

Bodmin College

Lostwithiel Road, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1DD

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects was poor. Recent improvements are not rapid or substantial enough. This is especially true for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' and governors' assessment of the quality of teaching in the school is too high, as it does not place sufficient emphasis on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement over time.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up is not used effectively to meet the needs of these pupils.
- The analysis of the impact of additional funding is not sharp enough, especially for the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.
- Middle leaders in key subjects have been in post for some time but are only now beginning to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not consistently high enough. Work set often lacks the right level of challenge to help pupils make more rapid progress.
- Teaching is not tackling pupils' basic literacy and numeracy errors effectively, especially for those pupils who join the school needing to catch up with their peers.
- Teaching does not consistently promote high standards in the way pupils present or set out their work. This means that pupils' books and folders do not provide them with useful resources for consolidating their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The overall progress of pupils at key stage 4 in 2017 improved to be in line with the national average.
- Leaders' actions have secured a marked increase in attendance in the last year, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and the school promotes their personal development well.
- The sixth form provides good-quality education. Students achieve in line with the national average and are able to move on successfully to employment, training or higher education.
- Pupils who have complex special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are cared for well in the area resource base, Greenfield. They make good progress as a result.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders and governors develop a more accurate view of the quality of teaching by paying sufficient attention to the impact it has on improving pupils' outcomes
 - additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up is used more effectively and its impact analysed more precisely
 - middle leaders have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and the outcomes for pupils
 - the rate of improvement in pupils' outcomes, especially for disadvantaged pupils, increases markedly.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers pitch the work they set at an appropriately challenging level in order to help pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, make more rapid progress
 - basic gaps in pupils' literacy and numeracy are attended to quickly, especially for those pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up after primary school
 - teachers expect work to be presented and set out so that it helps develop pupils' understanding and skills and provides them with a resource to consolidate their learning.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management, including governance, require improvement as leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils receive consistently good-quality teaching so that they make strong progress. In particular, while overall progress has improved, progress in key subjects such as English and mathematics has not been rapid or substantial enough. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' high aspirations for pupils are not being translated into strong outcomes.
- Leaders' and governors' assessment of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school is too generous. Leaders recognise that outcomes for pupils need to improve but still consider the quality of teaching to be good. Evaluation of the quality of teaching does not pay sufficient attention to the impact that teaching has on improving pupils' progress and future prospects.
- Leaders' use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, is not having enough impact on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up after primary school. Analysis of the impact of this funding is weak, particularly with regard to the catch-up premium.
- Middle leaders in English and mathematics have been in place for some years but are only now beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. The pace of change and improvement has not been rapid enough in these subjects to secure substantially better outcomes for pupils at key stage 4.
- Leadership of the sixth form, the school's vocational programme and the area resource base, Greenfield, has been more effective in securing positive outcomes for students and pupils.
- Pupils who have complex SEN and/or disabilities are well catered for by the area resource base. The care and attention they receive there enables them to make progress in their studies and in their personal development. Many of these pupils have autistic spectrum disorder and the school works well to enable them to follow a curriculum appropriate to their needs.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures that additional funding is spent effectively to meet pupils' needs. For example, the use of higher-level teaching assistants is well thought through and based around a clear analysis of where they can have the most impact.
- The curriculum is very broad. Pupils in key stage 4 can choose from a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications. The breadth of choice available to students following 16 to 19 study programmes is impressive, providing them with a wide variety of options to realise their aspirations and prepare themselves for future employment, training or education.
- School leaders have restructured the curriculum to give more time to English and mathematics and reduce class sizes. There are signs that this is beginning to have an impact but the extent to which it will rapidly improve outcomes over time is not yet clear. The curriculum structure has also enabled more current pupils to study subjects

that qualify for the EBacc.

- The formal curriculum is supported by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. These sporting, cultural, artistic and creative activities enable pupils to develop their particular interests and to grow in self-confidence. The extra-curricular programme makes an important contribution to the school's work to promote pupils' personal development.
- The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme ensures that fundamental British values are actively promoted through lessons, assemblies, tutorial periods and visiting speakers. In addition, effective links are made to British values across a range of subjects in the school, including, but not limited to, religious education, history, geography, English and modern foreign languages. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Together with the extra-curricular programme and the rest of the formal curriculum, the PSHE programme contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has a positive and motivated teaching staff. Responses to the online survey of staff opinion indicate that morale is high. Newly qualified teachers and recent entrants to the profession state that they are well supported by the school as they set out on their new careers. The programme of professional development has yet to secure consistently good teaching across the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have high aspirations for pupils and the school but their role of critical oversight has not secured consistently high-quality teaching or good outcomes in key subjects, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors do not have a clear enough insight into the school's outcomes or the reasons why pupils have underachieved. The level of challenge recorded in governors' minutes is slight.
- To their credit, governors have recognised that they need to strengthen their capacity. They have had an external view of governance, reorganised the way the governing body works so that all governors are involved in all aspects of governance, and added new members with educational backgrounds. It is too early, however, to say what the long-term impact of these changes will be.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead and her deputy, who work closely and well together as a team, have ensured that the school maintains a strong culture of safeguarding based on an understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The safeguarding leads have a good understanding of the school's context and local issues that might lead to pupils being at risk. They rigorously pursue contacts with the local authority and are not frightened to challenge cases where they disagree with the local authority's response.
- All the staff that inspectors spoke to showed a clear understanding of the school's

safeguarding procedures and what actions to take if they had any concerns about a pupil. The school's electronic system for recording referrals is thorough and allows clear chronological records to be maintained of any reported concerns and the action the school has taken.

