

Inspection of an outstanding school: Beckmead Park Academy

Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3BZ

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 May 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

It is clear to see that the school's motto of 'Building Positive Aspirations' is threaded through the work of the school. Pupils feel safe to make mistakes and take chances. Pupils view themselves as learners and are proud of their school.

At all sites of this nurturing school, there is a calm and happy environment, and pupils are greeted by smiling, caring staff. Leaders expect all pupils to behave well and try their best in lessons. Pupils feel safe at the school. They say that bullying is not a problem. If there are any disagreements between pupils, leaders sort this out quickly. Pupils know that there are familiar members of staff they can talk to if they are worried or upset.

Pupils learn a broad range of academic subjects at the school, including English and mathematics. Pupils also learn important social skills, such as how to get along with friends and how to sort out any disagreements in a calm way. Staff at the school are dedicated, and they understand the needs of the pupils very well. They notice if a pupil needs extra help, and they provide support calmly and expertly. Leaders and the school staff focus on helping pupils to develop their independence and resilience.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum in place. It has a sharp focus on English and mathematics, as well as a range of other important subjects, including history, geography and personal, social and health education (PSHE). In some subjects, new subject leaders are still fine-tuning the curriculum to the particular needs of all pupils at the school. This means that pupils' development of deeper knowledge in these subjects is not as secure.

Leaders have ensured that there is a structured programme in place to teach pupils to read. Older pupils who may have fallen behind get extra, targeted support to help them catch up quickly so that they can access the rest of the curriculum.

Pupils conduct themselves very well around the school. Because of their additional needs, pupils sometimes require extra help and understanding to manage their emotions. Staff provide this support in a sensitive and consistent way so that pupils can return to their learning as quickly as possible. Relationships between adults and pupils are a strength of the school. Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to their work. They like working with the pupils and feel supported by leaders. New staff have a careful induction so that they understand the needs of the pupils and the nurturing ethos that leaders have established.

Teachers have a secure understanding of the subjects they teach. Most teachers teach a wide range of subjects in addition to their own specialist subject. Teachers share ideas and have support and guidance from other subject leaders. Lessons are carefully adapted to capture the interests of pupils by, for example, linking poetry to popular culture, including rap and other forms of spoken word performance. Teachers use assessment well to check that pupils are progressing through the curriculum and to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Pupils have regular lessons about the world of work, so they become increasingly aware of the different options available to them in the future. Leaders have organised productive links with expert partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions, which delivers regular sessions on the skills that pupils will need to be ready for future careers and independence.

Leaders have made sure that there is a programme of activities that helps pupils to develop their individual character and sense of responsibility. Pupils learn the importance of tolerance and respect for people who may live their lives differently to them or have different backgrounds or beliefs. Through the curriculum, pupils are taught about a wide range of important personal and social issues, including how to keep safe online and how to build positive and healthy relationships.

Wider opportunities also include a range of trips and visits in the community. For example, there are visits to Shakespeare's Globe theatre to see 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', and pupils take part in sporting events with other local schools.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a highly organised system in place to recruit new staff. All staff are thoroughly checked and inducted before starting work.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding are equally thorough in following up any concerns related to pupil welfare and protection, including working with external agencies when necessary.

Staff are vigilant. They know how to spot the signs that a pupil may need extra help, and they know why the pupils at this school may be even more vulnerable because of their needs, including pupils who need support for their mental health and well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, new subject leaders have not had time to fine tune the curriculum to the particular needs of all pupils at the school. This means that, sometimes, pupils' development of deeper knowledge in these subjects is not as secure. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum so that it has the right level of challenge for all pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Beckmead School, to be outstanding in January 2017.

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	145591
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10268454
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurence Nesbitt
Headteacher	Dean Monfries
Website	www.beckmeadtrust.org/park
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 January 2017

Information about this school

- Beckmead Park Academy is part of The Beckmead Trust, which is a multi-academy trust.
- At the last inspection, the school was part of a family of schools on five sites. The school has undergone a significant period of change during the transition to the new academy, which opened in April 2019.
- Most pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan, which identifies social, emotional and mental health needs as the main category of need. Many pupils also have other additional needs as well, including communication and interaction difficulties.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the vice-chair of governors, the headteacher, the two deputy headteachers, and other senior and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority, which is the school's main commissioner.
- Inspectors had discussions with the chief executive and the deputy chief executive of the trust, as well as a number of directors from the trust's central team, which supports the school.
- Inspectors assessed the school's culture of safeguarding throughout the inspection. They also met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised a wide range of systems, policies and records.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PSHE. 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 spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including English and geography.
- Inspectors took into account the nine responses to Ofsted's pupils survey, the 14 responses to Ofsted's parent survey and the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Francis Gonzalez

Ofsted Inspector

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