

Inspection of Bexhill Academy

Bexhill Road, Town End Farm, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR5 4PJ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to this exceptional school. Leaders have created a wonderfully caring and supportive environment where everyone is respected. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are taught that respecting others should be central to how they behave. This is modelled by all staff. In the words of one pupil, 'I am proud to come to this school because everyone is kind here'. There is no bullying here. If pupils are struggling with behaviour, due to their additional needs, staff support them quickly and effectively.

Leaders give pupils wide and exciting opportunities to learn and develop. Alongside a well-planned curriculum for learning, they are given opportunities to take part in sporting events at Gateshead Stadium, sing on stage at the Sage theatre and visit places such as London or the Lake District. These visits are planned to inform pupils and encourage them to be brave and adventurous. Pupils thrive on these experiences.

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils' academic success. They ensure that pupils get an outstanding education at this school. Pupils remember what they have been taught in past years and talk about current learning with enthusiasm and interest.

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

Over several years, leaders have developed a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. They have ensured that teachers understand how learning builds, in all subjects, by creating a 'pathway for learning' from the early years to Year 6. Teachers skilfully use detailed planning to create interesting and exciting lessons. Consequently, pupils want to learn. They are confident to talk in detail about learning.

Assessment is used effectively. Leaders have clearly identified the important knowledge they want pupils to remember in all subjects. Teachers check if pupils can recall learning regularly. In mathematics this is done by recalling five facts a day. In other subjects such as history, learning is planned to link through 'golden threads'. An example of this was seen when pupils were discussing significant events in history. They recalled learning about the Benin Kingdom slave trade, the Industrial Revolution and how Winston Churchill had been the Prime Minister twice at significant points in time.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils should have access to a wide range of inspiring texts and that they can read them fluently and confidently. This includes children in the early years and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Books are everywhere in this school and pupils read or share them widely and often.

From the earliest days in Nursery, teachers start to assess children's readiness to access the phonics curriculum. This ensures that no time is lost in starting to learn to read. Staff are highly knowledgeable and skilful. They follow the school's chosen phonics curriculum consistently. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they know. Staff across school focus on fluency and pupils rapidly become confident readers. Pupils who are finding reading more difficult, or pupils with SEND, follow bespoke programmes of learning. They receive well planned support to help them to catch up swiftly.

Staff across school focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Leaders ensure that subject-related terminology is used and understood. In the early years, including the provision for two-year-old children, song and story is at the centre of all learning. All staff are experts at developing talk and vocabulary. The exceptionally well-planned curriculum, and a warm and welcoming environment encourage children to explore ideas and thoughts. They enjoy learning and playing together.

Leaders' work promoting pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school promotes the Unicef Rights of the Child values and is determined to ensure that pupils know how to be good citizens. Pupils are proud to be 'rights rangers', who promote understanding of speaking out about injustices. Others enjoy being school councillors, who identify ways to improve the school further or being part of the anti-bullying team, who promote friendship.

Leaders have embedded a curriculum over time which enables pupils to develop an impressive understanding of relationships, health and well-being. Well planned assemblies, as well as key texts, ensure that pupils learn about areas such as diversity and citizenship. Pupils of all ages show a remarkable understanding of why issues such as racism and inequality should not be tolerated. They understand why key characteristics are protected and why difference should be celebrated. Leaders are aspirational for pupils and promote understanding of future career opportunities. They are determined to ensure pupils are well prepared for future life.

The trust board and local governing body are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They use their experience well to challenge and support leaders. They provide opportunities for staff to work together, both within the school and in wider trust schools, to improve the curriculum further.

Staff are very proud to work at Bexhill Academy. They are appreciative of the support they are given to manage their workload. They feel valued and appreciated for their contribution to improving the school. Teachers at the earliest points of their career feel especially well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone at Bexhill takes safeguarding very seriously. Leaders and staff know their pupils and families very well. Staff are well trained and receive regular updates to

ensure that they can identify any risks or concerns. Leaders, and governors, ensure that the systems and processes for reporting are followed robustly. Concerns are swiftly followed up. Leaders have effective links to a wide range of agencies such as the police, child and adolescent mental health services and family support workers. These are used to support families effectively. Parents say that leaders help them with difficulties.

Pupils of all ages show an impressive and mature understanding of how to stay safe, both in the community and online. They know that there are trusted adults in school to speak to and that they can also put any worries into 'worry boxes' as teachers will always look at their concerns and support them.

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	136487
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10227456
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	366
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governors	David Person
Headteacher	Ruth Walton
Website	http://bexhill.wiseacademies.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- Bexhill Academy is part of the WISE Academies, a multi-academy trust with 12 other schools.
- The school has a nursery as well as provision for two-year-old pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school currently uses two alternative provisions to support pupils with specific needs.

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 of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with early career teachers and some support staff.
- The lead inspector met also with representatives of WISE Academies and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school. As well as speaking to parents at the school gate, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and also a number of free-text responses. Staff's views were taken into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

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