables pupils to stay safe. Staff are vigilant to any changes to pupils' behaviour that might indicate that a pupil needs additional help. They know the system for making referrals and concerns are raised promptly with the leaders responsible for safeguarding. Leaders follow up any concerns swiftly, including through the use of their strong links with external agencies.

- A highly skilled team of pastoral staff regularly consider the local safeguarding priorities specific to the pupils in school. Leaders have translated this into a programme that ensures that pupils have a well-rounded awareness of the issues that could affect them. As a result, pupils spoke confidently about a range of ways in which they have been taught to stay safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Ongoing improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have had a positive impact on pupils' progress. In particular, the majority of pupils make secure progress because teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan challenging lessons that enthuse and motivate. As a result, pupils make significant gains in their understanding and develop their wider subject skills well.
- Teachers are wholehearted in their desire for pupils to achieve well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are constructive and are built on trust and mutual respect. This enables pupils to have the confidence to ask for help and support when they are stuck or unsure.
- Typically, staff ask probing and thoughtful questions that significantly challenge pupils and deepen their thinking. This is particularly evident in the sixth form, where teachers' questioning unpicks pupils' understanding and maximises their learning.
- Teachers set homework that enables pupils to consolidate their learning. It is set in a considered way and enables pupils to revisit their learning from lessons effectively.
- Teachers carefully select resources that are well matched to pupils' needs and enable them to make progress. For instance, in mathematics, staff deploy resources to ensure that the level of challenge is high enough to keep pupils working and thinking throughout the lesson. This results in a purposeful buzz in the classroom as pupils work well together.
- Pupils understand the school's approach to providing feedback. In responding to teachers' advice, pupils identify errors and address gaps in their knowledge. Pupils say that they value teachers' advice in identifying the progress they are making. Most pupils commit to carefully reviewing and improving their work.
- Teachers provide frequent opportunities for the most able pupils to develop their extended writing skills, think analytically, problem solve and reason in context. In history, the most able pupils are consistently encouraged to think deeply, make links with prior learning and justify their reasoning. However, occasionally, for example in some key stage 3 English lessons, teachers' planning does not allow pupils to develop these skills sufficiently.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and expect every pupil to do their best. This leads to a collaborative ethos where standards are high and pupils are motivated and supported to produce work that they are proud of. However, sometimes, teachers' expectations of how hard pupils work are not as high as they should be. Leaders are working effectively to reduce any remaining variability in the quality of teaching.

- There has been a whole-school focus on supporting groups of pupils whose progress has been weak historically. Not all staff apply these agreed strategies rigorously, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The majority of pupils display a positive attitude towards their learning. They are keen to succeed and value the efforts made by their teachers in supporting them in lessons.
- Leaders have developed a rounded package of support to ensure that pupils are well informed about making choices for their next steps in education, employment or training. They have access to impartial careers advice from a variety of sources. As a result, pupils are well equipped to make sensible and carefully considered decisions about their future.
- The school provides pupils with a robust curriculum that strongly supports their emotional and social development. This helps them to have respect for themselves and others, stay safe and manage any risks. As a result, pupils are well prepared to deal with any future challenges they may face.
- Pupils are well looked after. They feel safe and are safe in school. Several commented on the strength of the relationships with staff and could identify an adult that they could talk to and who would listen to them if they had any concerns or worries.
- Pupils confirmed that bullying is rare and that they are confident that adults would deal with incidents quickly and effectively should they happen. Pupils are actively involved as anti-bullying ambassadors in raising awareness of how hurtful bullying can be and in creating a culture where it is not tolerated. Records show that the number of incidents of bullying is low.
- The majority of comments made by parents were positive. Several praised the nurturing and caring aspect of the school. One commented that 'the school has made my daughter smile again'. A small number of parents did, however, highlight concerns about the behaviour of some pupils in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is typically good.
- Pupils conduct themselves in an orderly manner. They are welcoming, self-assured and act in a polite and respectful way. Lunchtimes are calm, with groups of pupils engaged in friendly conversation. When moving between lessons, a small number of pupils occasionally act boisterously.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons overall is good. The majority of pupils are attentive in lessons, listening to teachers carefully and responding to instructions quickly. However, where expectations of pupils are not high enough or where the behaviour policy is not applied consistently, pupils' concentration and levels of engagement can dip.

