

Bowland High

Riversmead, Sawley Road, Grindleton, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 4QS

Inspection dates

13–14 December 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders are committed to and passionate about ensuring the very best possible progress for all pupils.
- Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for pupils as to what they can achieve and how they should behave. All groups of pupils respond actively to these ambitions and make outstanding progress at this school.
- The governing body is well informed, skilled and holds senior leaders firmly to account for all aspects of pupils' education.
- Leadership at all levels is outstanding. Detailed and effective systems for developing teaching and learning and the appraisal of staff are securing consistently high provision and outcomes across subjects.
- The innovative and creative curriculum is very well matched to pupils' needs. The school's well-planned approach to curriculum planning encourages pupils to study a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, well-mannered and respectful young people who are very happy in school.
- The high quality of teaching over time has a very strong impact on the achievements of pupils. Rapid progress is evident in pupils' books, but some work is not always well presented.
- High expectations, strong teaching and effective support all play a role in making sure the vast majority of pupils make sustained progress throughout their time in school.
- Pupils hold their teachers in the highest regard and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and care throughout the school.
- All pupils progress to further education, employment or training as a result of exceptional careers advice and guidance. Staff give wholehearted support to pupils to enable their transition to the next stage of their lives.
- Pupils are taught to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat people fairly. They are actively encouraged to make a positive contribution to society. As a result, they are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Staff training programmes encourage staff to be reflective practitioners, always looking to further improve. Staff recognise the need to refine pupils' reflective skills even further.
- Safeguarding policies and practice are highly effective. Pupils feel safe at school and very well looked after. The school works well with a range of external agencies to ensure that all pupils are well supported.
- Staff, parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive in their support of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching even further by:
 - ensuring that pupils further develop their skills in reflecting on their own learning so as to secure still further improvements
 - improving the presentation of the work of some pupils so that it meets the high standards expected by teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body are aspirational for all pupils. They have a clear vision based on highly effective systems to ensure that outstanding progress is secured by pupils.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for future success through an inspiring curriculum, additional support sessions and through the enriching extra-curricular opportunities which are on offer.
- Leaders and governors have developed an atmosphere of trust and respect. All staff who responded to the online questionnaire feel very proud to be a member of staff at Bowland High and thoroughly enjoy working at the school. Staff feel highly valued and well supported by senior leaders. They believe that leaders have created a calm, orderly culture develops pupils' high aspirations.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their support of the school. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire believe that their child is very happy and makes exceptional progress at this school. One parent described Bowland High as a 'true jewel in the heart of the Ribble Valley'.
- Outstanding leadership is at the heart of the school's success. Leadership at all levels is very strong. The headteacher is very well supported by a highly talented and committed senior leadership team. Subject leaders and pastoral leaders also contribute significantly to the excellent progress made by pupils.
- The procedures for managing the performance of teachers, including that of the headteacher, are robust. Teachers have measurable targets which link to the school's improvement plan and to national teachers' standards. Teachers are appropriately and fairly rewarded for their work.
- The innovative curriculum offer is broad and balanced. Students are very well guided when making choices for key stage 4. A range of appropriate courses is available for pupils with different starting points. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and the views of parents, pupils and staff are taken into account when making changes.
- Leadership of teaching and learning is outstanding. Incisive and accurate judgements about the quality of teaching, based on a wide variety of evidence, mean that leaders know the strengths of teaching. Where teaching is not of the highest standard, leaders challenge and support staff to improve.
- Teachers' professional development is a significant strength of the school. Leaders have put a well-structured programme in place to enable school staff to learn from each other's effective practice. Quality assurance and coaching for excellence underpin the drive to share good practice across the school. Evidence of this can be seen in the close work between teachers in the science and mathematics departments. This close work has enabled pupils to improve, for example, their skills in drawing graphs and rearranging equations.
- Almost all staff, including newly qualified teachers, speak very positively about the support offered to them by the school. Staff are consulted and drive many initiatives

through their working parties, such as improving the effectiveness of feedback they provide to pupils.

