

# The John Bentley School

White Horse Way, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 8YH

## Inspection dates

22–23 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make rapid enough progress through the school so standards at GCSE level are not high enough.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils made was well below that of other pupils nationally in 2016 and 2017.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. The level of challenge for pupils is too variable between and within subjects.
- Pupils, particularly boys, are not consistently set work that is sufficiently challenging. This limits their progress.
- Some teachers' assessments of pupils' work are not in line with the school's new assessment practice. They do not provide precise feedback to enable pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
- Where teachers have not planned work effectively, pupils lose concentration and their poor behaviour disrupts the learning of others, particularly in Year 8.
- Absence figures are too high. This is particularly so for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Too many pupils are persistently absent.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, languages, information and communication technology (ICT), and performing arts. Teaching and leadership in these areas are good.
- The leadership team has raised expectations across the school. Their work is improving the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive good-quality careers education and guidance. As a result, pupils are well aware of their options for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are well cared for. They understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy. Pupils embrace the wide range of extra opportunities available to them.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement by:
  - making sure that teachers have high expectations of what pupils, particularly boys, are capable of achieving
  - ensuring that the quality of teaching across the school matches the teaching seen in the best departments
  - setting work that is appropriately challenging and motivating for pupils with different abilities
  - embedding the new assessment processes to make sure that teachers identify pupils' misconceptions quickly and give them extra help to overcome their difficulties.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
  - the rate of attendance is raised, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - staff take effective action to reduce disruption in some lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Although senior leaders are working hard to improve the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress, there is still too much inconsistency across the school.
- The changes in leadership since the previous inspection have resulted in a shared understanding among staff of what needs to be done to bring about improvement. The principal has a clear vision for the future of the school which is shared by senior leaders. Development plans are now clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, it is too early to see the result of the action that is now being taken.
- The principal models good relationships and is developing a climate of trust. As a result, staff are increasingly well motivated. They are willing to share ideas and take part in professional development activities to improve their skills. The great majority of staff who responded to the online survey said that they enjoy working at this school and feel well supported by senior leaders.
- Senior leaders have a rigorous system for managing staff performance. The school links teachers' pay progression closely to successful performance; consequently, leaders hold teachers to account for their pupils' performance and challenge underperformance effectively. Leaders align training opportunities well with teachers' performance targets and the school's priorities. They have devised an effective induction and support programme for newly qualified teachers.
- A recent assessment initiative at key stage 4 focuses on ensuring that teachers diagnose the pupils' barriers to progress, identify the 'therapy' and assess their progress to see the impact. Leaders report that the procedure is proving successful in raising achievement. However, the application of the assessment policy by teachers remains too variable. As a result, pupils do not always know how to correct their work and move to the next level. Furthermore, some teachers do not routinely apply the school's policy for correcting errors in spelling and grammar.
- The curriculum now includes a broad range of courses at key stage 4, including both academic and vocational options. This is meeting pupils' needs more closely and is promoting better progress. Staff, including the careers adviser, give pupils clear guidance about suitable courses so pupils and their parents are able to make informed choices.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of clubs and activities beyond their lessons. Pupils appreciate these extra-curricular activities. Pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well through assemblies and other activities that are woven into the curriculum. The drama curriculum, for example, links to the themes in the personal development programme.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving quickly. Over the last year, a new coordinator has started to reorganise the support provided for this group. Funding for these pupils is being used effectively.

