

Inspection of Bloxwich Academy

Leamore Lane, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 7NR

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want the very best for pupils at Bloxwich Academy. Pupils and staff are proud to be part of the school. Pupils know that staff care about them and want them to do well. They can see how their school is improving. The sense of community and mutual trust is palpable throughout the entire school.

Leaders' expectations for all pupils are high. In the secondary phase, staff have based this on a 'no excuses' culture. However, this is not simply punitive. Staff know that some pupils will need extra support. They continually work to provide this so that pupils' achievement matches leaders' ambition.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved, and they can learn well in lessons. In the primary phase, leaders have focused on celebrating good behaviour based on their own 'Bloxwich values'. This has been effective.

Leaders do not pretend that bullying does not happen. Instead, they teach pupils what it is, why it is wrong and who to ask for support if they need it. Pupils know that staff will not tolerate bullying. They are confident that staff will address it when it happens. Pupils feel safe in school.

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

Leaders' work to improve the school has been successful. They have focused on the right things. Trustees provide support and challenge in equal measure. Secondary and primary staff work together well to share expertise, knowledge and plans. Pupils are reaping the reward of this hard work.

Leaders have developed a purposeful and ambitious curriculum. They have put a great deal of thought into what pupils should learn. Across all phases and in all subjects, the curriculum is well sequenced. Leaders have designed the curriculum so that the pupils learn important knowledge in a logical order. Plans are ambitious for all, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In the primary phase, leaders have adjusted what pupils will learn in response to the pandemic. They have focused on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical calculation. Pupils benefit from well-planned and delivered sequences of lessons. In other subjects, leaders have introduced a new curriculum. This is well organised and detailed. However, its introduction has been slowed as teachers successfully address gaps in pupils' numeracy and literacy knowledge and skills. Leaders have a clear timeline for its full introduction.

In the secondary phase, leaders know where pupils are learning the curriculum well. In these many subjects, pupils can explain what they are learning and how it links to what they know. For instance, in English, teachers systematically check pupils'

understanding before introducing further concepts and ideas. As a result, pupils build their learning securely and in a logical order. In the best instances, teachers alter their teaching plans for pupils with SEND. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve as well as others. However, this is not consistently so. In a few subjects, well-sequenced curriculum plans are not yet implemented effectively. Pupils cannot remember what they have learned before. This means that pupils build new learning on shaky ground. Assessment is overly reliant on examination questions. It does not identify the specific building blocks of learning that are preventing pupils from making progress. This is particularly so for some key stage 4 pupils and sixth-form students.

Leaders have put in place wide-ranging support to help pupils improve their behaviour. For example, the 'satellite centre' helps pupils when their behaviour consistently falls below the level expected. Leaders regularly collect information about pupils' behaviour. However, they do not use this to guide their actions strategically. As a result, while leaders use exclusions in the right way, the rate of exclusion remains high.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Staff are well trained to teach phonics. Books help pupils to practise reading the sounds they have learned. Staff give effective support to pupils who need extra help. As a result, pupils quickly learn to read. In early years and primary, pupils develop a love of reading. This is because teachers read to them often and help pupils improve their fluency, comprehension and expression. In secondary, pupils do not have strong reading habits. As a result, many pupils' love of reading has dimmed.

In early years, children happily learn and play together. Leaders have created classrooms and outdoor spaces that encourage pupils to explore and investigate. Teachers quickly get to know the children well. Leaders pay close attention to helping children develop their speaking and listening skills.

Leaders' ambition for students is equally evident in the sixth form. Leaders cater well for students' personal growth outside of their academic studies. They benefit from a wide range of experiences. Students told inspectors that it is 'like a little family'. Consequently, students are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment and/or training.

Staff want pupils to leave Bloxwich Academy as empathetic and independent young adults with an understanding of the wider world. Leaders have threaded a well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme through the whole school. This incorporates a well-thought-through careers programme. Staff teach pupils to respect people from other backgrounds and treat everyone equally.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their responsibility to safeguard pupils seriously. They are experienced and dedicated. Staff know and understand their role in keeping pupils safe. They are alert to any indication that a pupil may be at risk of harm, no matter how small. Leaders diligently follow up concerns raised by staff. This means that pupils and families get the support and help they need.

Staff are well trained. Leaders make sure that staff training is up to date so that staff know about local and national issues, such as sexual harassment and online abuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers are not implementing curriculum plans sufficiently well. This means that pupils are not learning the content of the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that pupils are learning the intended curriculum in all subjects so they are building on strong and secure knowledge.
- In the secondary phase, many pupils do not have strong reading habits. As a result, they miss out on the cultural, social and academic benefits of reading widely and often. Leaders should accelerate and build on recent work to develop a culture that promotes and celebrates reading.
- Leaders do not use the information they collect about pupils' behaviour effectively. Despite leaders' work to support individual pupils who need additional help to improve their behaviour, too many pupils are excluded from school. Leaders should ensure that they use the information they collect to guide their actions more strategically to reduce exclusions.
- In the primary phase, leaders have focused on pupils' literacy and numeracy in response to the pandemic. This has slowed the implementation of new curriculum plans in other subjects. However, leaders have already taken action to address this. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	137274
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10201033
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1326
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	80
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremey Bench
Headteacher	Andrew Seager
Website	www.bloxwichacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 and 6 December 2017

Information about this school

- The school is sponsored by the Matrix Academy Trust.
- The number of pupils in the school has grown significantly since its previous inspection.
- The school does not use any external alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the associate headteacher (primary) and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for post-16 education.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers, trustees and representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, early reading, English, modern foreign languages, art and history. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors visited tutor time and PSHE, geography and physical education lessons, as well as several sixth-form lessons.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups, and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- An inspector visited the school-based alternative provision and spent time talking to pupils who attend this provision.
- Inspectors visited early years classrooms.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rob Bourdon-Pierre	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Price	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Pollitt	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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