- Leaders have ensured that standards reached by disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are in line with or better than those reached by other students nationally with similar starting points. Support is personalised and put in place to address any barriers these pupils may face. Effective programmes include attendance support through home visits, counselling, support from a learning mentor, guidance that is specific to particular subjects, and enrichment activities. Each pupil is known and individual, tailored support is arranged according to need. The pupil premium funding is used expertly to ensure that these pupils make excellent progress.
- Pupils who enter the school with below age-related expectations in English and mathematics catch up, due to well-targeted spending of the funds available to support them. Leaders evaluate the impact of their spending of this additional funding against their key priorities and use the funding so that these pupils can catch up with their peers by the end of Year 7.
- Leadership of careers, advice and guidance is strong. All pupils in school receive impartial advice and guidance. A wide range of activities and sessions are available to pupils, such as support for applying for apprenticeships, workshops to develop their skills in writing curriculum vitae, work experience for Year 10 pupils, mock interviews and 'meet the expert' sessions and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) courses. The school runs its own 'Brag about Your Future' careers event at a local arts and exhibition centre. A careers newsletter keeps pupils up to date with the activities and support offered. As a result of these activities, for the past three years, all pupils have left school to continue their education or take up training or employment.
- Leadership of safeguarding and attendance is very strong. The culture of safeguarding permeates the whole school; the pupils themselves are vigilant. Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained and that all pupils are very well educated to keep themselves safe.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is evident throughout the school. Pupils learn about British values, including tolerance, in assemblies and form time as well as other subjects such as physical education, science and through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils understand issues including diversity, prejudice, immigration and changing communities. As a result of outstanding provision and practice, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- The school benefits from very strong governance.
- Governors have a clear sense of direction for the school. Governors are forward-thinking and provide support and challenge to leaders which is highly effective. Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school's many strengths and they regularly challenge leaders to do even better.
- Governors are provided with detailed and high-quality information about all aspects of school life. This, coupled with governors' skills and knowledge, enables governors to ask astute and probing questions to secure further improvements.

- Governors are resolute in providing a safe environment where pupils flourish.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and all staff understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Training on safeguarding is thorough and covers all relevant areas. All policies and procedures are up to date and reflect the latest guidance.
- Pupils feel safe in school and parents agree. Pupils know who to go to if they do have any concerns. Effective partnerships are made with external agencies if the school requires specialist interventions or advice. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils benefit from high-quality teaching over time, which enables them to make outstanding progress.
- Teachers constantly reflect on their practice, and this helps them to ensure that the quality of teaching is of the highest standard. Pupils also have opportunities to analyse their own work. Teachers recognise that the next stage in improving learning is for pupils to develop their reflective skills so that they are even better equipped for higher education or the world of work.
- Good and outstanding teaching results in high levels of achievement for all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils contribute well to learning. Pupils are keen to do well and told inspectors, 'We work together to succeed.' Pupils respond positively when encouraged to think deeply in lessons. Teachers' passion for their subjects and detailed knowledge promote a love of learning among pupils, particularly in science.
- There are high expectations of pupils in almost all lessons and pupils respond by producing work which shows rapid progress over time. Some pupils' work, however, is not consistently well presented.
- All staff know their pupils exceptionally well and are willing to provide additional support beyond lessons. Pupils regularly 'drop in' for help or support with their learning. There is a positive culture of support across the school and across year groups.
- Teachers use questioning and feedback well to accelerate pupils' progress. Regular assessments with informative feedback help pupils to know how to improve and move on. Many pupils value this incisive feedback and improvements can be seen in their work as a result of this. Assessment and feedback are particularly strong in English and mathematics. The school's marking and assessment policy is used effectively by most staff.
- Support from teaching assistants is effective, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support staff make a considerable contribution to

the provision for weaker readers, who develop greater fluency and understanding in response.

- Extended learning is set regularly for pupils and this is effective in reinforcing learning outside of school.
- Parents receive timely and detailed information regarding pupils' behaviour and progress. Termly 'trackers' provide parents with information about various aspects of attitudes to learning. Annually, parents receive full written reports which contain detailed information on progress in each subject related to target grades. Areas for improvement are also given to help each pupil to improve. Parents value this information.
- There is a very strong culture of reading across the school. The library is always busy and pupils go in there to read, work or engage in educational word games and activities. The library is well stocked with up-to-date texts which are regularly reviewed and refreshed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Personal development and pupils' safety are central to the school's ethos of 'challenge, care and tradition'. Leaders and governors are adamant that safeguarding pupils is their core purpose and they are tenacious in following up any concerns.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Staff and parents agree with this perception. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils feel that on the few occasions bullying does occur, they know who to go to and are confident that matters will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the PSHE programme, form time and assemblies. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and how to protect themselves from others. Older pupils are well informed about mental health and substance abuse. They have a very good awareness of how to behave appropriately on social media.
- Leaders promote tolerance and diversity exceptionally well and as a result, pupils accept differences readily.
- A strong programme of careers education starts in Year 7 and continues throughout the year groups. A wide range of activities and visiting speakers are arranged and pupils receive the advice they need to make appropriate choices for their next steps.
- Pupils welcome the opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They are very keen to take on responsibility such as prefects, form captains, society officials and buddies.
- Leaders rarely use alternative provision for pupils and currently there are no pupils currently attending receiving education away from the school site.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Behaviour, almost without exception, is exemplary.

