

# Burnham Grammar School

Hogfair Lane, Burnham, Buckinghamshire, SL1 7HG

## Inspection dates

22-23 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Not previously inspected</b>	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good with high attainment and strong progress in most subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Students learn new skills and develop their understanding well.
- The harmonious school community helps students to get on well together, feel very safe and behave well. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very strong with increasing opportunities for students' cultural development through the performing arts.
- The sixth form is good. Students have opportunities to study a broad range of subjects and achieve well in most subjects.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, have contributed strongly to the improvements across the school. Strategies to improve teaching have been well-thought through and supported teachers in broadening their skills effectively for the benefit of students.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good overall, more needs to be outstanding and a small minority of teaching still requires improvement. A few lessons do not have enough opportunities for students to work on their own and deepen their understanding.
- Achievement is not consistently good in a few subjects in both Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, taught by 34 different teachers. Seven lessons were observed jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors made brief visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with six groups of students, members of the governing body, the headteacher and groups of staff.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 71 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and a telephone conversation with a parent.
- Fifty five staff questionnaires were returned and considered by the inspection team.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including examples of students' work, the school's own information on students' progress and attainment, behaviour records, the school's planning, its own surveys of parents and students and the performance management of staff.

## Inspection team

Sarah Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Murrell	Additional Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector
Victor Chaffey	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Burnham Grammar School is an average-sized secondary school which is selective.
- Burnham Grammar School converted to become an academy school on 1 October 2011. When its predecessor school, which was known by the same name, was previously inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is low compared to the national figure. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than national.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- Less than 5% of students attending the school are known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals in this school), which is much lower than the national average.
- The school is a partner of the established sixth form South Bucks Partnership.
- The school does not use alternative provision arrangements for students.
- Since the previous inspection a new headteacher and several new senior staff have been appointed.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Continue to strengthen teaching by developing more of the good teaching to outstanding and ensuring that all teaching is at least good by:
  - increasing the opportunities for students to work effectively in pairs and groups to develop independence in their learning
  - asking probing questions which prompt students to think more deeply and give detailed answers in all lessons
  - planning each lesson to meet the learning needs of the full range of students, monitoring students' progress and re-shaping activities as the lesson proceeds.
- Enhance the consistency of high standards across, and within, subjects to raise the proportion of students achieving the highest grades of A\* and A at GCSE and A level by:
  - providing regular and frequent formal written feedback on students' work that gives precise guidance as to what students need to do to improve, as evident in the school's best practice
  - further developing opportunities for all students to respond to teachers' marking
  - more sharply focused evaluations by senior leaders and governors of the progress of groups within the school against national benchmarks, including for the small proportion for whom pupil premium funding is received.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 with skills and attainment that are significantly above average. They make good progress. More students make better than expected progress by the end of Year 11 than in most schools. Provisional 2012 GCSE results indicate a very small minority of students did not attain five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics.
- Students' progress is good for both English and mathematics. However, students make better progress in science and mathematics than in English by the end of Key Stage 4. The school chooses not to enter any students early for GCSE qualifications.
- Senior leaders recognise the variability in standards in different subjects and groups and have taken robust actions to monitor improvements.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are high, including those students who speak and write English as an additional language. Students read broadly and enjoy the opportunities they have to read books of their choice during tutor time.
- In the sixth form achievement is good with strong progress overall and high pass rates for most subjects. Much higher proportions of students complete their courses in the sixth form than found nationally.
- In an outstanding sixth form English lesson students achieved exceptionally well. They were given the opportunity to explore what a literary motif is using examples from *Eastenders*, *The Go Between* and *Harry Potter*. The teacher's effective use of targeted questions which assessed students' understanding and drew each student to an understanding of the difference between a literary motif and theme, was central to their rapid progress.
- Over time high proportions of A level entries are graded at A\*, A or B in history, geography, business studies, mathematics and English literature. This is much stronger than standards in art, biology, philosophy and modern foreign languages over the same period. The school is working hard to eliminate these variations.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress in line with other students because of the high quality support they are given. This support is knowledgeably matched to each student's particular needs.
- Pupil premium has been allocated to support students' pastoral needs. The school's 2012 unvalidated results at Key Stage 4 indicate that there is a small gap in the attainment (average point score) of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. All groups of students, including different ethnic groups, those who speak English as an additional language, girls and boys make progress that is at least as good as other students nationally.