- Pupils who joined the school in Year 7 with weak numeracy and literacy skills are catching up with other pupils in the school because of the good support they receive. Senior leaders ensure that the extra funding allocated for this group is used well.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing board is a motivated group with a wide set of skills and clearly defined roles. They are passionate about providing a good education for pupils in Calne. However, they recognise that pupils' progress has not been good enough in recent years. The chair of the governing board demonstrates the necessary strategic awareness and urgency to secure rapid improvement at the school.
- Governors work closely with senior leaders to monitor the school's performance. They use training wisely to enhance their understanding of information about the progress of different groups of pupils. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The chair of the governing board ensures that all responsibilities relating to safeguarding and financial transparency are fulfilled. Governors monitor the impact of extra funding for disadvantaged pupils, for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up in English and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders give safeguarding a high priority and ensure that policy and practice are in line with statutory requirements. Governors, senior leaders and staff are all suitably trained. They understand clearly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety.
- Senior leaders communicate well with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They keep detailed records of any concerns that are raised and any action that is subsequently taken.
- Senior leaders successfully promote positive messages about safeguarding with parents and pupils. A large majority of parents believe that their children are well looked after and are safe at school. Senior leaders give staff regular updates that keep them aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and support the culture of vigilance throughout the school. An example is the newsletter which focuses on pertinent areas.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have an excellent understanding of e-safety and they are confident that they know to whom they should speak if they have a problem. However, pupils do not consistently understand some aspects of safeguarding, such as sexual exploitation and extremism.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the school and within some departments. Although there are areas of good practice, too much teaching does not enable pupils to make good enough progress. For example, the quality of work produced by the same pupil in different subjects can vary considerably

because of discrepancy in the level of challenge that teachers provide for them and in teachers' expectations.

- Teaching does not consistently challenge pupils sufficiently. Some pupils have not made good progress in recent years because teachers' expectations of what they are capable of achieving have been too low. This is particularly so for boys. Where teachers expect pupils to learn quickly, for example in languages, performing arts, mathematics and ICT, these pupils are successful. However, there are too many other subjects in which this does not happen.
- Most teachers' subject knowledge is good. The vast majority of classes are taught by specialists with a deep understanding of their subject. Particularly in the sixth form, teachers are able to illustrate ideas by drawing on their rich background knowledge. Teachers use homework effectively, to reinforce learning in the classroom.
- Teachers are well motivated. They have welcomed the principal's initiatives to improve the quality of teaching. They are keen to share ideas and consider how they can accelerate pupils' progress.
- Some teachers' assessment practice, including their use of questioning, is not effective in fully probing pupils' understanding of key concepts and ideas. Pupils sometimes spend too long on tasks that are too easy for them; they do not move on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- The quality of teachers' feedback to pupils is inconsistent. While some of the feedback is highly effective, too much lacks precision. As a result, some pupils are unclear how well they are doing and lack clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their learning further. Some teachers do not adhere to the new assessment policy.
- Teachers have positive relationships with their classes. However, some do not have high expectations of behaviour. Most pupils respect their teachers, although where teaching is not motivating there are interruptions to learning. Teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils. Pupils are appreciative of the help they receive.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff model and support the values that underpin the school's culture. In response, pupils are tolerant of each other and accepting of difference. The school culture is helping some pupils who lack confidence to become more self-assured.
- Effective careers guidance throughout the school enables pupils to understand their future options fully. Pupils speak favourably about the support they receive when choosing their GCSE, post-16 and post-18 options. All pupils progress to further education, employment or training.
- Pupils are given clear messages about how to maintain good physical and mental health. Pupils have a strong understanding of these issues, and so are able to make sensible choices to stay healthy.

- The majority of pupils believe that teachers deal with incidents of bullying well when they happen. Most parents who responded to Parent View also agree that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- A few pupils who attend off-site provision, at Rowdeford School, Lackham College, Catch 22, Launch to Learning and Academy 21, are well looked after. Senior leaders have close relationships with these providers. They ensure that pupils reintegrate smoothly back into school when appropriate.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils show a lack of pride in presentation and completion of their work; some teachers do not challenge this effectively.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good where teaching is strong. Pupils told inspectors that there is disruption in lessons where teaching is weak and this was confirmed by inspectors' observations. Some parents who responded to the Parent View survey supported this view and believe that pupils are not well behaved in the school.
- Staff refer serious incidents of misbehaviour to the inclusion room. Although the number of referrals has decreased, they remain too frequent, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Attendance is below the national average for some groups of pupils. A small group of pupils find it difficult to attend school regularly. The rate of persistent absence is currently above the national average, particularly for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils. However, the school has now put appropriate measures in place to address this situation. The school's Gateway Centre is having a positive impact in working with pupils who find it hard to attend a full timetable.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions remains above the national average for repeat offenders. The school has many systems to support pupils at risk of exclusion and these are showing impact.
- Pupils are calm and courteous as they move around the school site. They respect their environment and each other. There was no graffiti and very little litter around the school site.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Although most pupils start in Year 7 with average attainment, in many subjects they do not attain the GCSE grades they are capable of.
- Pupils' progress in GCSE English was below average in 2017. Pupils' progress in GCSE mathematics was considerably stronger than in English in 2017. Pupils have made consistently strong progress in mathematics in recent years and the same is true of current pupils.
- Assessment information shows that pupils' progress, measured across eight GCSE subjects, was well below average in 2017. Pupils currently in the school continue to

have gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills. In science, for example, many pupils struggle to explain the key ideas they are learning.

