

Inspection of Bodmin College

Lostwithiel Road, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1DD

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The head of this school is Claire White. This school is part of the Cornwall Education Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lisa Mannall, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Geoff Brown. There is also a principal, Samantha Fairbairn, who is responsible for the Bodmin College Campus.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bodmin College has been through a period of turbulence. The trust and new leadership have a shared aspirational vision for the school and sixth form. They recognise that published outcomes for pupils are low and have identified priority areas for rapid improvement. However, at this point-in-time, many elements of the improvement plan are in their infancy and therefore not yet had impact.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils appreciate the new clarity about what behaviour is acceptable. There are clear sanctions and rewards in place to help pupils to learn from mistakes. Pupils can learn without disruption and the school is calm. The school identified that bullying was a concern for some pupils. There has been a focus on helping pupils to understand that bullying is never acceptable. Pupils are now increasingly reporting concerns that they previously tolerated. Adults take action to help resolve any incidents. Pupils value this support and feel listened to.

Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities. For example, competitive sport, outdoor adventurous activities, school drama productions and musical performances. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and to contribute their views. Pupils recognise and appreciate the improvements being made to their school.

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

The school has made substantial changes to the curriculum. Pupils now study a broad and more ambitious curriculum. Subjects are clear about what pupils will learn in each year. However, older pupils and students in the sixth form have gaps in their knowledge and understanding because of weaknesses in the old curriculum. This is hindering their ability to learn new content.

The checks that teachers make to see if pupils understand are not accurately identifying what pupils know and can do. This means that misconceptions are not corrected and gaps in knowledge remain. Those pupils without a secure understanding of the subject to date find it difficult to grasp more complex topics. Equally, some pupils do not have the opportunity to learn more challenging content quickly enough.

The school accurately identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils accessing the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND are well supported to learn the curriculum and engage in the wider life of the school. The information supplied to teachers is sometimes generic and not targeted to meet pupils' individual needs. This means those pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they might.

The trust recognises the importance of reading. It has supported the school to develop the reading curriculum and the Bodmin College Reading Canon. These books cover a diverse range of themes to interest pupils. The weakest readers are identified and helped to improve their reading confidence. However, these pupils are not supported to read the

challenging texts they see within the wider curriculum. This is hindering their comprehension of subject topics.

Raising attendance is a trust priority. The school works with families to increase their awareness of the importance of attending school regularly. The school has strengthened its monitoring systems so that pupils receive more timely support. This work is beginning to raise the attendance of pupils.

The provision for personal development is a strength of the school. The school has considered the local context and which experiences will best prepare pupils for their adult life. For example, including driver awareness in the sixth-form curriculum. There is an age-appropriate approach to teaching pupils about healthy, respectful relationships and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils learn about other cultures and have a good understanding of fundamental British values and diversity. The school values bring these to life for pupils.

Pupils have opportunities to learn about the world of work and receive impartial careers advice. Students receive support for considering their future options such as university and apprenticeships. However, students in the sixth form have had insufficient guidance when selecting their courses. As a result, some students are undertaking courses that are not suitably challenging or aligned to their future career aspirations.

The school is working to improve communication with parents and the wider community through events such as 'Bodmin Connects'. The trust has recognised that improvements at the school need to accelerate. A 'Rapid Improvement Group' has been appointed by the trustees to facilitate this. The school is considerate of staff workload and well-being when implementing changes. Due to the recent nature of many changes the school and trust do not currently have a clear view of what is working well and what is not.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not adapted precisely enough for some pupils with SEND or pupils with low levels of literacy. Consequently, these pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as their peers. The school should ensure that teachers have the information and training they need to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of learners.
- Assessment within the curriculum does not help adults accurately identify pupils' starting points or gaps in their knowledge or understanding. This means that some pupils do not receive the support or challenge they need to learn as well as they might. The school should ensure that assessment routines check pupils' understanding so that the curriculum can be adapted accordingly.

- Pupils do not receive sufficient individual guidance about appropriate qualifications to select at key stage 4 and post-16. This means that some pupils and sixth-form students are taking courses that are not suitably challenging or aligned to their future career aspirations. The school should ensure that all pupils receive the independent advice and guidance they need to select appropriate programmes of study.
- The school has implemented extensive changes to secure improvements in the quality of provision. As much of this is in its infancy, there have been limited opportunities to review impact. The school should ensure that systems are in place to embed, monitor and evaluate the impact of the newly introduced strategies. This will provide leaders and those responsible for governance with accurate self-evaluation to help to inform future leadership decisions.

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	136383
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10322243
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1477
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Geoff Brown
CEO of the trust	Lisa Mannall
Headteacher/Principal	Samantha Fairbairn (Principal 11-18) Claire White (Head of School 11-16)
Website	www.bodmincollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT). The school joined this trust in June 2023.
- There has been a change of leadership since the last inspection. The principal and the head of school took up their substantive posts in January 2024.
- This school currently has an interim executive board in place to support governance. This is called the Rapid Improvement Group.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Currently there are 47 places within this 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.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 spoke with teaching staff, support staff, trust executive leaders, the chair of trust and representatives of the interim executive board.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including representatives from the pupil leadership group and sixth-form students.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The sixth form was considered through the deep dives as well as through additional visits during the inspection.
- Inspectors also visited additional lessons and tutor periods to consider the effectiveness of the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for pupils with SEND and considered the support provided to meet the needs of these pupils. They visited the specialist resource base provision.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of governance meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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 considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

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