

Inspection of Bexley Grammar School

Danson Lane, Welling, Kent DA16 2BL

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

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

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Bexley Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Bexley Grammar School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' expectations of pupils are very high in all aspects of school life. Pupils study a challenging curriculum and are very well prepared to become responsible citizens.

Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Pupils value the pastoral support they receive. They appreciate that staff reach out to offer support before pupils ask for it.

Pupils feel safe. The school is calm and orderly at all times. Younger pupils say that older pupils treat them with respect. Pupils report that bullying is rare and acted upon quickly.

Pupils take part in a wide range of after-school activities. Of particular note is the number of clubs started and run by pupils. For example, the Afro Caribbean Society and the Art and Rocket clubs. All pupils are encouraged to take part in house competitions and drama, music and sports activities.

All Year 9 pupils and sixth-form students support the school community. They mentor younger pupils and lead after-school activities and house competitions. Sixth form-students support the teaching of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) to younger pupils.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly praise the school. One parent reflected the views of many saying, 'My child is very happy in this exciting, challenging, diverse school.'

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

Leaders have ensured that pupils learn knowledge that goes beyond that set out in the national curriculum. For example, in Year 9 pupils study the standard model of particle physics in science.

In Years 10 and 11, all pupils study three sciences, two languages and history and/or geography. This means that all pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Sixth form students study the International Baccalaureate. Students are able to choose six subjects that match their interests and support their ambitions.

Leaders emphasise the development of independent learning in all year groups. For example, in Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils complete an extended project in each subject.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and the order in which they should learn it. This allows pupils to achieve demanding learning goals. Important knowledge is revisited when it is needed to access a new lesson. For example, in sport science pupils revisited their understanding of diabetes. This meant they could then successfully learn about the risk factors for developing diabetes.

Teachers are specialists in their subject and have strong subject knowledge. They prioritise the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers present new ideas clearly and check after each step. They quickly identify pupils who need further help and provide it.

Pupils complete termly formal assessments. Leaders use these to identify pupils who need additional help. Pupils appreciate the individual support they receive in person outside of lessons, including online.

Teachers adapt their teaching using detailed information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures pupils with SEND achieve just as well as their peers. Weaker readers receive targeted support and quickly become fluent readers.

Pupils take pride in their work. There is little variation in the quality of work seen in books. Pupils are confident when discussing their learning. They have a good recall of what they have learned. Pupils meet the demanding learning goals set by leaders.

Staff have very high expectations of behaviour and pupils meet these. Low-level disruption is very rare. Pupils are keen and eager to learn. They become immersed in lessons as soon as they start.

Attendance is high. There are robust measures to support those whose attendance dips.

Pupils' views on PSHE education help teachers decide what to teach. For example, pupils supported staff training by detailing how they use their mobile phones and the aspects they wanted further advice about. In PSHE education, pupils listen respectfully to others. For example, pupils listened to their peers talk about their use of social media and its impact on their mental health.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive high-quality careers education. This includes input from a range of speakers. Pupils appreciate the regular talks by scientists and engineers from diverse backgrounds. In the sixth form, students are very well supported with university and apprenticeship applications. Vulnerable learners are identified and given additional careers support.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders engage with them about their well-being and workload. Staff speak highly about the training they have received. For example, teachers of English have learned how to teach higher order thinking skills.

Governors have very high expectations and hold leaders to account. Governors and leaders ensure that they respond to the emerging needs of pupils and staff. As a result, there is greater pastoral support following the pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school.

Staff attend regular training, so they can identify when to report a concern. Leaders ensure that any concerns are acted upon. Leaders work in partnership with external agencies to secure help for pupils. Where leaders cannot secure external help they provide support through mentoring and counselling.

Pupils learn about safeguarding in PSHE. Pupils and parents value the PSHE workshops that focus on topics in detail. These cover school priorities, including mental health and sexual harassment.

Leaders carry out relevant checks on the suitability of adults working at the school.

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	136369
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10228488
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
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	1,464
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	440
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anthony John Woodcock
Headteacher	Stephen Elphick
Website	http://www.bexleygs.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bexley Grammar School converted to become an academy school in December 2010. When its predecessor school, also called Bexley Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider, Horizons Academy Bexley.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. Inspectors held a discussion with four members of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, English, languages, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and discussed the curriculum with subject leaders in a range of other subjects, including art and design, business studies, music and PSHE education.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders about attendance, behaviour, career education, SEND and sixth form provision.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school. Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders, pupils and staff about the arrangements for safeguarding and reviewed safeguarding records and documentation. Inspectors also checked the single central record of checks made on the suitability of staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, responses to the staff survey and responses to the online survey for parents, Parent View.

Inspection team

Gary Phillips, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Guy Forbat	His Majesty's Inspector
Hannah Glossop	His Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamlyn	His Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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