### The quality of teaching is good

- A high proportion of teaching is good with some outstanding practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of what students can achieve. Teaching is well-paced and energetic in many lessons matching students' abilities and stages of their learning.
- Good teaching over time has secured high levels of attainment, particularly at GCSE grades A\* and A in the stronger subjects such as history, geography and physics and physical education at Key Stage 4.
- Students are very keen to do well and are highly focused on their own progress. They respect their teachers' knowledge and are very appreciative of the additional support teachers give when they are not meeting their attainment targets.
- In the best lessons teachers' planning builds on students' prior knowledge. Teachers check students' progress regularly, skilfully asking questions which probe students' understanding supporting them to make brisk progress. In an outstanding Year 10 chemistry lesson, the

teacher's questions ensured all students were engaged in thinking carefully about ionic form and associated reactions. The lesson was dynamic with ample opportunities for students to discuss their emerging ideas before requiring individual responses to increasingly complex concepts.

- A minority of teaching requires improvement where students spend too long listening to the teacher with limited opportunities for students to think on their own or discuss their understanding with other students in a structured way.
- In a few lessons, all students complete the same work which means it is either too easy or too hard for some which slows their progress. In a mathematics lesson, students were completing tasks rather than the teacher monitoring students' progress and developing students' understanding by re-shaping the learning as the lesson progressed. This meant that students were not given sufficient opportunity to confidently apply their skills to a range of challenging problems.
- Students know the grades they are aiming for. High quality marking and detailed feedback on students' written work is evident, this gives students frequent and regular information how they can improve. This is not consistent. Some marking records that work is completed rather than evaluating students' learning. This means that students are not given opportunities to respond to teachers' guidance often enough.

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

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students overall consider behaviour is good. Scrutiny of behavioural records show that this is the case over time too. The majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, agree with this. Parents consider that their children are happy and safe in school.
- Students are courteous, showing respect for each other and staff. The school has very effective policies to manage poor behaviour and provides exceptional levels of support for students. They appreciate the support offered and speak highly about the summer Space Camp that they attended as Year 6 students before joining the school.
- Students consider bullying is very rare and if it occurs that it is dealt with effectively. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and of the range of different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying. Students say that racist language is rare and if used they are confident that it is challenged consistently.
- Students are keen and their attendance is high compared to national figures and it rare for students to be persistently absent. Students are punctual to school and lessons.
- Students have a clear understanding of right and wrong and keenly involve themselves in the many opportunities to be involved in the school such as the well-established school council and school-based community service.
- The school's programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education and assemblies use the expertise of local agencies to raise students' awareness of topical issues. Together with year-based tutor time, the programme contributes strongly to students' well-being. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a strength of the school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher's thoughtful approach has improved many aspects of the school. With support from well-informed governors, the headteacher has decisively tackled areas of weakness in leadership. Aply supported by senior leaders, they are ensuring that the expertise of new staff is integrated successfully into their central roles across the school.
- Parents express an increasing confidence as shown through the school's increasing roll.
- The headteacher's commitment to involving staff at all levels in the school's development is nurturing a loyal and dedicated staff team. Teachers value their involvement in the school's

tailored professional development programme which is securing good teaching overall.

- The meticulous monitoring of the quality of teaching identifies strengths and areas for improvement which are tackled through targeted professional development. The performance of staff is well managed and thoughtfully reviewed along with the national changes. It is clearly linked to pay progression. The balance of teachers who progressed through to the upper pay spine in recent years is closely linked to good student outcomes.
  - The school has a forensic approach to checking individual student's progress. Individual student's underachievement is swiftly identified and well-matched support put in place. This tracking system ensures that parents and students are kept informed at each key stage.
  - The school checks how well it is doing thoroughly with detailed overviews of areas of strength and weakness. Consequently, the school's development planning focuses on appropriate priorities. However, senior managers recognise that focused evaluations against national benchmarks of the standards and progress of current year groups and other key groups are less refined.
  - The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. Senior leaders use external support well to develop expertise across the school, such as middle leaders' skills when scrutinising different classes' work.
  - The curriculum is good. The inclusion of Key Stage 3 drama and increased time for mathematics and English at Key Stage 4 are meeting identified needs. Sixth form students have a wide choice of subjects supported by the South Bucks Partnership; a consortium of 8 local schools.
  - Students take part in a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities. They keenly participate in the extensive international educational visits including to Australia, Iceland and various European countries.
  - Procedures for safeguarding meet requirements. The school's health and safety procedures are recognised by the local authority as exemplary.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The experienced governing body participate in appropriate training. They are aware of the quality of teaching, involved in teachers' pay progression and perceptive in their discussions about the impact of spending decisions on students' learning and progress. Nevertheless, tracking of pupil premium funding (additional government funding) school expenditure has not been sufficiently robust to track its impact in detail. Subject-area link governors usefully participate in meetings for checking how well subject areas are doing, holding senior leaders to account for standards and the quality of teaching and leadership.
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## 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 pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils 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 pupils' needs. Pupils 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 pupils 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>	137564
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403706

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<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>	923
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Frith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Gillespie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 604812
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