

Bowland High

Riversmead, Grindleton, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 4QS

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' behaviour is exemplary both in lessons and around the school. They have excellent relationships with each other and make an outstanding contribution to improving the school and the community they live in. Students state they feel very safe and enjoy school.
- Most students make at least good progress and outstanding progress in mathematics and science.
- By the end of Year 11 students reach standards that are considerably higher than average overall, especially in mathematics and science. This represents good achievement from their broadly average levels of attainment when they start at the school.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Teachers expect students to work hard. They give students good opportunities to learn effectively and support and guide them well. Consequently, students are well-prepared for their next stage of education or employment.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have high ambitions for each of the students in the school. The relatively new leadership team has developed a strong sense of purpose amongst all staff. In a short amount of time new systems and procedures have already had a clear impact on the quality of teaching and student achievement.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of subjects and after-school activities. These enrich students' experiences and have a positive impact on improving their lives and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all students make consistently rapid progress, especially those who are less-able. Marking does not always tell students how to improve their work.
- Progress in English, especially in Key Stage 3, is not as strong as in mathematics and science.
- Subject and key stage leaders do not always check the quality of teaching and learning rigorously enough.
- The revised performance management systems are not yet fully embedded and effective across the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 parts of lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons. Inspectors also listened to students read and scrutinised work in their books.
- Meetings were held with three different groups of students from all ages and from a range of different backgrounds. Inspectors held informal discussions with other students.
- Inspectors also held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors, senior leaders and had a telephone conversation with a consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, the tracking and assessment of students' attainment and progress, records on attendance, behaviour and safety and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. They looked at the impact of the school's use of the pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 80 parents in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors scrutinised 30 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Andrew Henderson | Additional Inspector |
| Sonya Williamson | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Bowland High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.) At this school, almost all the students eligible for the pupil premium are those known to be entitled to free school meals and this proportion is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The large majority of students are White British.
- Since September 2012 a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and three assistant head teachers have been appointed.
- There are currently 18 students attending alternative provision at Craven College.
- Current students have already moved up to their next year groups so at the time of the inspection, there were no Year 7 classes.
- Bowland High School converted to become an academy school in August 2011. When its predecessor school, also known as Bowland High School, was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2009, it was judged to be outstanding.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that work is always matched to the needs of each student, especially those who are less-able so that all students make the best possible progress
 - making sure that teachers' marking is consistent across the school so that students know their targets and how to achieve them as part of the 'next step' to improve their work.
- Further increase students' progress in English, especially at Key Stage 3, to match that made in mathematics and science by making sure that:
 - students have more opportunities to write at length in a wide range of subjects
 - students have choices from a wider range of books to create a love and joy of studying different literature.
- Further strengthen leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the role of subject and key stage leaders to enable them to monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously in order to raise students' achievement further
 - fully embedding the revised performance management systems to link teachers' pay progression more closely to the quality of their teaching and students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good. Most groups of students make at least good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. In mathematics and science the proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress are high. Achievement is not outstanding because progress in English, especially in Key Stage 3 is not as brisk as in mathematics and science and students who are less-able do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Although English result dipped in 2012, leaders took effective action and there is now an improving picture. Current school information and inspection evidence indicate that students are now making better progress, especially in Year 11.
- School data show that most students are on track to achieve five or more grade A* to C GCSE qualifications, including English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 11, standards are set to be considerably higher than average. As a result, students are well-prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The achievement of different groups of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals is good overall. Students eligible for the pupil premium funding do much better than similar students in other schools across the country. This is because the school carefully checks on their progress and then provides effective support, such as one-to-one reading support, lunch time, after school and holiday classes. Consequently, the gap in attainment between these students and others has narrowed in both English and mathematics. Students in Year 7 entitled for 'catch-up funding' make similar progress to that of their classmates.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good and some outstanding progress because of the good guidance and support they receive from well-trained staff.
- There is a strong focus on developing students' skills in speaking and reading across the school. This happens in lessons, for example in music, through support sessions and through after-school activities to promote debating and speaking skills. However, students do not have enough opportunities to write at length in a wide range of subjects and the range of reading texts available to create students' passion and enjoyment of literature is not extensive. Nevertheless, students gain confidence and broaden their skills which contribute positively to their achievement across the curriculum.
- A small number of students are entered early for GCSE examinations, principally in mathematics. This does not affect their attainment and they achieve well. They typically move on to do other courses successfully such as 'AS' and 'A' level qualifications.
- A few students attend alternative provision for part of their education. The school has strong links with these providers and students benefit from these opportunities. They learn new skills such as building construction and achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good over time and some teaching is outstanding. As a result, students learn well and make good progress. Teaching is not outstanding because work is not always well enough matched to the needs of each student, especially those who are less-able so that all students make the best possible progress.
- Most teachers mark students' work regularly and there are some excellent examples such as on-line feedback. However, in some year groups and subjects feedback to students about their work is not always consistent and it is not made clear to students the steps they need to take to reach their target and so improve their work.
- In the outstanding lessons teachers show strong subject knowledge and this helps students to learn extremely well. This is often the case in the teaching, in science, modern foreign

languages, physical education and performing arts. In a Year 10 science lesson, for instance, the teacher teased out the importance of understanding reactions of alkali metals. As a result, students were able to give accurate explanation of chemical processes and made rapid progress.

