

The Brittons Academy

Ford Lane, Rainham, Essex RM13 7BB

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Inadequate |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Inadequate |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Inadequate |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Inadequate |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the last section 5 inspection, leaders and governors have been too slow to tackle poor teaching and halt the decline in the quality of education that pupils receive.
- In 2017 and 2018, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 4 was significantly below the national average in English, mathematics, science, French and humanities.
- The progress of current pupils remains poor, particularly for the most able and those who are disadvantaged. Teachers do not set tasks that meet the needs of their pupils.
- Over time, governors have failed to hold leaders to account effectively. Governors have not monitored the impact of additional funding on pupils' progress with sufficient rigour.
- Too many teachers have low expectations of pupils and do not motivate or challenge them adequately. As a result, pupils do not have consistently positive attitudes towards learning.
- Pupils' work is often incomplete and poorly presented. Pupils do not know how to improve their work in order to make good progress.
- Middle leaders have not ensured that curriculum plans enable pupils to develop a deep understanding of essential knowledge in individual subjects.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not evaluated accurately enough. Teachers do not receive adequate support to improve their teaching.
- Teachers do not have secure knowledge of GCSE content and assessment. They do not plan lessons carefully enough to ensure that pupils can achieve well.

The school has the following strengths

- Pastoral systems provide effective support for vulnerable pupils. Leaders work effectively with external partners to protect pupils at risk of harm.
- Attendance has improved this academic year and is now in line with the national average.
- The quality of teaching in some subjects, such as art and physical education (PE), is strong.
- Since September 2018, leaders have taken effective steps to improve pupils' behaviour around the school. This, improvements in attendance and broad curriculum changes indicate that leaders have the capacity to bring about the improvements needed to other areas of the school's work.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that it is consistently good and enables pupils to achieve well, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, regardless of their ability, across all subjects and year groups
 - plan learning activities that are closely matched to pupils' starting points and that challenge, interest and motivate pupils so that they make strong progress
 - accurately assess pupils' learning to correct misconceptions and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that curriculum content is planned in detail so that pupils acquire deep knowledge and understanding across all subjects
 - ensuring that teachers in every subject have a good knowledge of the new GCSE specifications so that pupils can reach the highest standards, including the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and learning are accurate and reliable
 - challenging staff underperformance swiftly and supporting staff to improve their practice
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders to account effectively for the quality of pupils' education
 - ensuring that subject leaders are challenged effectively by senior leaders, that subject leaders monitor the work of their departments more effectively, and that consequently they all have an accurate understanding of how pupils are doing in different subjects.
- Improve the quality of personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that teaching motivates pupils and encourages them to consistently apply their best efforts, including in the presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since September 2018, the new headteacher and interim transition board have brought about necessary improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance. This indicates that they have the capacity to make the necessary improvements needed in other areas of the school's work.
- The curriculum provides a broad model with appropriate pathways for all pupils' needs. In response to an area for improvement from the last inspection, current leaders have provided more time for music and drama at key stage 3. Pupils are also now able to take three separate sciences at GCSE. However, curriculum planning within individual subjects is still not planned well enough by middle leaders.
- Subject leaders have not been challenged effectively. Members of staff have not been held to account sufficiently for pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Subject leaders are overly positive about the work of their departments and do not check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress thoroughly enough.
- Support to improve the quality of teaching and learning has not been effective and pupils continue to make poor progress. This is particularly the case for the most able and those who are disadvantaged. Too much practice remains weak, with low expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils were not prepared for the higher demands of the new GCSE courses in either 2017 or 2018. Current pupils are still not making sufficient progress in English or in other key subjects, including mathematics, science, French and humanities.
- Leaders' plans for improvement, including for the use of the pupil premium, identify priorities and action to be taken. However, it is less clear how much improvement is expected in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' progress as a result of these actions.
- Since the previous inspection, an external review of pupil premium funding has been completed. Leaders have made effective use of the pupil premium to improve attendance and behaviour. Middle leaders responsible for pupils' attendance and behaviour are clear about which strategies have been effective and what more needs to be done. However, leaders do not closely monitor the use of Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is better developed as a result of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and assembly topics. Pupils have a clear understanding of difference and similarity within their school community. Through various trips and visits, pupils are aware of different cultures in Britain. The school offers a wide range of courses, clubs and activities for pupils.
- The identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the allocation of resources to support them are strong.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- As a result of the governance review which took place following the last inspection, Empower Learning Academy Trust (ELAT) put in place an interim transition board (ITB).
- Governors, including the ITB, have not acted quickly enough to prevent the decline in the quality of education since the last inspection. There has been insufficient challenge to school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The ITB has ensured that pupil premium funding has been used to good effect to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance. However, their oversight has not included ensuring that the funding helps disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture across the school that prioritises the safety and well-being of pupils. Staff members are clear about the procedures for keeping pupils safe. Staff training is up to date. Recruitment procedures for new staff are completed rigorously and in line with statutory guidance.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about staying safe and know how to report any worries or concerns to relevant staff members. Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe at school.
- The pastoral team is quick to support vulnerable pupils. They take appropriate actions when concerns are identified and make timely referrals to the appropriate external agencies. Records of leaders' actions are accurate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate because too many pupils underachieve, particularly those who are disadvantaged and the most able. The poor quality of teaching means that pupils' learning needs are not met.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Assessment is not used effectively, and teachers' planning is poor. Teachers and leaders do not assess pupils' starting points well enough to make sure the pitch of work is challenging for pupils' needs and abilities. This causes pupils to drift off task and lack motivation, with some disrupting learning.
- The low expectations of many teachers are reflected in the quality of work in pupils' books. Teachers do not challenge pupils effectively or consistently when they are presented with incomplete, untidy and careless work. For example, diagrams are often haphazardly drawn, and rulers are not regularly used to underline work.
- The quality of questioning is often ineffective and fails to help pupils think carefully about what they are studying. This leads to brief and weak responses from pupils.
- In mathematics, pupils have little opportunity to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to solve problems or explore mathematical reasoning. The work set for

