

# Ribblesdale School

Queens Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1EJ

## Inspection dates

4–5 June 2013

|                                |                      |                             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good                        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is weak in science and varies too much in other subjects, including mathematics.
- The most able students and those with special educational needs do not achieve as well as they should across a range of subjects because lessons are not always planned appropriately to challenge them and support their individual learning needs.
- Too much teaching is not good enough and leads to underachievement.
- The governing body has not acted quickly enough to arrest the decline in achievement since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have an over-generous view of the quality of day-to-day teaching and its impact on achievement.
- Procedures for the management of behaviour and prevention of bullying are not effective enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in some subjects, such as English, religious education and catering, is good.
- The high quality teaching in English results in students making good progress in this subject.
- Attendance is high for most groups of students.
- Students develop good reading and writing skills because many teachers focus on these aspects during lessons.
- The Year 6 Transition Programme is a model of good practice and gives excellent support to new students.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 teachers in 43 lessons, of which two were jointly observed with senior staff.
- Other observations included a series of short visits to lessons to look at a variety of issues including assessment, marking, the quality of teaching for those who may be disabled or have special educational needs and behaviour. Eight lessons were visited jointly with the school's special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also observed behaviour at break and lunchtime. Inspectors examined detailed information on students' performance over a number of years and information provided by the school on current students' learning and progress. They also looked at work in students' books and folders during lessons.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, staff and groups of students.
- Inspectors took into account 110 responses by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 67 responses to a survey of staff on behalf of inspectors and the school's own satisfaction surveys.
- A great variety of other evidence was also considered, including the school improvement plan and the school's view of its own performance. Records relating to current attendance and behaviour and information on the quality of teaching and the setting of targets for teachers were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sally Kenyon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Rowland

Additional Inspector

Clive Hurren

Additional Inspector

Janet Peckett

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average secondary school with an even split of boys and girls.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding given to schools by the government to support children of armed forces families, pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- Average numbers of students are supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, and the number supported at school action is below average.
- The school holds a number of awards such as Sports Mark Gold award, Healthy School status and the Investors in People award.
- The school makes use of a number of off-site alternatives, allowing a small number of students to learn in the workplace for one day per week. Placements include a hairdresser and restaurants.
- 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 good and better teaching by:
  - ensuring that teachers draw on the good practices seen in English and religious education and apply them to their own teaching
  - ensuring that marking is used effectively in all subjects to tell students precisely how to improve their work and giving them the opportunity to respond
  - ensuring that teachers use questioning more effectively to check on students' progress and to deepen their levels of understanding
  - making sure all teachers communicate higher expectations to their students by planning activities and tasks that are appropriately matched to their individual needs and starting points.
- Raise the achievement of all students in science and across a range of subjects, particularly for high-ability students and those with special educational needs by:
  - ensuring subject leaders identify ways in which their subjects can be delivered or taught so that they inspire and engage students, particularly those more likely to be excluded such as boys and those eligible for the pupil premium funding
  - ensuring information collected about how well students are doing is used by teachers to plan lessons more effectively so that tasks and activities suit individual needs.
- Improve leadership at all levels in the school by:
  - ensuring the governing body regularly challenges leaders about underperformance
  - verifying that school policies, such as the behaviour policy, are implemented consistently well across the school by all staff
  - ensure that subject leaders play a leading role in the rigorous monitoring of teaching.
- Improve behaviour by:
  - ensuring the visibility of staff across all areas of the school so that all students feel safe all of the time
  - developing a PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) education and citizenship programme that promotes the highest standard of behaviour from all students.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, taking account of their starting points, students do not make as much progress as they should in a wide range of subjects, including in mathematics and science. Not enough students attain grades at the highest levels in any subjects apart from English.
- Students enter the school with skills in English and mathematics that are broadly average. There are fewer students of lower ability than would be expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 4, their attainment remains broadly average.
- Based on results from GCSE examinations that have already been taken, leaders are predicting improved results this year.
- The school's policy of entering some students early for examinations, particularly in core subjects, has historically impeded progress. This year, students of all abilities will be re-entered for examinations if they have not achieved the grade of which they are capable.
- Students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium are now making better progress. However, by the time they leave school, these students are typically one GCSE grade behind their peers in English and mathematics.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs are also making better progress than last year. This is due to some well-targeted high quality work by the student support team. These students do not yet make good progress because teachers do not always plan well enough to support their individual needs in lessons.
- Students taking GCSE examinations in 2012 achieved well in subjects such as English, French and religious education and particularly well in hospitality and catering. In these subjects, a much higher proportion of students gained an A\* to C grade than the national average.
- In approximately half the lessons seen by inspectors, progress was not good enough. However, there is a core of good and outstanding teaching in the school and students were observed making very strong progress in some English, religious education and mathematics lessons.
- Students grow in confidence and competence in reading and writing as they move through the school. This is because many teachers actively promote these skills through their teaching. For example, in an English lesson, the teacher used assessment information to group pupils in the class by ability; this had a very positive impact on their progress because the tasks were linked to the students' level of understanding and capability.
- The very small proportion of students who attend the alternative provision achieve well and some say it has helped them achieve better in core subjects because they are more motivated and involved in school life.
- Students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium are developing stronger literacy skills through specialist teaching in small groups focusing upon reading, writing and communication.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good or better, too much teaching requires improvement. As a result of the weaknesses in teaching, some students, particularly the more able and those with special educational needs, do not make the progress they should.
- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not plan well enough to meet the individual needs of the full range of abilities. As a result, lessons do not fully challenge the more able and they do not always support those who need additional help, including students with special educational needs.
- In too many lessons, questioning by the teacher does not encourage the students to develop their thinking skills, which slows their progress. Likewise, students are given insufficient time to