- The single central record of the pre-employment checks on teachers and other staff is very well maintained. Training records show that a programme of safeguarding training is in place and that staff receive regular updates in line with the statutory guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement as it is not securing consistently good outcomes across the school.
- Teachers' expectations are too low, particularly in English and mathematics. Teaching does not provide the level of challenge that will help pupils make rapid progress, whatever their starting points. Work is often not based on a clear understanding of what pupils already know, understand and can do. This leads to pupils doing work that is too easy or does not contribute to a clear programme aimed at promoting progress.
- At the same time, insufficient attention is given to plugging the gaps that many pupils have in their basic numeracy and literacy, especially those who need to catch up with their peers after primary school. This means that many pupils lack the basic skills which will enable them to make progress across a range of subjects.
- There is a tendency in some teaching to equate task completion with progress. However, some tasks set by teachers are not part of clear sequences that aim to consolidate and build effectively on prior learning. This limits the progress pupils make.
- In addition, extension tasks are often tacked onto the end of other activities which all pupils have to complete before reaching them. This limits the challenge for the most able. Only rarely does teaching take account of the prior attainment of the most able from the outset.
- Teachers' expectations of the way pupils present and set out their work are far too variable. The ability to set out work clearly is an important aid to understanding and progress. In mathematics, for example, work is very often not set out in a way that helps pupils to understand or tackle the problems they are trying to solve. Many exercise books and folders across a range of subjects are scrappy and untidy. They do not provide pupils with a useful resource to consolidate their learning or to revise from.
- Departmental assessment policies are not used consistently by teachers to provide feedback to pupils.
- Stronger teaching is evident in some subjects. For example, in history expectations of literacy are high and result in pupils producing better written work than is seen in many English books. In art, pupils rise to the challenge of producing highly skilled and impressive artwork.
- Teaching of science is developing good practical laboratory skills but, as in a number of other subjects, there is insufficient challenge in the rest of the work to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and to push forward their progress.
- Teaching of vocational courses, such as hair and beauty or construction, on the Woods

Browning site is more consistently effective in promoting positive outcomes for the pupils who take these courses.

- Teaching is also more effective in the sixth form and this results in students making progress broadly in line with the national average. However, levels of challenge are sometimes not high enough, for example in science.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school works well to help pupils understand how to stay safe, including when they are online. Pupils spoke of how the PSHE programme covers a variety of topics that helps them to lead healthy lives, for example sex and relationships education and information about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse.
- The school's work to promote tolerance and respect is evident in the way pupils behave towards each other and adults.
- Pupils receive independent, impartial careers guidance, beginning in Year 8 and continuing through into the sixth form. Pupils are encouraged to aspire. The school's William Clift Academy plays an important part in encouraging pupils to believe that they can enter a wide variety of professions.
- Pupils state that they feel safe and understand how the school works to protect them from risk. Those spoken to during the inspection did not consider bullying to be a significant problem, although a quarter of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, did not agree that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that some pupils have not fully acquired the habits of successful learners. Some do not take sufficient pride in their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School leaders have had a noticeable impact on rates of attendance, which have improved to above the national average. In particular, they have been very successful in reducing the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils. In 2015/2016, one in three disadvantaged pupils were persistently absent. In 2016/17 this had reduced to one in four and currently it stands at one in six. While still above the national average, this represents a notable improvement in a relatively short space of time.
- Pupils conduct themselves well both in lessons and around the school. In lessons they are typically attentive and follow instructions. They are polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. The very little low-level disruption that does occur, such as shouting out, is usually a result of weaker classroom management by teachers rather than any desire to misbehave among pupils.
- The school has worked successfully to reduce the use of fixed-term exclusions. Records

show that these fell by a third between 2016 and 2017.