pupils often lacks sufficient challenge. At times, pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 are required to repeat work which they had already mastered in primary school.

- Pupils' literacy and speaking skills are underdeveloped. This is because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to give extended answers or write at length. As a result, too many pupils are unable to express themselves with articulation.
- In lessons, the support provided to pupils with SEND is variable. Too often, teachers do not plan lessons that take account of pupils' needs or use the most appropriate strategies to help them learn. This is despite pupils' needs being clearly identified and resources provided to support teachers.
- Where teaching is more effective, such as in art and PE, teachers have strong relationships with their classes. They use their good subject knowledge to provoke pupils' thinking. In turn, this helps them to give clear and full responses. As a result, pupils work in these subjects with energy and enthusiasm, and make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Too many pupils lack confidence as learners and do not demonstrate consistently positive attitudes towards learning. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Pupils do not always take pride in their work. In particular, boys' work is too often untidy, poorly presented and contains gaps. Teachers do not always deal with this effectively.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and mobile technologies. They also understand the dangers of substance misuse, gang affiliation and knife crime. As a result, pupils are confident about how to keep themselves safe outside school. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare and, where it does occur, staff deal with it effectively. School records support this view.
- Pupils are confident when talking to visitors. They are proud of their school and are keen to see it improve further. They report that teachers know them and support them well. They are enthusiastic and positive about the help they can access for mental health and well-being issues.
- Leaders make checks on the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils who attend external alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In lessons, most pupils conduct themselves appropriately. However, teachers do not always recognise or deal with disruption swiftly. Inspectors saw pupils become

increasingly unsettled when the work they were doing was too easy and when they had too little to do.

- Leaders' actions to improve attendance has had a significant impact. Pupils' attendance and persistence absence are in line with national averages. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils has also improved. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent remains above the national average for all pupils.
- Most pupils behave well around the school site. At lunchtimes and breaktimes, pupils usually behave well together. They converse and interact positively.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons.
- Leaders have been successful in reducing exclusions. The appointment of a pastoral team to work with pupils vulnerable to absenteeism and exclusion has been a significant factor in this improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate. Pupils have underachieved in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages, for the past two years.
- In 2017 and 2018, Year 11 pupils' progress in GCSE English, mathematics, science, French and humanities was significantly below average. The proportion of pupils who achieved a strong pass in these subjects was below the national average.
- Nearly half of the school's pupils are disadvantaged. In recent years, their progress and attainment have been significantly below those of other pupils nationally. Other groups of pupils also make poor progress. In 2018, the progress made by the lower- and middle- attaining pupils and the most able was in the lowest 10% of the country.
- The work of current pupils across a range of subjects and year groups indicates that this legacy of underachievement has not been adequately addressed.
- Too many pupils in key stages 3 and 4 make insufficient progress across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, French, history and geography. Typically, this is related to teachers' low expectations and work which fails to sufficiently engage or challenge pupils.
- Pupils' books are often poorly presented, with sections of their work missing. Across a range of subjects, work is insufficiently challenging for the most able pupils.
- As a result of poor teaching over time, pupils are not well prepared for their GCSE examinations at the end of key stage 4. Too many underachieve. They are not well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Work scrutiny showed that, as a result of stronger teaching, pupils achieve well in art and PE.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136576 |
| Local authority | Havering |
| Inspection number | 10107644 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 722 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | David Forster |
| Principal | Will Thompson |
| Telephone number | 01708 630002 |
| Website | www.brittons.havering.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | school@brittons.havering.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 23–24 May 2017 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The current principal was appointed in September 2018.
- The Brittons Academy became a member of the Empower Learning Academy Trust in September 2016. The multi-academy trust is governed by a trust board. Following the previous inspection in May 2017, trustees established an interim transition board for the school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.

- The school uses alternative provision at Koru Independent Academy, Romford, The Bridge, Romford, and Barking and Dagenham College for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders and teaching staff.
- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. Many of these observations and activities were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were also held with members of the interim transition board, the chief executive officer and the chair of Empower Learning Academy Trust.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of Havering local authority.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4. Inspectors spoke with pupils informally in lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- One inspector listened to a group of Year 7 pupils read.
- The inspection team considered the school's policies, including those for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the pupil premium funding and special educational needs. They reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and minutes of the interim transition board meetings. They also looked at records related to current pupils' progress and attendance, as well as behaviour and exclusion logs.
- Inspectors considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire and the 28 free-text responses received during the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the 55 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 15 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Carolyn Dickinson, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Bruce Goddard | Ofsted Inspector |
| Vicky Linsley | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alison Moore | Ofsted Inspector |

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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