

Inspection of Beaminster School

Newtown, Beaminster, Dorset DT8 3EP

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Beaminster School is a community that pupils, parents, staff and governors are proud to be a part of. The 'ASK' ethos of ambition, service and kindness underpins all that the school does.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. Pupils and students in the sixth form have good relationships with adults, built on mutual respect and trust. The school encourages and supports pupils and students to attend well. The student services hub supports pupils with their individual needs, helping them to be ready to learn when they join lessons.

'#Not-okay' is a student council-inspired campaign that encourages pupils to share concerns with adults. Pupils feel listened to and safe in school. Prefects act as role models for younger pupils to understand the 'Beaminster Way'. Bullying does happen occasionally, but pupils report it. They are confident that adults will help them.

Pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular clubs such as beekeeping, sports and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. 'Stop the Clock' days and 'Activities Week' give pupils the opportunity to enjoy trips and visits. Drama and music performances showcase pupils' talents.

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

The school has planned an ambitious curriculum for pupils. Pupils study a range of subjects at key stage 4, with the English Baccalaureate subjects now at the heart of the curriculum for most pupils. Subject curriculums set out the knowledge that is important for pupils to learn each year. This helps pupils to build on their learning from Year 7 through to Year 13.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Adults know pupils well as individuals. As a result, pupils get the help and support they need. The school supports the weakest readers to build their confidence and fluency with reading.

Assessment is not always used effectively to check what pupils can and cannot do. Consequently, some teaching is not adapted to help pupils to correct mistakes or fill gaps in their knowledge. This makes it harder for pupils to then learn new content. It also means that pupils who have already grasped the lesson content are not always given the chance to learn more.

The school has the ambition for pupils to become committed readers who understand the value of reading. The school encourages pupils in Years 7 and 8 to read regularly. However, pupils in Years 9 and above have not benefited from these strategies. The reading curriculum does not provide pupils with the opportunity to read a diverse range of challenging texts suited to their ages. As a result, not all pupils read widely and frequently.

Pupils learn the vocabulary that makes each subject unique. Sixth-form students learn the academic language needed to prepare them for higher education. This includes reading academic journals.

Pupils value their 'life studies' lessons. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and sex in an age-appropriate way. Pupils enjoy debating and exploring their own views on spiritual and moral issues. They develop an understanding of fundamental British Values and tolerance for others. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. The personal, social and health education programme continues in the sixth form. Students are prepared well for adult life.

All pupils receive effective careers education, information, advice and guidance. The school works with local businesses to provide pupils with opportunities to learn about the workplace. Careers fairs, guest speakers and visits to universities help pupils to understand the opportunities that are available to them. Students in the sixth form value the individual mentoring with their tutors. They make informed choices about their next steps into education, apprenticeships and employment.

The school is considerate of the workload and well-being of staff. Staff appreciate the opportunities provided for professional development. Governors and the leadership of the school work together to identify priorities for the school's future development. There is a shared commitment to continuing to improve the quality of education provided by the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment sometimes does not check pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions go unchallenged while some pupils are not given further opportunities to deepen their knowledge. The school should develop the use of assessment so that teaching approaches can be adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The reading curriculum does not support pupils of all ages to read widely and frequently. As a result, some pupils do not experience a diverse range of challenging and interesting texts. The school should further embed and evaluate strategies to develop a culture of reading across all year groups.

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	113884
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10268724
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	663
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bridget Millwood
Headteacher	Keith Hales
Website	www.beaminster.dorset.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The sixth-form provision is run in collaboration with Sir John Colfox Academy.
- The school use three registered alternative providers and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school has a Christian character. A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was carried out in May 2019. Inspections are normally carried out every five years.
- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also met staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, design technology and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of work.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the pupil body, including students in the sixth form.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documents, including minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans that support pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; 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 pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Shanks	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Coulson	Ofsted Inspector
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