- Pupils are extremely proud of their school and hold teachers in high regard. Teachers and pupils show mutual respect for each other. Members of the school community typically feel valued and supported. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm, respectful and positive.
- The behaviour of pupils around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are well mannered, polite and were keen to engage with inspectors and talk about their school with pride.
- In lessons, pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. In many lessons observed during the inspection, pupils were enthused and engaged in their learning. Pupils learn exceedingly well in supportive classroom environments where all pupils are encouraged to try their best.
- Low-level disruption is very uncommon. The incidence of exclusion from school is very low and such behaviour is not repeated by individuals, due to the effective strategies put in place by pastoral staff to address any unacceptable behaviour.
- Attendance is above average and persistent absence is low and decreasing. Leaders take effective and swift action to reduce the number of disadvantaged pupils who do not attend school regularly. Leaders know individual pupils well and put effective personalised support in place for pupils and their families.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' outcomes are outstanding. All groups of pupils make very strong progress from their starting points. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 in line with the national average and leave school in Year 11 having made progress equivalent to two-thirds of a GCSE grade better than expected in a wide range of subjects. Their progress is well above average and represents that of the top 5% of schools in the country.
- Attainment in English and mathematics is high and is similarly strong across a wide range of other subjects. This is the result of very strong teaching, high expectations and an absolute commitment from staff and pupils to succeed together.
- Pupils who take vocational courses achieve well and enjoy their studies. This results in many pupils achieving qualifications that prepare them very well for the future. Leaders constantly review the vocational curriculum and the teaching of it to ensure that the qualifications offered by the school are suited to the needs of pupils.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is rapid, particularly in mathematics. Current records show clearly that disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally and often better in a wide range of subjects. For the small minority of pupils who are not on track to achieve this well-targeted use of the pupil premium funding is being well used to diminish any differences in progress.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieve very well. Any pupils who do fall behind are quickly identified by teachers and pastoral leaders; they ensure that the appropriate support is rapidly put in place.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that they know pupils well and that their needs are met. They are particularly effective in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in achieving strong outcomes.

- Pupils' books and assessment information show that outcomes continue to improve for all groups and across the majority of subjects. Provisional information provided by leaders shows that current pupils are predicted to achieve outstanding outcomes again in 2017. The progress of current groups indicates that pupils are being very well prepared for their examinations.
- Leaders are working hard to ensure that all pupils develop strong reading skills and to instil a love of reading. All pupils receive well-structured and in-depth support to enable them to be confident and fluent readers. The library is situated at the centre of the school and is a welcoming and supportive environment which pupils readily access during and after the school day. Inspectors listened to pupils read and found that most pupils read fluently and with expression. Support in reading lessons enables pupils to develop skills which will help them when revising for examinations and tests.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are a strength of the school. Pupils are being exceedingly well prepared to progress to their next stage of education or training. As a result, all pupils move on to appropriate further education, training or apprenticeships.

School details

Unique reference number	136997
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10024156

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	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	559
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Robinson
Headteacher	Mr John Tarbox
Telephone number	01200 441374
Website	www.bowlandhigh.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@bowlandhigh.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Bowland High is a smaller than average-sized school with a comprehensive intake.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than average. Some pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the proportion who have a statement and/or an education, health and care plan.

- Since the last inspection, the academy has developed a multi-academy trust (AtC – Achievement through Collaboration).
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects in different age groups. Some observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons, form times and other activities.
- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with pupils, both formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, newly and recently qualified teachers, groups of pupils and the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation that covered: information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan; minutes of meetings; and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaks, lunchtimes, in registration periods, assemblies, in lessons and at the end of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at a sample of their books.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 121 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. Inspectors also took into account the 42 responses to a questionnaire for staff and the 31 responses to a questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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