

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School

Glen Road, Waterfoot, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 7BJ

Inspection dates 19–20 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding academy

- The academy is led by an exceptional and visionary Principal, senior team and governing body who have engendered a culture that enables pupils to excel as learners and develop as well-rounded citizens.
- The Principal and governors' perceptive appointments have strengthened the leadership team and support further the academy's ethos of excellence.
- Remarkably good teaching supports pupils' very high, and ever-improving, levels of attainment and progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar or better rates of progress than their peers and considerably better progress than pupils nationally.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching is a highly developed process that supports improvement while allowing teachers the freedom to innovate.
- The academy is a very safe and purposeful environment where pupils value the autonomy they have to explore and develop as individuals. This has led to them becoming self-disciplined, reflective and independent-minded young people.
- The academy's culture of high expectations and aspirations is embedded further in the sixth form where outcomes for all groups are consistently outstanding.
- The sixth form enrichment programme is wide-ranging and enhances learners' excellent personal and social development.
- Action to further develop pupil's verbal communication skills, improve careers advice and refine the monitoring of participation in extra-curricular activities would further enhance the academy's outstanding provision.

Full report

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to develop their verbal communication skills.
- Improve the monitoring and analysis of pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities to ensure that it is an entitlement for all.
- Improve further the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils and learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The Principal, supported by a highly capable leadership team, has succeeded in realising their uncompromising vision of a thriving learning community with ambition and aspiration at its heart.
- The academy's evaluation of its own performance is never complacent; it builds on the premise that there is always room for further improvement. Planning for improvement is very robust in its actions to further the academic success, as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
- The leadership of teaching and learning, which was an area of improvement identified at the previous inspection, is now a model of outstanding practice. Teachers have confidence in the academy's systems of coaching, mentoring and support, which enable them to challenge their ways of working and reinvigorate their teaching practice. Many of the teachers who met with inspectors were of the view that the trust put in them by the leadership was highly motivating, as it allowed them the freedom to be creative and innovative in the support of pupils' learning.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at the academy. The great majority of those who completed the online questionnaire felt that the academy was continuing to improve; that it was well led and managed; that the leadership created a climate of trust and that they were provided with good opportunities to develop professionally.
- Middle leaders are a strong and resourceful group. They embrace their increased levels of accountability and as such, are making a highly effectively contribution to the execution of the academy's improvement plan. Systems for tracking pupils' performance are sufficiently sophisticated to ensure that interventions to support learning are appropriate and timely. They also reflect the academy's philosophy of educating the whole child by ensuring that tracking includes information about pupils' attitudes to learning and personal well-being.
- The curriculum offers a broad and balanced range of subjects enhanced by comprehensive citizenship education, a strong programme of assemblies and tutorials, and a thorough personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils speak with confidence about their understanding of the rule of law, democracy and their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the United Kingdom; how in PSHE they learn personal resilience and how to respect and safeguard themselves and others.
- The academy offers a wide range of extra-curricular options that enables pupils from across year groups to engage together in activities. Figures from the academy's pupil survey indicate that approximately three quarters take part, but the monitoring and analysis of pupils' participation is insufficiently robust for the academy to be able to ensure that extra-curricular options are accessible to, and meet the needs of, all who may wish to take part.
- Leaders target the use of the pupil premium fund in a bespoke and proportionate manner. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils are able to access extra-curricular activities and trips and have the resources they need to succeed in their learning. The impact of the funding has been a year-on-year narrowing of the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Disadvantaged pupils also show better rates of progress than their peers within the academy and significantly better rates of progress than their peers nationally.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and are supported in the reading of challenging texts during lessons. The leadership are aware that the current library is insufficiently well supplied with books of a suitable quality and are in the process of restocking.
- The leadership is highly committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. The ethos and culture that permeates every aspect of academy life encourages pupils' self-expression and challenges any form of prejudice or discrimination. The academy's equalities, behaviour and child protection policies take full account of the need to celebrate diversity and to prevent and tackle all aspects of intolerance or discriminatory behaviour.
- Pupils are well safeguarded. Training for staff in child protection issues, including how to recognise and prevent radicalisation and extremism, is updated regularly. Staff work closely with external agencies to support pupils who are at risk. Pupils value the opportunity to talk to the on-site school nurse and counsellors and all of the pupils who met with inspectors felt confident that they had a trusted teacher they could turn to if they had any concerns.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the leadership of the academy. The great majority believe their child to be safe, happy and well taught. The great majority who responded to Parent View would recommend the academy to another parent.

