

Inspection of Pix Brook Academy

Arlesey Road, Stotfold SG5 4HB

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Steve Adams. This school is a member of the Bedfordshire Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alan Lee, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ilona Bond.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Pix Brook Academy. They know that staff are highly ambitious for them. Pupils are determined to meet the school's expectations. Pupils follow a demanding curriculum that develops their knowledge and skills. They appreciate that staff will give them the support they need to be the best they can be. If pupils ever feel unsafe or worried, they know who to turn to.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They work with focus and enjoy taking part in lessons. Pupils support each other to do well. There are many 'buddies' who help new or younger children. Outside of lessons, pupils treat everyone with courtesy and respect.

Most pupils attend an increasing variety of clubs. These include debating, cheerleading and many sports. Pupils enjoy taking part in a growing range of trips. They visit places of worship from different faiths. Consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), grow in confidence and learn about the world around them.

The school prepares its pupils for adulthood. They learn how to keep healthy and safe, how to be good citizens, and about the importance of diversity. Older pupils learn about the dangers of extremism.

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

The school has thought very carefully about the content of its curriculum. The curriculum in each key stage builds on what pupils have learned previously. It then prepares pupils for the next steps in their learning. Curriculum plans clearly identify what pupils need to know to succeed. Leaders break knowledge down and regularly check that pupils are secure in their grasp of it before they are moved on. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, confidently build their knowledge across a range of subjects as they progress through the school.

Teachers usually use well-chosen strategies to ensure that pupils gain the knowledge they need. They skilfully match work to the needs of pupils, especially those with SEND. Teachers usually check how effectively pupils are learning and tackle any misconceptions. They use their chosen strategy of 'live marking' to provide instant and clear feedback. This helps pupils to develop the quality of their written work. In a few areas of the curriculum, teachers do not always choose the most effective activities in lessons. When this happens, pupils sometimes do not secure important knowledge as well as they could.

Reading is a high priority. The school promotes reading well and provides many opportunities for pupils to read. Consequently, pupils, especially younger ones, read enthusiastically and often. The school regularly checks how well pupils can read. Those pupils who find reading hard are given personalised support to help them

become more fluent and accurate. As a result, these pupils swiftly improve their reading and access the curriculum successfully.

Pupils fully embrace the positive ethos of the school. They follow the four 'Pix Brook Ps'. They are polite, they persevere, they are positive, and they prepare. Disruption to learning is exceptionally rare. In the unusual instances that pupils find it difficult to meet the high expectations of their behaviour, they are given the support they need to improve. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They attend very well.

The school is determined to develop 'socially responsible citizens of the future'. Therefore, pupils learn about global issues and topics such as democracy, healthy relationships and looking after their well-being. Pupils in key stage 3 learn about the world of work and meet employers.

Trustees, governors, leaders, and teachers work tirelessly together to ensure that all pupils become the best versions of themselves. The trust provides effective training. This develops the skills and knowledge of teachers and leaders. This has been a significant challenge, as the school has grown rapidly, acquiring many new staff and pupils each year.

Leaders care for staff well-being and support them with their workload and by providing mental health support. As such, staff are very happy to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of the curriculum, teachers do not always make the most effective pedagogical choices. This means that pupils do not always secure important knowledge as well as they might. The school should ensure that these teachers get the training and support they need so that they can consistently make the most effective pedagogical choices to support pupils to secure learning well.

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	147081
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10295108
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	9 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	722
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ilona Bond
Principal	Steve Adams
Website	www.pixbrookacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Pix Brook Academy admitted its first pupils in September 2019.
- The school currently educates pupils from Year 5 to Year 9. When the school is full, it will educate pupils from Year 5 to Year 11.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, trustees, and members of the local governing body.
- An inspector met with early career teachers and staff involved in their induction.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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 puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 164 responses and 124 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the 88 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 92 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Constable	Ofsted Inspector
James Chester	His Majesty's Inspector
James Shapland	Ofsted Inspector

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