

# The Elton High School

Walshaw Road, Bury, Lancashire BL8 1RN

## Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has created a culture of high expectations. He has inspired all staff to bring about considerable improvements to key aspects of the school's performance since the previous inspection.
- School leaders and governors have taken effective action to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. As a result, pupils make good progress in these subjects.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has improved and many are making the same gains in their learning as other pupils nationally.
- Middle leaders have taken responsibility for the attainment and progress of pupils in their areas and have contributed to the improved outcomes.
- The leadership of teaching and learning, at all levels, has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is now good and teachers are keen to refine their skills. Where further improvement is needed, leaders' actions are swift and effective.
- Most teachers plan their lessons well to ensure that pupils make good progress. However, in some lessons, teachers do not use questioning effectively to check and probe pupils' understanding.
- Occasionally, activities are not matched to pupils' needs. When this happens, pupils are not clear about what is expected of them.
- Most pupils respond to their teachers' suggestions to improve their work, in line with the school's marking policy. However, this policy is not followed consistently in all subjects.
- School leaders collect information about pupils' attainment and progress, but they do not analyse this sharply enough to judge the achievement of different groups of pupils across year groups.
- Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils say that they are proud to be part of the school. They say that they are making better progress and appreciate the work of teachers and leaders.
- Pupils' attendance overall is higher than the national average; however, it is low for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Safeguarding arrangements are of a high standard. Pupils of all backgrounds feel included and the care the school provides for vulnerable pupils is very strong.
- Governors are skilled and effective in holding senior leaders to account and have supported the improvements in the school's performance.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - using the school’s information to analyse the outcomes of different groups of pupils across all years and subjects more effectively
  - further improving the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - checking that teachers follow the guidance provided in the school’s marking policy.
- Secure the improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - using questions more effectively to check and extend pupils’ understanding
  - providing opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking across all subjects
  - ensuring that activities are matched to pupils’ needs and that pupils are clear about what they are expected to do.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has united all staff to bring about considerable improvements since the previous inspection. He has achieved this while the school transferred to a new building. Together with leaders and governors, he has provided a relentless focus on improving standards and behaviour. As a result, pupils' behaviour and outcomes in key subjects, including English, mathematics and science, have improved.
- Leaders' evaluation of the impact of their work is accurate. The actions they have taken as a consequence of identifying strengths and areas for development have resulted in improvements across a range of subjects since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders have motivated middle leaders and teachers, so that all are focused on improving outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders regularly monitor how well pupils are achieving in their areas and have taken action to ensure that standards in most subjects are rising. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their subject areas and use this information well to make appropriate changes to provision. For example, subject leaders have made changes to the curriculum to reflect the increased demands of the new GCSE courses.
- Leaders and managers use information from routine checks to plan extra help for pupils who are making slower progress. Teachers spoke enthusiastically about the strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and how they are supported and encouraged to develop their practice. The good practice identified is shared effectively, across subjects, through peer observations and in regular team meetings.
- The quality of teaching is closely and effectively monitored. This is carried out through regular checks on pupils' work, observations of lessons and information about the outcomes for pupils. This work provides middle leaders with a clear view of strengths and areas for improvement, for example in ensuring that all teachers follow the school's marking policy in their subjects.
- Leaders have improved the quality of training for staff, including teaching assistants. All staff, including those who are recently appointed and newly qualified, agree that they are very well supported. This, together with leaders' and governors' use of performance management, mean that there is more effective practice across the school.
- Leaders, including governors, have a clear view of the impact of the pupil premium funding. This funding is spent effectively and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved.
- Leaders have made good use of the additional funding to support the Year 7 pupils who need extra help to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, these pupils are making significant gains in their learning, particularly in literacy. Similarly, the effective use of additional funding is supporting those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress from their starting points.
- While leaders track the progress of individual pupils across subjects and year groups, they do not use the school's information about pupils' outcomes sharply enough to

analyse how well different groups of pupils across subjects and years are performing.