- Most pupils and staff do not have serious concerns about behaviour in the school, although a significant minority of parents, approximately a fifth, who responded to the online survey did express concern about the way behaviour is managed.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision, chiefly in hospital education or pupil referral units. The school monitors their progress, both academic and personal, closely and has strong relationships with these alternative providers.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils currently in the school are not making consistently strong progress, especially in English and mathematics. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils, who make up over a third of the school's pupils.
- Pupils' work indicates that many have gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills that have persisted through their time at the school. This means many do not have secure foundations upon which to build their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum.
- In the GCSE examinations in 2017, although progress in English, mathematics and subjects in the EBacc improved, it did not do so substantially enough. In English, for example, pupils achieved approximately half a grade below the grades of pupils with similar starting points nationally. For disadvantaged pupils that figure was closer to a full grade below.
- School leaders point out that the Year 11 cohort in 2017 was significantly below average in terms of prior attainment and that the presence of an area resource base means that the school has pupils who do not take any exams. Both these statements are true but, even allowing for the impact of these factors, progress is some way off being consistently good.
- Shortcomings in pupils' outcomes in key academic subjects such as English and mathematics mean that they are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training as they should be. Only one in four disadvantaged pupils achieved at least a standard pass (grade 4) in both English and mathematics in 2017.
- Overall progress is improving and now is broadly in line with the national average. Vocational qualifications make an important contribution to improving the overall progress score of pupils. This is a consequence of better teaching, learning and assessment in this area of the curriculum.
- For three years prior to 2017, the school met the government's definition of a coasting school. The latest results will mean that it no longer does.
- Progress in the sixth form is in line with national averages in both academic and vocational subjects.
- Outcomes in the area resource base, Greenfield, are good. Many pupils make progress, in both academic and personal terms, from their individual starting points and taking into account their individual SEN and/or disabilities.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders of the 16 to 19 study programmes have ensured that students in the sixth form receive a good standard of education. As a result, students make progress in line with the national average on both academic and vocational courses.
- Students' 16 to 19 study programmes meet the requirements set out by the Department for Education. They build well on students' prior attainment. The sixth form offers an impressive range of courses at level 2 and level 3. This means that the post-16 provision is very inclusive and a wide diversity of pupils' aspirations can be catered for.
- The latest published information from 2016 shows that progress on academic and vocational courses is in line with the national average. The provisional information from 2017 shows that attainment in academic subjects is part of a year-on-year rising trend and that attainment in vocational qualifications is above the national average, with the average grade being a distinction.
- As a consequence of underachievement in key stage 4, many students join the sixth form needing to continue studying English and/or mathematics in order to improve their results. These students' 16 to 19 study programmes include time devoted to studying these subjects. They make progress towards improving their performance, either in the GCSE or, for lower-attaining students, in functional skills. The latest results show that they are more successful in improving their grades in English than in mathematics.
- As the outcomes indicate, teaching is having a positive impact on students' progress. It is more consistently effective in the sixth form than in key stages 3 and 4. Teachers' secure subject knowledge provides a secure basis for their teaching in the sixth form.
- The strengths of the school's work to promote pupils' personal development are also seen in the sixth form. Tutors help students through the preparation to take their next steps, whether that be into further or higher education, employment or an apprenticeship. The school's William Clift Academy helps pupils to make the right choices in order to enter the professions they aspire to. As part of this drive to raise aspirations, the school helped a third of Year 12 students to take up places on university summer schools last year. The great majority of pupils go on from the sixth form to education or employment and the proportion going on to higher education or apprenticeships is rising.
- Students' study programmes include appropriate and meaningful non-qualification activity, including work experience and/or work-related learning. Work experience has a large take-up and is tracked well by both tutors and leaders. External experts, for example from the construction and information technology industries, visit the school regularly to meet with students and work on employability skills. Employability is also enhanced by leadership roles in the school and the paired reading that many students do with younger pupils.
- Students on 16 to 19 study programmes are very positive about their experiences in the sixth form, including the opportunities it gives them to grow and develop skills outside the academic aspect of their individual study programme. They regard the pastoral care they receive as excellent.

School details

Unique reference number	136383
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10042706

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,519
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	325
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jason Coad
Principal	Brett Elliott
Telephone number	01208 72114
Website	www.bodmincollege.co.uk
Email address	secretary@bodmincollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its memorandum and articles of association and its funding agreement on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about contact details, examination results, the pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up funding, and compliance with the public sector equality duty and accessibility plan.
- Bodmin College is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school. Pupils have significantly lower than average prior attainment at key stage 2 when they join the

school in Year 7.

- The school has a slightly higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils than the national average. It has lower proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language.
- The school has a larger-than-average proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. This is because it hosts a local authority-funded area resource base, Greenfield.
- The school uses three alternative providers: Cornwall Hospital Education Service, Carrick Acorn Academy and North Cornwall Academy.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standards for achievement at key stage 4.
- The school runs the foundation and first year of a digital media degree with Falmouth University.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, often accompanied by a member of the school's senior leadership team. During these visits, inspectors spoke to pupils about their studies and looked at their work. In addition, inspectors undertook work scrutiny across a wide range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior and middle leaders, governors and other members of staff. They also spoke to groups of pupils from all the key stages in the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the information on its website. This included policies and records relating to safeguarding, including the single central record of pre-employment checks on teachers and other staff.
- Inspectors took into account 118 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey of parental opinion, when making their judgements. They also considered a number of emails from parents. There were 127 responses to the staff survey and no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Ann Cox	Ofsted Inspector
John Laver	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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