

Inspection of Beechwood School

Long Readings Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL2 1QE

Inspection dates:	29 and 30 April 2025
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 Anita Spires. This school is part of The Schelwood 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), Joanne Rockall, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julian Ingram.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand the school's systems and routines, which they follow well. This means that the school is calm and safe. Pupils are polite, respectful and inquisitive. They benefit from warm and trusted relationships with staff. Pupils know that staff have high aspirations for them during and after their time at Beechwood.

Although the school is ambitious for pupils, too often they do not develop the secure knowledge that they need to achieve as well as they should do. In some subjects, pupils are supported to remember more and produce higher quality work, but that this is not consistent enough across the range of subjects that they study. The school recognises this and is making positive changes to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Pupils, including sixth-form students, benefit from experiences that develop their understanding of life beyond school and their local area. For example, pupils attend workshops run by businesses and visit other schools for discussions and competitions. Through the well-designed careers education, pupils are guided to become ambitious for themselves, curious about different opportunities and resourceful in finding out information that they need.

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

Leadership at this school has been strengthened in the last two years so that it is informed and strategic at all levels. This approach is improving pupils' experiences of school. Staff understand the school's aims and play a key role in bringing about positive change. For example, the school has made improvements to the curriculum and pupils' behaviour at school. Some aspects of the school's work are further along than others. Despite a positive shift in attendance, too many pupils still miss too much school, which affects how well they achieve.

The school has ensured there is a well-considered curriculum in all subjects. These identify the knowledge that pupils need to learn and in what order. The school's curriculum is ambitious in design. There is also a clear lesson structure for staff to follow to ensure that pupils revisit prior learning. Pupils benefit from this structure that helps them focus on learning from the very start of each lesson.

Although each subject has an appropriate curriculum in place, some pupils do not remember, or know how to use, enough of what they have learned. This affects how well pupils achieve, which is reflected in below average outcomes at the end of key stage 4. There is, rightly, a school-wide focus on improving this and learning from those subjects where pupils remember more and show greater depth of understanding.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. However, the way in which staff check what pupils have understood is not as effective as it needs to be. This means that pupils' gaps in knowledge are sometimes missed and errors in their thinking therefore persist.

Additionally, sometimes the tasks that pupils complete have not been considered carefully enough. This means that some pupils are not challenged to think deeply enough while others struggle to understand the task.

Sixth-form students have a more consistently positive experience across their subjects. Although published data shows a dip in results in 2024, the school has acted quickly to address gaps in learning and improve achievement. Students benefit from staff checking how well they understand their learning more rigorously. Where students have misconceptions, these are addressed quickly. This helps students connect knowledge together securely, which is demonstrated in their written work and how confidently they talk about their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and receive additional help from staff when they need it. The school has thought carefully about their local context and enhanced what they offer pupils, such as setting up 'hubs' to re-engage pupils through wide-ranging support. This ensures that pupils with SEND receive the precise support that they need to be able to learn.

The school's approach to pupils' personal development, such as the 'character curriculum', has been instrumental in improving pupils' behaviour and sense of belonging. Pupils learn about and have a mature appreciation of protected characteristics. They celebrate diversity and enjoy learning about each other's backgrounds. Pupils are also encouraged to develop leadership qualities such as responsibility in roles including sports leaders, librarians and prefects. The active school council, led by pupils, organises and promotes fundraising events for charities and local families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variability in how effectively teachers check pupils' understanding. This means that misconceptions are sometimes missed or not addressed swiftly enough, so pupils do not build knowledge as securely as they need to. The school should continue to provide support to ensure that all teachers have the expertise that they need to address gaps in learning so that pupils achieve well.
- The tasks that pupils are set do not consistently support pupils to develop the depth of knowledge of which they are capable. Additionally, tasks are sometimes not broken down enough for other pupils who need more time to understand the important knowledge being taught. This sometimes hinders how well pupils understand new knowledge, which impacts how well they achieve. The school should ensure that all

staff adapt tasks so that they meet the needs of pupils and enable them to achieve as highly as possible.

- Despite some recent improvements, too many pupils still do not attend school as often as they should. This puts pupils at risk of falling behind in their education. The school should ensure that staff continue to review and implement plans effectively to improve attendance, so that pupils benefit from the education that the school provides.

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	143327
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10379901
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	830
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julian Ingram
CEO of the trust	Joanne Rockall
Headteacher	Anita Spires
Website	www.beechwood.slough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Schelwood Trust.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- 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 second routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including leaders from the trust. Inspectors also met with leaders with the responsibility for SEND, behaviour and attendance, and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, geography, social sciences and modern foreign languages. 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.
- 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.

Inspection team

Alexandra Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Cave	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Morrison	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Marande	Ofsted Inspector

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