- Leaders manage the attendance of pupils well through careful and regular monitoring. Pupils' attendance, including persistent absence, is at least in line with national averages. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is good and has further improved this year to be similar to that of pupils overall. Leaders rightly continue to focus on further raising the attendance of pupils through the positive celebration of attendance and constructive engagement with families.
- Leaders have sought to increase their understanding of the factors that affect pupils' behaviour. They help pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour, resolving any conflict in a calm way. As a result, pupils' behaviour has improved and there has been a reduction in exclusions.
- The school uses alternative provision, when necessary, to meet pupils' specific needs. Ongoing liaison between the school and alternative providers ensures that placements are kept under constant review. This makes sure that each placement is safe and successful.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, the progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 4 across the curriculum has improved and is now broadly average. There have been particular improvements in mathematics, science and the EBacc subjects.
- Pupils' attainment is improving. The proportion achieving at least an average or above average grade in English and mathematics rose in 2018.
- Current pupils are making good and improved progress in most subjects, particularly in mathematics and science. This is because curriculum planning in these subjects is effective and teaching ensures that pupils are challenged suitably from their different starting points. However, current pupils' progress in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, is slower.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving across most subjects. However, in some instances, teachers do not challenge these pupils effectively. Staff do not always make sure that disadvantaged pupils' work is of sufficient depth and quality. This hinders their progress.
- The most able pupils are making greater progress than they have done historically. They are being challenged well in most subjects across the curriculum, making the greatest progress in mathematics and humanities. For instance, in a Year 9 history lesson, pupils' analysis showed a well-developed understanding of the Second World War. The progress of the most able pupils in English, while improving, is not as strong as in other core areas.
- Leaders clearly identify the individual needs and strategies for pupils with SEND. The rate of progress of these pupils from their starting points remains lower than that of other pupils, but it is improving.
- Pupils who join the school with lower-than-average attainment make good progress. As a result, the majority of these pupils catch up with their peers.
- Leaders' changes to the curriculum have ensured that pupils' achievements are preparing them well for their next steps in education and training. Pupils receive

comprehensive careers advice and guidance that raises pupils' aspirations for the future. Pupils say that they feel well informed about the range of opportunities open to them. As a result, pupils are well prepared to take their next steps.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders manage the sixth form well. They are working effectively to create a culture of high achievement coupled with strong pastoral care. The sixth form is valued as an integral part of the wider school.
- Despite being a relatively small sixth form, students have a broad range of courses available to them. There are a combination of A level and applied qualifications on offer, supplemented with other courses such as personal finance.
- Students' rates of progress from their starting points was lower than similar pupils nationally in A-level courses in 2018. Students on applied courses made strong progress. Leaders meticulously track the progress of current students. Current students are making better progress than previous years in most subjects.
- Leaders have created a culture of high expectation and aspiration in the sixth form. Students conduct themselves well and are actively involved in the wider school. They are proud to be part of the school and act as powerful role models for younger pupils.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully to challenge and extend students. They link the learning with real-life examples that enthuse students and bring lessons to life. Consequently, students are completely engaged in their lessons, working with real focus and purpose.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge and clarity of explanation means that students make good progress in lessons. They develop knowledge across a range of topics and are able to link them together appropriately. Students therefore have an accurate view of their current position and know what they need to do to improve further.
- Teaching is effective and teachers use insightful questioning to probe and challenge students' understanding. They listen carefully to students' responses and then reshape their explanations. Students report that this has a marked impact on the progress.
- Students in the sixth form attend well. Leaders track attendance carefully and students know the impact that this will have on their outcomes. This has led to high levels of attendance, especially in Year 12.
- Students in the sixth form feel supported and valued by their teachers. They feel that teachers get to know them well, value each of them as individuals and trust them to be independent. As a result, a large proportion of students continue into Year 13.
- Students' personal development and welfare is good. They benefit from a well thought through programme that is extensive and covers topics from study skills to radicalisation. This means that students are well equipped to stay safe and make positive choices.
- The majority of students make a successful transition into further education, employment or training. Most students enrol on courses at university or go on to take up an apprenticeship. Students are supported in this through a wide-ranging and well-

coordinated careers package and benefit from a range of trips, information days and external speakers.

School details

Unique reference number	139367
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10058141

This inspection of the school 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 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	832
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	90
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Anthony Harrison
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Fletcher
Telephone number	01494 673450
Website	www.beaconsfield.bucks.sch.uk
Email address	office@beaconsfield.school
Date of previous inspection	12–13 October 2016

Information about this school

- The Beaconsfield School is a smaller than average, non-selective secondary school and sixth form.
- Pupils have broadly average levels of attainment on entry to the school.
- The 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 funding is lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above average.
- The school makes use of two alternative providers. A small number of pupils attend provision at Aspire, and a small number of key stage 5 pupils attend the Jackie Palmer Academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 49 lessons to observe learning across a range of subjects and all year groups. Some of the lessons were visited jointly with members of the school's leadership team. Inspectors also visited tutor groups and attended two assemblies.
- Inspectors met with pupils at each key stage in meetings, in lessons and informally around the school. Inspectors looked at work in lessons and also at a sample of pupils' written work across a range of subjects, abilities and year groups.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff. The lead inspector also met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. Inspectors also took account of the responses to the confidential questionnaires received from staff. They telephoned leaders of the alternative provision.
- A range of school documentation was scrutinised by inspectors, including the school's strategic planning documents, minutes of meetings, school policies on safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the pupil premium and special educational needs. Inspectors also evaluated records relating to pupils' safety as well as behaviour and exclusion logs.
- Inspectors reviewed the 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 78 comments from parents on Ofsted's free-text service. Responses to the online questionnaire completed by pupils were also taken into account.

Inspection team

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Nicholas Simmonds	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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