■ The governance of the academy

- Governors are highly experienced and well-qualified to undertake their various roles and responsibilities.
 - Governors have an in-depth understanding of the strengths and needs of the academy and challenge the leadership from a position of knowledge and authority.
 - The governing body is fully engaged with performance management processes that support improvements in teaching, learning and overall outcomes.
 - Governors have a good oversight of the academy's finances and have used funds insightfully to ensure high-quality appointments to key roles.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching and learning at the academy is exemplified by the very high expectations of teachers and the enthusiasm and high personal aspirations of the pupils. The climate for learning is industrious and productive, with no learning time wasted.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely good. Pupils trust in their teachers' exemplary subject knowledge and take responsibility for their own learning by asking questions as well as responding to the teacher's questioning.
- Teachers use questioning particularly well to assess pupils' understanding and deepen their learning by contesting and challenging their responses. Although many pupils can, and do, articulate themselves well in class, too often opportunities are lost for teachers to further develop the verbal communication skills of pupils who are less confident at speaking up.
- Good and outstanding teaching at the academy has resulted in outstanding levels of attainment and progress for all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers use a range of interesting and creative activities to engage pupils' interest and stretch them as learners. Pupils thrive on the opportunities they are given to discuss what they are learning and explore and challenge their own misconceptions. Work in pupils' books demonstrates their very active engagement with their learning and progress and their efforts to improve further.
- Teachers skilfully encourage and draw on pupils' wider knowledge across the curriculum to support their learning. A good example of this was a Year 8 lesson on *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, which was greatly enhanced by the pupils' reflections on learning about the impact of the introduction of the Poor Laws and Victorian parochial institutions.
- Approaches to assessment are well considered and understood by teachers, pupils and their parents and carers. Feedback on pupils' work is regular and appropriate to the task. Pupils engage very well with marking and value their teachers' helpful comments. Pupils who responded to the online questionnaire were strongly of the view that teachers gave them work that challenged them and made sure that everyone understood what was being taught.
- Pupils welcome the new approach to homework that is now better spread out across the week and is designed to be more meaningful and supportive of the learning in the lesson.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Attendance is higher than the national average and exclusions are very low, with no pupil having been permanently excluded for the past five years.
- Pupils who met with inspectors were of the opinion that their teachers trusted and respected them and that allowed them the freedom to discover who they are. 'I don't think I would be the boy I am if I were at a different school' and 'Here we can really develop as individuals' were typical of the comments made.
- The academy takes safeguarding in the curriculum very seriously. Through the PSHE education programme pupils learn how to protect themselves from abusive relationships, inappropriate sexual behaviours and exploitation. They are well informed about substance use and abuse and have a good

awareness of the mental health issues that can affect young people. All know who they can go to for further help and advice within and outside the academy.