- In recent years, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been consistently below that of other pupils nationally. Senior leaders' efforts to help these pupils to improve were more successful last year and current data shows significant improvement for current pupils. However, many disadvantaged pupils still leave the school at the end of Year 11 without the basic qualifications of GCSE English and mathematics.
- The progress current pupils make varies across year groups and subjects. In some subjects, for example science and English, the focus of attention has been on providing extra support for Years 10 and 11 pupils to enable them to catch up following previous underachievement. Middle leaders are taking steps to address this and to support pupils from Year 7.
- Pupils progress well in mathematics, performing arts, ICT and languages. This is due to good leadership, teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers in these subjects have high expectations of pupils and the quality of work they produce.
- Current progress information shows an improvement on previous years. However, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not challenged to make the progress of which they are capable. In English, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop greater depth of learning in extended writing to obtain the highest grades at GCSE.
- In the past, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not received effective help and so have not made strong progress. The support for these pupils is improving, and so pupils currently in the school are making better progress.
- Pupils who join the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy receive effective extra help. This is developing their confidence in reading, writing and numeracy, helping them become more self-reliant across a number of subjects.
- Leaders have an effective system to monitor pupils' progress carefully. This enables them to have an accurate view of how each pupil is progressing. The targets set for pupils are aspirational.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- Wide variations exist in students' outcomes in both AS- and A-level academic and vocational courses. In some subjects, students make very good progress, but in others they make less progress.
- In 2017, students' overall progress and attainment on A-level courses were broadly in line with the national average. Students' progress in 2017 in vocational subjects was also in line with the national average. Information supplied by the school and inspection evidence show that students currently in the sixth form are making stronger progress, particularly in ICT.
- The leader of the sixth form has a good understanding of students' needs and demonstrates a genuine passion for the success of all students, no matter what their starting points. Disadvantaged students' progress is improving on 16 to 19 study programmes as a result of the support they receive.

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Much teaching inspires students and develops their love and passion for the subject. Other teaching does not challenge students sufficiently to enable them to make enough progress.
- The school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Some students complete one-year courses and so leave the sixth form at the end of Year 12. The great majority of students who start two-year programmes see them through to completion at the end of Year 13.
- Students are offered work experience and other work-related activities in Year 12. These experiences help students to develop their employability skills well. Students receive timely advice about the possibilities open to them when they leave. The majority of students take up university places, and an increasing proportion go into apprenticeships.
- Students are happy in the sixth form. They develop their confidence and personal skills well through a wide range of additional enrichment opportunities. Many students are involved in mentoring younger pupils in the main school or in supporting lessons, for example physical education lessons. Attendance in the sixth form is high.
- Students understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including online, but have less secure understanding about the issues of radicalisation and extremism. Students have a good understanding of mental health, because sixth-form leaders emphasise this issue.



## School details

Unique reference number	137650
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10037848

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	812
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nicky Brennan
Principal	Jason Tudor
Telephone number	01249 818100
Website	<a href="http://www.johnbentleyschool.com/">www.johnbentleyschool.com/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:reception@johnbentley.wilts.sch.uk">reception@johnbentley.wilts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11 in 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average and the number supported by an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.

- More than nine out of 10 pupils are of White British heritage. There are a few from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language.
- Six pupils attend alternative provision at five different providers: Rowdeford School, Lackham College, Catch 22, Launch to Learning and Academy 21.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subject areas and across year groups. Many observations were jointly conducted with senior and middle school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct entering and leaving the school premises and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with the school improvement partner and local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of 141 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 43 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 75 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors considered two letters from parents.

## Inspection team

Gill Hickling, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Wring	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Hummerstone	Ofsted Inspector
Kirsten Harrison	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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