

# Beaumont School

Oakwood Drive, St Albans, AL4 0XB

**Inspection dates** 19–20 March 2014

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>     | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |          |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
|                                  | This inspection:     | <b>Outstanding</b>       | <b>1</b> |
| Achievement of students          |                      | Outstanding              | 1        |
| Quality of teaching              |                      | Outstanding              | 1        |
| Behaviour and safety of students |                      | Outstanding              | 1        |
| Leadership and management        |                      | Outstanding              | 1        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and students

### This is an outstanding school.

- Students receive an outstanding education at Beaumont School that prepares them extremely well for their future.
- In 2013 the school achieved better results for students at the end of Year 11 and Year 13 than in 2012.
- The headteacher, leadership team and the governors have a relentless focus on raising achievement for all students in the school.
- Teaching is consistently good and much of it outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and demonstrate a passion and love for their subject.
- Teachers plan exciting, challenging lessons that stretch students' thinking. In most subjects and for all abilities, including the most able, students make rapid progress.
- Students are very respectful towards each other and their teachers. The behaviour and attitudes of students is exemplary in and out of the classroom. Students are very proud of their school.
- Attendance is above average.
- Students feel safe in school and say that bullying is uncommon but if it happens they have confidence that teachers will deal with it.
- Governors and senior leaders set themselves very high standards. Checks on the quality of teaching and how well students are doing are robust and rigorous. This promotes further improvement in achievement.
- The teaching and learning group in school relentlessly support the leadership team in their continuous drive to improve the percentage of outstanding teaching. This is enhancing provision in the school. This best practice is being shared with other local secondary schools.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Most students at the end of Year 11 transfer to the sixth form and the vast majority go on to their first choice of university.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 57 lessons, of which seven were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Formal discussions were held with the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders and teachers.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with two groups of students, representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- Inspectors analysed the school's 2012 examination results and the unvalidated results for 2013. They analysed the school's data on the progress students have made and their current progress. Inspectors reviewed a variety of school documents, including the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, governing body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The views of 272 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also considered the views in 115 questionnaires returned by school staff.

## Inspection team

|                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Patricia Hunt, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| John Mason                    | Additional Inspector |
| Heather Housden               | Additional Inspector |
| Bruce Clark                   | Additional Inspector |
| David Gutmann                 | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Beaumont School converted to become an academy school on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than average. This is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from families in the armed forces and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school holds language, maths and computer specialist status and this supports its provision and curriculum.
- The school works with a consortium of local schools to provide academic and work-related courses for the sixth form.
- The school does not use alternative providers for its students.
- School leaders and teachers provide support for local secondary schools. This involves, for example, helping teachers to develop strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise attainment even higher by:
  - ensuring that marking always provides clear advice on what students should do to improve their work
  - giving more time for students to act upon the teachers' advice and making sure there is clear evidence that their work improves as a result.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of students is outstanding

- Students typically join the school with attainment that is well above average. They make outstanding progress and their attainment, including that of the most able students, in gaining five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics is much better than in other schools nationally. The school achieved improved results in 2013 with 86% of students achieving five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics.
- Since the school became an academy, the proportions of students making expected progress and the proportions making more than expected progress in mathematics and English has been high compared to those found nationally. The proportion making more than expected progress in mathematics in 2013 was nearly twice the national average.
- The school enters students at the end of Year 9 in GCSE French and German examinations. This has been particularly successful with most students achieving A\* or A. This then allows students to follow a second or third language in Years 10 and 11. It does not hold back the most able.
- The high standards and levels of progress in Key Stage 4 are also reflected in Key Stage 3. The school's own performance information shows that current progress in all year groups is at least good and often outstanding including students who are disabled, and those with special educational needs.
- There is no significant difference between the achievements of students from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Students supported by pupil-premium funding achieve better than is typically found nationally. Current data in the school indicate that the gap between the performance of this small group of students and their peers in school is continuing to close. In 2013 the attainment of students eligible for pupil premium was approximately one GCSE grade lower overall in English and mathematics in comparison with other students in the school.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is spent wisely. For example, the school has used some of the funding to pay for extra staff to support a literacy programme for those students who enter the school in Year 7 below national expectations in English. This targeted group is making good progress in all subjects as a direct result of this intervention.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. The attainment of students joining the sixth form is above average. Students make outstanding progress which means they leave Year 13 with standards well above average. Nine out of ten students go on to their first choice university. The school works with a consortium of local schools to ensure the widest choice of academic and work-related subjects is available to the students.
- School leaders have tackled the fall in students' attainment in resistant materials and graphics in 2013. Current information about students' progress in these subjects shows that students are now making progress above national figures.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently good and much of it is outstanding. The school's own information shows there is an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Inspectors agree with leaders' views

regarding their judgement of teaching.