- In some lessons, students have the opportunity to use resources and prompts and this promotes their learning well. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, students used computer software to produce their own animations gaining new knowledge to develop their skills to promote their economic well-being.
- Homework makes a positive contribution to students' widening experience and extends their knowledge as well as promoting independent learning skills through research.
- Support staff play a positive role in helping to improve students' learning, both in and out of the lessons. This ensures that disabled students, those who have special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make at least good progress.
- Equality of opportunity is clearly demonstrated by the way the school cares well for all its students and offers them the same degree of challenge and demand, and ensures that there is no discrimination.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school and their understanding of safety issues is exemplary. This is because the school nurtures them well from the beginning of their 'learning journey' in the school.
- Staff have very high expectations of what they want students to achieve. Students' attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive, they are very focussed on their work and are keen to do well. Behaviour in lessons is very good and there is a very calm atmosphere during breaks and at lunch time. Students are very patient, as shown by their excellent behaviour when queuing for dinner.
- Students have a strong sense of respect for each other and the adults around them. They say 'staff know each student by their name' and they are very proud of their school.
- Students, staff and parents all agree that students are very safe at the school. Students feel confident, happy and are keen to succeed. They are very well-prepared for the career path they wish to choose, for example through the 'Enterprise Day' where they design and promote mobile applications.
- Students are very aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and safe use of the Internet. School records show that all types of bullying are very rare. Cases of racial abuse are also rare. Attendance is high and there have been no permanent exclusions recently. Students enjoy coming to the school and they are proud and dependable. Students say 'you can be who you are in this school'. This is reflected well in one of the school's aims 'ensure that Bowland is a happy and welcoming place'.
- The school succeeds in encouraging students to behave extremely well. The key reason is that students have a huge range of activities for them to organise themselves in arts, sports, school and community improvement programmes. There is a range of very effective support packages which help students who might be at risk of being excluded to get back on track or keen to choose a different career path, such as alternative provision with strong management and good links, such as those with the Craven College.
- Students take on a wide range of responsibilities in the school, such as heads of house, prefects, school councillors and being on the recruitment and selection panel for the appointment of senior leadership for the school. They take the initiative in helping to develop school policies such as the use of mobile devices and provision, with special educational needs and disabilities. As a result, they make an outstanding contribution in the school and the wider community.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher and the senior leadership share high expectations for the school and are driving improvement effectively with the strong support of the governing body. Senior leaders have a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and have quickly addressed weaknesses. As a result the quality of teaching and learning is good and some is outstanding.
- Leaders are aware of the need to implement the Teachers' Standards (the government's expectations of teachers' professional practice and conduct) They have established clear policies and procedures for the appraisal of staff and to ensure that progression through the pay scales and teachers' performance are more closely linked. These systems are not yet fully embedded.
- All in the school share the same vision for the future and are committed to improving the school. Most staff work very well together as a team and take advantage of the opportunities available for further training to improve their skills, including the newly qualified teachers. However, the outstanding teaching practice already present in the school is not yet shared widely with all teachers.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is performing. They have correctly identified the priorities for development and quickly taken effective action, such as improving students' achievement in English throughout the school. Consequently students are now making better progress.
- However, even in the areas where achievement is high, subject and key stage leaders do not always make rigorous enough checks on the quality of teaching and learning, especially when monitoring teachers' feedback in students' books to see how well they are related to students' progress and targets. This limits the guidance they could give to other staff to improve their expertise and bring about further improvement in students' performance.
- The curriculum promotes very strongly students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students benefit from an excellent range of exciting activities and visits.
- Links with parents and other external partners are excellent. Through the parents, teachers and friends association they makes a very positive contribution to school development such as sponsoring 'achievement folders' for all students so that they will have a complete record of their 'career' while at the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body now has a stronger impact on school improvement. Governors have a wide range of skills and undertake effective training which has enhanced their understanding, particularly in calling leaders to account. Governors are challenging, supportive and have a good grasp of the school's data on its performance. They are knowledgeable about how their school compares with others. The governing body is aware of performance management procedures and the good quality of teaching, how this is rewarded and how any underperformance is dealt with. It knows how well the pupil premium funding is spent, which includes the employment of support staff who help to support the needs of these students. Governors check the impact of this spending to ensure that the support is making a difference. The school meets the statutory safeguarding requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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 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

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| Unique reference number | 136997 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 413314 |

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

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| Type of school | Academy converter |
| School category | Non-maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 561 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Grange |
| Headteacher | John Tarbox |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not applicable |
| Telephone number | 01200 441374 |
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