

Inspection of a good school: Burnley High School

Byron Street, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 6NX

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 June 2022

Outcome

Burnley High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this tight-knit community. Pupils and staff say that there is a family feel to the school. Adults in the school know pupils well and care for their well-being and safety. Pupils are appreciative of the high-quality facilities available to them in the new school building.

Pupils feel safe when they are in school. They know who to speak to if they are worried or upset. Pupils told inspectors that if bullying does happen, teachers ensure that it is sorted out quickly.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teachers consistently apply the clear and straightforward rules of Burnley High School, known as the 'BHS Way'. Pupils behave well. They move around the school calmly and act sensibly towards one another during social times. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and join in when asked to do so by their teachers.

Leaders, governors and trustees are ambitious for all pupils. They have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Leaders ensure that staff prepare pupils well for their future lives. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress well through the curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a strong personal development curriculum. They gain the knowledge that they need to live safe and happy lives. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities including many trips to places outside of school. For example, all Year 8 pupils enjoy a geography trip to the Lake District where they study both the landscape and the impact of tourism on the area.

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

Leaders, including trustees, have ensured through recent changes that all pupils, including those with SEND, learn a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum. For example,

leaders and trustees are successfully increasing the proportion of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, progress well through key stage 3 curriculums in most subjects. Subject leaders have worked closely with trust advisors to design well-ordered curriculums that enable pupils to build their knowledge logically and securely over time. However, in a small number of subjects in key stage 3, leaders' curriculum design is less effective. As a result, pupils are not able to use the knowledge that they have gained confidently, fluently or within unfamiliar situations.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain concepts clearly to pupils. Teachers know the mistakes that pupils are likely to make when learning new content and help pupils to avoid making those mistakes. They know their pupils well and adapt the teaching of subject content to the specific needs of their pupils. Teachers take opportunities to make links between current learning and earlier topics. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned previously.

Teachers use a wide range of strategies to check that pupils have learned and fully understood the intended curriculum. Teachers adapt the curriculum to cover any learning that pupils may have missed or forgotten. Pupils listen carefully to the advice from their teachers and conscientiously correct and improve their work.

Pupils behave well around the school site. They appreciate and respect the facilities within the new school building. Pupils follow the well-established school routines without fuss. Typically, lessons take place without disruption. Pupils want to do well and have positive attitudes to their learning.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Teachers and learning support assistants use the information that leaders provide to support pupils with SEND to learn well. This helps pupils with SEND to progress through the same ambitious subject curriculums as their peers.

Recently, leaders have built upon established systems to identify more precisely pupils whose reading knowledge is weak. The changes leaders have made enable them to pinpoint the specific problems that individuals face with their reading. Leaders have invested in specialist staff and additional resources to support pupils who are less confident readers. As a result, more pupils are becoming more confident and fluent readers. Leaders have introduced several new schemes to encourage all pupils to read more widely. Subject departments have developed reading challenges to help pupils build subject specific vocabulary. This has enabled pupils to become more confident in using this vocabulary.

Leaders have a well-designed personal development curriculum in place. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about and discuss issues relevant to their current and future lives. Teachers are well trained to deliver the personal development curriculum effectively. Lessons are supplemented by sessions led by external speakers who are knowledgeable in their field. Pupils told inspectors about a recent talk that helped them clearly understand the dangers of knife crime.

Pupils receive age-appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance. They also have opportunities to receive independent careers advice.

Staff appreciate how leaders and governors have taken steps to reduce their workload. Staff, leaders and governors appreciate the high-quality support they have received from the trust since the school joined in April 2020.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are well informed about local and national safeguarding matters. They use this knowledge to ensure that safeguarding training is thorough and that all staff are kept informed about the most recent developments. Leaders ensure that any safeguarding concerns are identified quickly and that appropriate and timely action is taken.

Staff know how to spot the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. They know to share any concerns with leaders. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to keep themselves and their friends safe. This is because they benefit from a strong culture of safety which is present across the whole school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects in key stage 3, leaders have not designed a curriculum that supports pupils to learn about these subjects in sufficient depth. As a result, some pupils do not acquire the essential knowledge in some aspects of the curriculum as securely as they should. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, curriculums are designed so that pupils gain the same rich body of knowledge as they do in other subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141028 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 10226287 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 562 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of governing body | Pete Baker |
| Headteacher | Emma Starkey |
| Website | www.burnleyhighschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 23 and 24 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at two registered alternative providers.
- The school joined the Education Partnership Trust in April 2020. It had previously been part of the Chapel Street Community Schools Trust.
- Since the previous inspection a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, governors, the chief executive officer, the headteacher, other senior leaders and some subject leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors reviewed leaders' records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted 's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted 's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss curriculums, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed curriculums, visited lessons and considered samples of pupils' work from some other subjects.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Claire Hollister

Ofsted Inspector

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