work independently and develop their own ideas and reasoned arguments. For example, in a science lesson, students' ability to plan an investigation was not sufficiently developed because the teacher did not provide guided questioning to help them think more critically and in depth.

- Marking does not always provide incisive comments on how students can make better progress. There is a lack of written dialogue between the students and teachers about improvements students can make, their response and the impact of the changes.
- There is a core of good and better teaching which promotes good relationships and allows students to make a strong contribution to their own learning and progress. For example, in a Year 7 lower-ability set including some students who were disabled or had special educational needs, all students made rapid and sustained progress due to the carefully structured learning activities individually tailored to support literacy development and challenge students to think for themselves.
- Year 8 students, in an English lesson, discussed a poem. Some students were given shorter extracts to interpret, while more-able students were asked to interpret and look for hidden meaning in the whole poem. Students made outstanding progress because the work set for them was not only interesting but also appropriate for their ability.
- Teachers in physical education have drawn on the good practice in teaching English to support students with their writing in coursework. As a consequence, examination results in physical education have improved significantly this year.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### require improvement

- While the behaviour of many students is a credit to the school, students told inspectors that there are a number of students whose behaviour is not good and causes disruption to lessons, breaks and lunchtimes. This is confirmed by the school's behaviour records and shows that over the past year, there have been too many incidences of poor behaviour within the school.
- When teaching fails to interest and students have insufficient opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning, their concentration lapses; as a result, they switch off from what is being taught in the lesson.
- Procedures for dealing with low-level disruption in the classroom are too vague, resulting in some teachers managing behaviour well while others do not. Policies are in place for the management of behaviour and the prevention of bullying but they need to be revised to ensure that they are having the desired impact and are being applied consistently throughout the school.
- Permanent exclusions remain above the national average, while fixed-term exclusions are below average and are likely to be lower this year than last. This is in part due to greater use of the school's internal exclusion unit known as 'reflect and resolve'. This room is a purposeful, well-organised and calm environment where students can reflect upon their behaviour. Unfortunately, some students are referred to 'reflect and resolve' on repeated occasions. The highest instances of referrals are for boys.
- A small number of students, in similar proportions to the school's own survey, expressed the view to inspectors that they felt less safe at some times around the school site, particularly in areas that are not routinely patrolled by staff.
- However, most of the students spoken to by inspectors say that they feel safe in school and almost all parents who gave their views through Parent View agree. Some students felt that recent steps taken to increase security around the school building were reassuring.
- Students have an awareness of the different forms of bullying, partly through the posters prominently displayed around the school and also through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and coaching sessions (the school's registration time facilitated by a form tutor). Leaders and managers are planning to review the current curriculum for PSHE and Citizenship to ensure it has a more positive impact on behaviour.
- Many students seen or spoken to by inspectors were very well behaved. They show great respect for others and are very keen to do well at school. Some choose to take on leadership

