

Inspection of Robert Bloomfield Academy

Bloomfield Drive, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5BU

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is John Linehan. This school is part of the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST), which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Alan Lee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ilona Bond.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this welcoming and exceptionally inclusive middle-school environment. The 'VOICE' values of vitality, opportunity, independence, community and excellence, are well-represented features of daily school life. Pupils appreciate the extensive personal development opportunities, which build on a wide range of interests and skills. They enjoy school, attend regularly and are motivated to learn. Pupils' achievement and conduct consistently meet the high expectations set. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) flourish alongside their peers. The curriculum ensures that all pupils are well prepared to move to upper school at the end of year 8.

Exceptionally positive relationships underpin pupils' success. Pupils know what is expected of them, so they behave very well. They feel safe, trusting the adults in school to support them. Pupils know what it means to make safe choices, including when they play games online.

The Robert Bloomfield spirit shines through pupils' kindness and respect shown to others. Over time, they build high levels of confidence and self-awareness. They enjoy the vast range of clubs on offer. Pupil leaders are strong role models. They contribute extremely well to the school community, especially in representing classmate's views when they share ideas to improve the school.

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

Pupils join the school in Year 5 from many different settings. The school checks what they know and can do from the outset. Any gaps in learning are addressed quickly. High aspirations underpin the schools' values and determination for all pupils to become the best that they can be.

The carefully designed curriculum extends beyond national expectations. New knowledge and skills build logically on previous learning. For some pupils, outcomes in national tests at the end of Year 6 do not reflect how well prepared they are for upper school, once they have experienced the full curriculum offer. Where the school identifies any areas to improve, rapid and effective action is put in place, for example, following a previous decline in mathematics outcomes.

Pupils with SEND are exceptionally well supported. Most learn seamlessly alongside their peers. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Staff are well trained to support them. Parents and carers of pupils with SEND typically value the high-quality support that the school offers. Many speak highly of the positive difference the curriculum makes to their children's lives.

Ensuring that all pupils read regularly and well is a priority. Successful support for reading is in place for any pupils who need to catch up. Pupils develop their reading skills across all aspects of their learning. They relish the many opportunities to read interesting stories. Books are carefully selected to complement the curriculum. Pupils, including

disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, speak confidently about the books they read. In a library lesson, for example, pupils spoke sensitively about the difficulties in accessing education for girls in some countries.

Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes are secure due to clear and consistent expectations. The school is relentless in resolving any barriers to pupils' learning. This includes effective support for a few pupils who occasionally need help to manage their emotions.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils' views ensure that lunchtime and after-school clubs meet their different needs. The school is meticulous in checking that everyone can join in. Applications for the impressive pupil leadership roles offer an age-appropriate introduction to the world of work. Careers education is carefully thought out. The personal development programme and pupils' academic achievements contribute to the sought after 'VOICE' diploma award. This is a highly successful feature of pupils' motivation to learn.

Working closely with the trust and governors, the school is relentless in its focus for continuous improvement. Staff are supported through wide-ranging professional development opportunities. The close attention to staff and pupils' well-being is appreciated. The culture of safeguarding is strong and well established. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136713
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10345308
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	983
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ilona Bond
CEO of the trust	Alan Lee
Principal	John Linehan
Website	www.robertbloomfield.beds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current principal took up post in September 2023.
- The school uses five alternative provision providers to offer bespoke support for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: English, including reading, mathematics, physical education, French, technology and performing arts. To complete each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke with teachers and other staff. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- A wider sample of curriculum plans were considered beyond the deep dives across other subjects, including in computing, history, geography and science.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at safeguarding policies, the school’s record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of child protection files. They took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of governance, including the chair of the local committee to the board and the CEO of the BEST Trust.
- Meetings were held with the principal, other school leaders, trust leaders, the school’s SENCo, school staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governors’ meetings, school improvement plans and school policies.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. These were considered alongside the free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted’s questionnaires for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Polly Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Shapland	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Cooper	His Majesty’s Inspector

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