- Pupils' attendance is monitored closely, including those who attend education in alternative provision for part of the week. These checks mean that overall attendance is above the national average. However, while the school has supported a number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to improve their attendance, overall attendance for this group remains low.
- The curriculum is well planned, broad and balanced. The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including in sports and the arts. A number of pupils told inspectors that they enjoy taking part in musical activities. Pupils across all years take on a number of leadership roles, for example, as form captains, and as reading and peer mentors. This provides them with opportunities to make a contribution to the life of the school.
- British values are promoted strongly through activities in the curriculum, tutor periods and assemblies. The school's values of 'quality, care and integrity' are widely understood by the school community. Pupils are accepting of each other and tolerant of differences. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school has strong links with the local authority and other schools locally. This aspect of its work has supported improvement across a number of subjects, including mathematics, since the previous inspection.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors bring a wide range of experience to the school and have a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement. Where actions are needed to improve outcomes in some subjects, they monitor these closely. Individual governors have increasingly close links with departments and this work is supporting their knowledge of the school's actions.
- Governors have taken account of the review of governance which was recommended at the previous inspection. They understand their role in providing effective support and challenge to school leaders by asking searching questions. This has contributed to the improvement in key areas since the previous inspection.
- Governors took account of the review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding which was recommended at the previous inspection. They now monitor the spending of extra funding closely and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved.
- Governors have not evaluated the impact of funds specifically allocated to ensure that Year 7 pupils catch up by improving their literacy and numeracy skills. While these pupils are making gains in their learning, governors do not have precise information that supports this.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. The support and care provided by staff for vulnerable pupils are very strong. Many parents said that they appreciate this aspect of the school's work. However, the systems for checking whether alternative providers are registered have not been carried out. Despite this, leaders have taken care to ensure that the courses provided by alternative providers are appropriate for pupils attending these courses. Staff make regular checks on their progress and attendance, and as a result, the pupils educated off site are safe and achieving well.
- Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date. Staff are trained to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and they report their concerns. Working relationships with other agencies are strong, and close contact is maintained with parents and carers to ensure that pupils are safe.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- School leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection, so that it is now good. They have achieved this through a programme of high-quality training, robust challenge of weak practice and appropriate support. Teaching has improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and pupils are now achieving well. Effective monitoring of teaching is resolving any variability between subjects.
- Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and as a result, pupils are keen to rise to the challenge and make gains in their learning. This was evident, for example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils' misconceptions were discussed so that their learning became secure. Those pupils who grasped the key concepts quickly were provided with more complex and demanding work, which gave them the opportunity to apply their knowledge in new contexts.
- Teachers in many subjects make skilful use of questions to consolidate and accelerate pupils' learning. For example, in geography and design and technology, pupils use technical vocabulary confidently and accurately. Similarly, in science, pupils engage fully in investigations and are able to explain their understanding with confidence. In physical education (PE), pupils talk about the link between theory and practice in circuit training. The most able pupils are encouraged to think deeply, and as a result, they make good progress.
- In some subjects teachers do not routinely provide opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and this means that pupils do not make the gains in their learning of which they are capable. Teachers' questioning of pupils to explore their understanding of concepts is not consistently strong across subjects.
- Sometimes, teachers do not make it clear to pupils what they are expected to do and activities are less well matched to pupils' needs and their progress slows as a result. Occasionally, teachers focus on delivering the planned content rather than ensuring that all of the pupils have understood before moving on to the next task. When this happens, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. As a result, pupils lose focus and do not demonstrate the positive attitudes seen in most classes across the school.

- The school's support for vulnerable and low-attaining pupils is good. A particular strength is literacy support. This means that these pupils continue to have improved literacy skills and make strong gains in their learning. The additional support in numeracy is not as focused and plans are in place to improve this aspect of provision.
- The majority of teachers provide helpful feedback in line with the school's policy, and most pupils follow up the advice to improve their learning. In some cases, pupils do not respond to their teachers' feedback and this holds back their learning.
- In most subjects, teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. As a consequence, pupils deepen their understanding and are well prepared for future lessons. However, this is not yet the case in all subjects and years, which means that pupils miss opportunities to consolidate their learning.
- The support provided by most teaching assistants makes a good contribution to the learning of pupils who need additional support. They are well informed about the individual needs of the pupils they support and the topics pupils are learning. Their support and challenge mean that these pupils make good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and secure because the school has established safeguarding as a high priority. As a result of assemblies, tutorials and lessons, pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet and mobile technology. Pupils are confident that there is an adult at school whom they can talk to if something is worrying them. They are very positive about their school experience and life as part of the school community.
- Bullying is rare. Teachers and other adults promote clear messages about the impact of bullying and prejudiced behaviour on pupils' well-being. The school has strong support in place for pupils who have emotional difficulties, and a number of parents expressed their appreciation of the care and swift response of the school when they raised concerns.
- Parents' views of the school's care for their children are very positive. One comment included, 'The school has been so supportive and this has helped my child to keep on track academically and emotionally.' Many other parents echoed this view. Most parents were full of praise for the improvements since the previous inspection and the way in which the school supports their children's personal and social development as well as their academic achievement.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. For example, pupils in a religious education lesson expressed respect for people of different faiths, and there were many examples of pupils from different backgrounds and ages socialising together.