- In assemblies, tutorials and computing lessons, pupils have learned how to keep themselves safe online and when using social media. They understand the importance of security settings and the consequences of sexting and cyber bullying.
- The online questionnaires revealed that the great majority of pupils felt safe in school and considered bullying to be very rare and effectively dealt with by the academy. The pupils who met with inspectors stated their belief that racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic language or behaviours would not be tolerated by the staff nor by the great majority of pupils.
- Pupils in all year groups are well supported in their next steps by a strong careers education programme that includes visiting speakers, one-to-one interviews and work experience for all in Year 10. However, some pupils would welcome more information about careers in the arts and more on alternative routes into further and higher education, such as apprenticeships.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- What is most noteworthy about the behaviour of pupils is that they are self-disciplined; little or no supervision is required to ensure that they act in a calm and mature fashion. Pupils' encounters with staff and visitors showed them to be unfailingly polite and helpful. Although corridors are narrow and there are many pressure points around the building, pupils' behaviour is impeccable at breaktimes and the overcrowded dining rooms are left clean and litter-free at the end of the session.
- Information from the online surveys show that this view is supported by pupils, parents and carers, who were overwhelmingly of the opinion that the academy is a safe and happy environment where pupils behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Information about the attainment and progress of pupils in 2015 indicates an improving trend since the previous inspection.
- Attainment is outstanding in all subjects, across all years, for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is continuing to narrow.
- The progress that pupils make from their starting points is also high and has improved in recent years to significantly above expectations.
- The proportion of pupils making more than expected levels of progress in English and mathematics is significantly higher than the national average. No groups of pupils underachieve.
- Information that the academy holds on current pupils shows a further improvement in their performance since 2015.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 3 attain as well as their peers and make better levels of progress.
- Pupils at the academy have developed into smart, reflective, independent-minded thinkers who take pride in their work and responsibility for their learning and progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education, with the great majority moving on to appropriate institutions of further education.

16 to 19 study programmes

are outstanding

- The sixth form provision is very popular with local communities from the Rossendale Valley and surrounding area. Approximately nine out of ten pupils in the main school choose to enter the academy sixth form, where they are joined by a substantial number of pupils from surrounding schools. The sixth form is non-selective.
- Leadership of the sixth form is strong, developmental and highly reflective. The academy's culture of high expectations and aspirations is embedded further in the 16 to 19 programmes of study.
- Outcomes for advanced courses are excellent. Learners make at least good, and many make outstanding, progress at GCE A level. Disadvantaged learners achieve as well, and often better than their peers nationally.

- Attendance and retention figures are high and well above national averages.
- The great majority of learners progress to higher education and many are successful in their application to the most prestigious universities. However, the academy acknowledges the need to develop further learners' understanding of other progression routes such as apprenticeships.
- It is an expectation that all learners take advantage of the wide and varied work experience and enrichment opportunities. This includes acting as strong role models to pupils in the main school as mentors, prefects and subject ambassadors. The learners in the sixth form are serious-minded, thoughtful and confident young people who make a very positive contribution to the academy as a whole.
- Teaching in the sixth form is at least good and often outstanding. Teachers are very well prepared and demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. Activities match the needs of learners well. Feedback is regular and informative, pointing learners to the next steps in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers promote a learning culture that is studious, insightful and philosophical. Knowledge is embedded, and deeper, challenging thinking is encouraged. The trusting relationship between teachers and learners enables confidence in this style of learning.
- The tracking and monitoring of learners' progress is thorough and well-focused. Intervention systems are effective; where teachers spot underachievement they act quickly to tackle it.
- The personal development and welfare of learners is enhanced through access to an extensive range of support services and the tutorial programme that includes activities designed to enable learners to further their understanding of British society and their role as citizens within it.

School details

Unique reference number	119809
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10011077

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,227
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David King
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Alan Porteous
Telephone number	01706 234500
Website	www.brgs.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@brgs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 January 2012

Information about this academy

- Bacup and Rawtenstall is a larger than average, selective, co-educational grammar school that converted to academy status in October 2012.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided to support the education of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is considerably lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- None of the pupils at the academy are educated off-site at institutions offering alternative provision.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the work of the academy across a wide range of subjects and year groups. Some observations of teaching and learning were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with pupils both formally and informally and took account of the views of the 120 pupils who completed the online questionnaire.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body and with staff, including newly qualified and experienced teachers, senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 263 responses to the online Parent View survey and the 73 online questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation including the academy's self-evaluation and improvement plans; information relating to pupils' attainment and progress; attendance, behaviour and safeguarding records; teacher performance information; and academy policies.

Inspection team

Janet Palmer, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Patrick Geraghty	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dawn Platt	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Yarwood	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Lanovy Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Marcia Harding	Ofsted Inspector
Jen Cave	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, 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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