responsibilities and become prefects, helping to supervise students at lunchtimes.

- Overall attendance has improved since the last inspection and is well above the national average. The number of students who are regularly absent has also reduced to well below the national average. However, students who are eligible for the pupil premium do not attend as well as their peers.

## **The leadership and management**

## **require improvement**

- The new headteacher has brought a clear direction and set of priorities for the school. He is well supported by a restructured senior leadership team and a significantly changed governing body.
- A survey of staff during the inspection and one of parents, using Parent View, show that these groups are overwhelmingly in support of the headteacher, a view echoed by many students. Many students expressed the view that in this academic year, there have been many positive changes to school life.
- School improvement planning shows that leaders and managers have a largely accurate view of the changes needed for the school to be good. Much work has already begun to raise teachers' expectations and improve the school but it is too early to see the impact.
- The curriculum is not used well enough to support the achievement of students or to improve behaviour within the school.
- Not all subject leaders have embraced the need to make their curriculum exciting, interesting and relevant to all groups of students. However, there are some areas of the school where good practice can be seen. Where this happens, it has a markedly positive impact on achievement and behaviour.
- For example, older students are given the opportunity to gain experience in preparation for working life through subjects such as catering and hospitality. Year 10 students recently provided a meal for local business people who support the school by offering work experience placements. Some students also benefit from alternative provision offering real-life experiences, such as in the hair and beauty industry.
- Some students typically have very considerate attitudes towards others, especially those less fortunate than themselves. This can be seen by their charitable work and funds raised for Comic Relief. Highly creative artwork and visits to the Old Bailey, along with music clubs, very active media, drama and music departments and sporting successes give some indication of the wealth of cultural experiences enjoyed by students. There is also a strong promotion of moral and spiritual education as seen in religious studies lessons. However, opportunities are missed to raise students' social and cultural awareness through a well-planned and interesting PSHE education and citizenship programme combined with a whole-school approach to social and cultural understanding.
- Leaders and managers responsible for students' behaviour do not make sufficiently good use of the wealth of information available to ensure behaviour is at least good. As a result, inequalities in achievement and exclusions remain between different groups of students.
- Historically, the governing body has not acted quickly enough to ensure senior leaders bring about the improvements required in achievement and the quality of teaching. This year, the governing body has been strengthened by a number of newly appointed governors, including a new Chair of the Governing Body. The governing body is seeking training to ensure that its members have the required skills to hold school leaders effectively to account for students' achievement.
- Local authority support for the school and governors is beginning to have an impact. Joint observations of teaching by the local authority advisor and senior leaders, have helped the school gain a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching. Governors have been given training in the use of data and they have used this to become more actively involved in the performance management procedures.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has recently made significant changes to its structure and working practices and is very clear about the future direction of the school. Governors are involved with teachers' salary increases through their new pay committee. They use performance management effectively to ensure that teachers only progress through the pay scales where it is merited. The resources committee ensures the school remains financially viable and recently took appropriate action to avoid a budget overspend. The governing body is aware of the weaknesses within the school, for example in science. Governors have also identified the need to use data more effectively to hold senior leaders and the school to account. They are now making an effective contribution to strengthening the school's capacity for improvement.

## 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> | 119716     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Lancashire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 412846     |

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>                     | Community                 |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16                     |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                     |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 1276                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body        |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Larrie Whittaker          |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Stephen Cox               |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 29 September 2009         |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01200 422563              |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01200 442506              |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | enquiries@ribblesdale.org |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

