

Inspection of The Bromfords School

Grange Avenue, Wickford, Essex SS12 0LZ

Inspection date	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Jochen Tree. This school is part of the Compass Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Skinner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Miller.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff and parents and carers agree that this school has improved since the previous inspection and considerably so in some areas. Pupils enjoy coming here, where everyone is welcome. They know that they have a trusted adult to go to if they need help for any worries or concerns.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. Staff build positive relationships with pupils, who feel cared for. Pupils are kind and respectful towards staff and each other.

The school has a high ambition for pupils' achievement. However, pupils experience some variability in the quality of teaching. Consequently, they do not always achieve as well as they should. In the sixth form, students benefit from a well-planned curriculum and consistently high-quality teaching.

Pupils can develop their wider interests and talents. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to enjoy. This includes a number of different clubs, as well as trips and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Pupils are proud to take on leadership positions throughout the school. This helps pupils develop the skills that they will need for the next stage of their lives.

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

Previous weaknesses in the school's curriculum mean that pupils have not achieved as well as they should have done. Leaders have begun to address these weaknesses effectively. Staff now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, in some subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to learn has not been identified precisely. This means that teachers are not clear enough on the important knowledge that pupils will need to learn. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge in some subjects securely.

Overall, teachers have strong subject knowledge. However, too often, they do not check and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where this happens, pupils do not make links in their learning and do not build their knowledge securely. Therefore, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by the school. The school provides staff with the information that they need to give pupils the help that they need. Teachers adapt the curriculum where needed so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. However, pupils with SEND experience the same variability in the effectiveness of teaching as their classmates, so they do not achieve as well as they could.

Students in the sixth form benefit from a curriculum that is well structured. Teachers check routinely how well students understand the important concepts in the subjects they

study. Students make progress in all areas of their learning. They receive well-considered guidance that helps them to make decisions on the next stage of their lives.

Reading is a high priority. The school makes sure that any pupils who need to catch up with reading are supported well. Staff provide a range of interventions to help these pupils learn to read fluently. This means that pupils who are weaker readers can access the curriculum.

Pupils' attendance is high. This is because the school has worked resolutely to address historical issues and overcome any barriers to attendance that pupils face. Staff work effectively with pupils' families to provide the help and support they require.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their interests. They learn about the world around them through a precisely planned-out personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) education curriculum. The school promotes diversity effectively through assemblies and form time activities. As a result, pupils know that discrimination is not tolerated.

Leaders have recruited a number of new teachers to the school. These teachers benefit from the high-quality professional development that they receive. Staff enjoy working at the school because they are supported by leaders and each other. This means that there is now the capacity to improve further the effectiveness of teaching that pupils experience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not always effective. This means teachers sometimes do not spot gaps in pupils' knowledge when pupils are not secure in their understanding and misconceptions are not addressed. This means pupils do not achieve as well as they should because they do not build effectively on what they have been taught previously. The school should ensure that teachers use their checks on pupils' learning to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they can build on pupils' prior learning effectively.
- In some areas of the curriculum, the knowledge that pupils need to know is not precisely identified. As a result, it is not always clear what pupils need to know and, therefore, how their knowledge can be built on. The school should ensure that the important knowledge that pupils need to learn is identified precisely in all subjects.

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	139181
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10349760
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,118
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	86
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Miller
CEO of the trust	Sarah Skinner
Headteacher	Jochen Tree
Website	www.bromfords.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an on-site specialist support unit for pupils with autism.
- The school uses five alternative provisions. One of these provisions is registered with Ofsted.
- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with the trust's CEO, the chair of trustees, the chair of local governing body and school leaders.
- Inspectors visited the school's on-site specialist support unit for pupils with autism. Inspectors met with leaders regarding the use of alternative provision.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents, including free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Andrew Robinson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steven Hogan	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Shapland	Ofsted Inspector
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