

Inspection of Sir Bernard Lovell Academy

North Street, Oldland Common, Bristol BS30 8TS

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 November 2021

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value and appreciate the subjects they learn. They like coming to school. Staff have high expectations and pupils work hard to meet them. Leaders and staff have planned a well-sequenced curriculum that enables most pupils to learn well. However, some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not learn as well due to weaknesses in reading and writing.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts learning. Pupils are punctual to lessons and arrive ready to learn. They study a well-structured personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. However, some pupils told inspectors that PSHE is not implemented as well as other subjects across the school and that a minority of pupils' misguided views are not fully addressed by staff through these lessons.

Pupils say that staff resolve any bullying quickly and effectively. Leaders support pupils' mental health through mentoring and counselling. Some pupils follow bespoke curriculums that help them to learn confidently and successfully.

Sixth-form students enjoy learning a breadth of subjects. They are well supported to make important decisions about higher education, apprenticeships or employment. Leaders have high aspirations for students' academic, social and emotional success.

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

In many subjects, leaders have structured an effective and engaging curriculum that enables most pupils to build up their knowledge. This is particularly effective in mathematics and history. Staff use assessment information about pupils to adapt the curriculum so that most pupils learn well. Although leaders have prioritised reading, some pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not receive the support they require to read and write in each subject. Consequently, some of these pupils do not learn the subject curriculums as well as they could.

Leaders and staff have benefited from working with other schools across the trust. Leaders' vision for a curriculum that enables pupils to develop strong knowledge in a breadth of subjects drives improvement across the school. Both trust and school leaders have established effective training and support for staff. In the online staff survey, staff state unanimously that they are proud to work for the school.

Leaders encourage pupils to learn the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. They have revised the French and Spanish curriculums to encourage pupils to study a language at GCSE. Although the PSHE curriculum has been thoughtfully and skilfully structured, leaders acknowledge that it has not been implemented as well as other subjects due to obstacles posed by the pandemic. Some pupils state that there is inconsistency in the confidence and expertise of staff

in teaching the subject. As a result, a minority of pupils are not fully prepared for life in Britain in the 21st century.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development through the well-designed careers education. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils also receive strong guidance about choosing GCSE subjects. Students in the sixth form receive expert support regarding higher education and apprenticeships at local companies, such as Rolls Royce.

Pupils, including sixth-form students, participate in a range of sports and creative clubs. They can also take on roles of responsibility such as 'student leader'. Pupils view these roles as important as they support their well-being.

Leaders have established consistent expectations for pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils behave well across the school. Staff and pupils state that pupils' positive behaviour supports their learning. Pupils have strong relationships with staff, enabling them to feel safe and protected.

Pupils are punctual to lessons and attend school well. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely to ensure that pupils are in school and learning the curriculum.

Students in the sixth form study a well-structured curriculum. Students want to do well and they value the opportunities at the school. For example, students engage in voluntary work, such as supporting pupils in Year 7 with reading. Students are supported to achieve well in many subject areas. Students with SEND receive bespoke support with their reading and writing, enabling them to learn the curriculum well.

The academy governance committee provides challenge and support for school leaders in equal measure. There is a breadth of expertise in the committee. Governors ask pertinent questions about the curriculum, safeguarding and the needs of vulnerable pupils. As a result, they know the school well and support the continual improvements to the curriculum. Parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire are positive about the education their children receive at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant about the physical and emotional safety of pupils at the school. They have created a very strong culture within the school where the well-being and safety of pupils are given the utmost importance. Leaders work well with external agencies and challenge appropriately to ensure that pupils are protected. Pupils are confident that there are trusted adults who they can speak to if they have a concern.

Staff receive up-to-date training and know how to identify signs of abuse. Leaders ensure that appropriate background checks are carried out on adults working in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have established a raft of strategies to support pupils, including pupils with SEND, to learn the curriculum. However, these strategies are not fully aligned to the learning needs of pupils in every subject. Leaders need to develop pupils' literacy skills in every subject area so that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, can learn confidently and successfully.
- Leaders have designed an effective PSHE curriculum. However, they have not yet ensured that all staff implement the curriculum effectively. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers deliver the PSHE curriculum with confidence and expertise so that all pupils are well prepared for life in Britain in the 21st century.

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	141665
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10200983
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	1163
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	142
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Broad
Principal	Dean Anderson
Website	www.sblacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February and 1 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Futura Learning Partnership which formed in September 2021.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is just below the national average.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: modern foreign languages, English, mathematics, art, science and history. This meant that, in each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the views of parents who spoke to inspectors. They evaluated the views of staff from the Ofsted online questionnaire.
- Inspectors held discussions with the chief executive officer and the director of education of the Futura Learning Partnership.
- Inspectors held discussions with single-sex groups of pupils to gather their views on the culture of the school.
- Inspectors met with the special educational need coordinator and spoke with pupils with SEND in lessons. Pupils with SEND were included in group discussions about the quality of education in different subjects.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Frances Gormley	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Hannon	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector

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