- The art department runs an imaginative 'Art to Heart' project, which effectively bridges the gap between the generations through the 'art-making' process. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are given the chance to volunteer to assist older people and people who have disabilities in care homes and community groups to engage in a range of art and craft activities. Pupils from local primary schools also take part in this initiative. This contributes to the effective collaboration with local schools and makes a significant contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
- Pupils benefit from impartial careers guidance to make choices about the next stage of their education, employment and training. They have opportunities to visit universities, and make links with employers, including through mock interviews, many of them with the support of governors. Most pupils go on to attend courses at Bury College.
- Leaders make close checks on the pupils who are educated in alternative provision for part of the week. These systems ensure that the attendance and behaviour of these pupils are good.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have secured considerable improvements in behaviour both in lessons and around the school since the previous inspection. The large majority of parents who expressed an opinion on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school ensures that pupils behave well. Inspection evidence supports these views. The school is an orderly and calm place to learn.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the new building and move sensibly around the school even when wet weather means that they are not able to go outside at breaktime.
- Pupils have very good relationships with staff and across year groups. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning in most lessons, making a strong contribution to their progress.
- Pupils are proud of their school and most are confident in their learning. This is demonstrated not only in their behaviour, but also in how most pupils present their work in books.
- Overall attendance is above the national average and this reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and their commitment to achieving well. However, the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. While there have been successes for some pupils, this is not the case for all and this remains a priority for the school.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils join the school with starting points that are broadly in line with those of other pupils nationally. In some year groups, their prior attainment is above the national average. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils did not make the progress expected of them in many subjects, including English, mathematics and science. This is not the case now. The actions of the headteacher and leaders have successfully addressed underperformance and pupils in these subjects are now achieving well.

- The proportion of pupils who achieved five GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics in 2016 was above the national average. Pupils also achieved well in business studies, religious education and modern foreign languages.
- The attainment and progress of pupils currently in the school are good. This is because leaders have taken action to secure improvements through closer monitoring and ensuring that curriculum planning reflects the increased demands of GCSE exams.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported and consequently their progress across most years and subjects is now good. Disadvantaged pupils who had low and high prior attainment made better progress than other pupils nationally in their GCSEs in 2016. This improvement is reflected for many pupils currently in the school in English, mathematics and science.
- The most able make good progress and achieve the highest grades in a number of subjects. Leaders use information about their prior attainment carefully to make sure that they make the progress expected of them in lessons and over time.
- Pupils in key stage 3, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress across the curriculum. The consistently good quality of teaching enables pupils to acquire knowledge and skills quickly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported, and as a result, are making good progress.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision for part of the week achieve well because they are following courses that meet their needs, and leaders make careful checks on their progress.
- The proportion of pupils moving on to further education, employment or training is in line with the national average. This reflects the good-quality and appropriate careers advice and guidance that prepare pupils to successfully move on to the next stage.



## School details

Unique reference number	105354
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10025464

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,013
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Rosindale
Headteacher	Jonathan Wilton
Telephone number	0161 763 1434
Website	<a href="http://www.eltonhigh.bury.sch.uk">www.eltonhigh.bury.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:eltonhigh@bury.gov.uk">eltonhigh@bury.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2015

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2016.
- The school moved to a new site in September 2016.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportions of minority ethnic pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

- A very small number of pupils attend off-site, work-related courses for part of the week at a single provider, the Achieve Programme.
- The school has received support from the local authority and a local high school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across both key stages. A number of observations were completed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors observed breaks, lunchtimes, tutorials and an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, other members of staff and groups of pupils in each year group.
- Meetings were also held with local authority advisers and senior leaders at a local pupil referral unit.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and action plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding documents, records of pupils' behaviour, and information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents from the 170 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- The views of staff were gained from the 66 responses to the online staff questionnaire and from discussions with individual teachers.

## Inspection team

Mary Myatt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Hyman	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Kitchin	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector

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