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and demonstrate a passion and love for their subject. This enthusiasm is also shown by the students. For example, in English, students, even in Year 7, were able to evaluate critically the text they were reading and use an extensive range of vocabulary relevant to the subject to respond to the teacher's questions.
- Teachers work together to improve their skills and share best classroom practice. The 'teaching and learning group' supports teachers to improve their teaching even further. For example, the 'black box' which each teacher is given has examples in it of outstanding practice for them to draw on. All teachers in the school can contribute to this box. 'Learning lunches', time spent at lunchtime sharing examples of good practice, are another example of opportunities for teachers to see and share their ideas.
- Teachers plan exciting, challenging lessons that stretch students' thinking. In most subjects and for all abilities, including the most able, students make rapid and sustained progress.
- Questioning is used exceptionally well to check students' understanding and to encourage them to think deeply. Teachers have high expectations and expect responses to questions to be detailed, thoughtful and informed.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers monitor, review and assess students often. A wide range of activities supports learning including an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and visits.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to students of all abilities. This is the result of working together with the teacher to plan the learning.
- Students respect their teachers. Relationships are strong. Students said they are taught well. Most parents who responded to Parent View agree that their child is taught well.
- Some boys in the school take less pride in their work than girls however, despite some untidy work, boys continue to make progress in line with girls.
- Students work is marked but there is inconsistency in providing clear advice on what students should do to improve their work. Sometimes students are not given time to act upon the teacher's advice.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Students are very respectful towards each other and their teachers. The behaviour and attitudes of all students, including the sixth form, is outstanding in and out of the classroom. The school is a calm and purposeful place in which to learn. The school's motto of 'enjoy and excel' is embraced by both students and staff.
- Students are very proud of their school. The school buildings and facilities are treated with respect. There is little, if any, litter on the site and buildings are free from graffiti.
- Learning is taken very seriously. Students show a very mature and responsible attitude to managing their own behaviour. When asked what behaviour is like at the school students commented on praise and reward and said there are sanctions for poor behaviour but these

rarely have to be used.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students feel safe in their school and say that bullying is uncommon but if it happens they have a confidence teachers will deal with it.
- Attendance is above average. Students arrive at lessons punctually confirming that they enjoy school life.
- An imaginative and extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, study-support and trips are offered by the school. Students spoke enthusiastically about these well-attended opportunities, which take place at lunchtime and after school. The timetable is also suspended at times during the year for curriculum enrichment days.
- The school council makes a positive contribution to the school. Student opinion is sought on a range of issues. For example, governors seek students' opinions of how well subjects are taught and areas for development as part of the school's rigorous tracking and monitoring of teaching and learning. Students also take part in the interviewing process for jobs at the school.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher, leadership team and the governors have a relentless focus on raising achievement for all students in the school. They are all passionate about driving up standards even further and give a clear vision to all staff of where they want the school to be. They have been successful in creating a culture that pursues excellence.
- Governors and senior leaders set themselves very high standards. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and how well students are doing are robust and rigorous. This promotes further improvement in achievement. GCSE and 'A' level results rose in 2013.
- Staff feel supported by their leaders and were overwhelmingly positive about them in the staff questionnaire carried out during the inspection.
- Leaders undertake regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching across the school. The evaluation of this monitoring leads to a comprehensive programme of training for staff and the sharing of best practice. The school is now sharing this outstanding practice with other local schools.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. The structures in place support learning, progress and attainment very well. Much of the teaching is outstanding so students make outstanding progress on many courses.
- Subject leadership is very strong in almost all subjects. Subject leaders play an active role in evaluating achievement in their subject and act quickly to put strategies into place for those students who underperform. The impact of these strategies is measured regularly. Subject leaders are well informed about the progress of students supported by the pupil premium and those students who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The school provides a broad and balanced range of subjects throughout all key stages, including an appropriate balance between academic and work-related subjects in Years 10 to 13. Students unreservedly said they enjoyed all their lessons and felt all subjects gave them the chance to succeed and prepare them for the next steps in their education. Students' literacy skills,

particularly reading, are highly developed across all subjects.

- Students receive excellent impartial advice, information and careers guidance throughout their time at the school. Nearly all students go on to university at the end of Year 13.
- There are strong systems in place to track and monitor all forms of discrimination and bullying. Even though incidences of this kind are rare, the school is not complacent and parents and pupils confirm that the school deals with any concerns they may have.
- Pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively. This additional funding has helped students entering the school with low literacy skills to access the curriculum and to make rapid progress, particularly in reading. Targeted support, delivered by specialist teachers, in Years 10 and 11 has a positive impact on the progress of students supported by the pupil premium.
- There are high levels of support for spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning. Students are very confident in sharing their own values and beliefs and often empathised with the topic or person being discussed drawing on their own personal experiences.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has provided challenge to enable the school to further drive up achievement.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and child protection procedures are secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors systematically pursue excellence along with the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors are passionate about the school. They know the school very well because of the regular visits governors make to support leaders in monitoring and tracking the quality of learning. For example, governors are well aware that achievement in resistant materials and graphics has been below that of other subjects. Governors ensure that the performance of teachers is well managed. Governors oversee performance appraisal arrangements effectively and regularly review statutory policies and ensure that requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding. Governors ask school leaders challenging questions about performance in all aspects of the school's work. They monitor the impact of pupil-premium funding closely.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |  |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its students' needs. This ensures that students are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its students' needs. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |



## School details

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 138286        |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Hertfordshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 425401        |

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

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Secondary                  |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Academy converter          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 11–18                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 1185                       |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 295                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body         |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Alex Hall                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Elizabeth Hitch            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | Not previously inspected   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01727 854726               |
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