

Burnley High School

Padiham Road, Byron Street, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 6NX

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school's ethos of 'Grace, love and fellowship' permeates throughout every aspect of school life. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.
- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders are committed and passionate about raising the aspirations of all pupils to ensure the very best possible life chances for them.
- Leaders, including the trust and governors, are highly ambitious for pupils. They are unstinting in their drive to achieve excellence for all. As a result, pupils are making good progress at this school.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and incredibly proud of their school. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel valued and are keen to take on positions of responsibility.
- A culture of high expectations, challenge and good teaching ensures that pupils make strong progress overall.
- The innovative curriculum engages the interest of pupils and encourages independence, resilience and a clear development of skills, knowledge and understanding across all subject areas.
- Extra-curricular opportunities broaden the range of experiences for pupils. They help pupils to learn new skills, try out new activities and consolidate their learning.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils are taught to respect others from different backgrounds. They are actively encouraged, through the 'graduation' process, to make a positive contribution to society.
- Pupils, staff and parents say that pupils are safe in school. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe, both online and personally. Safeguarding policies and procedures are highly effective and leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils stay safe and receive any additional support that they need.
- Attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving but is below the national average. Rates for pupils who are persistently absent are too high.
- Some middle leaders are not fully effective in driving improvements to teaching and learning in ensuring consistent application of the school's feedback policy.
- Variations in the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils exist in some subject areas.
- Governors are not holding leaders rigorously enough to account for the expenditure of funding to support pupils in catching up in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - continuing to strengthen the role of middle leaders across the school
 - governors rigorously holding leaders to account for the progress of pupils in receipt of funding to catch up in literacy and numeracy
 - improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that the proportion of pupils who persistently miss school decreases rapidly.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - pupils receive appropriate support to access challenging learning activities
 - variations in the progress of disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able continue to be reduced.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher works with strength, integrity and moral purpose to ensure that all pupils under her care receive high-quality education which will transform pupils' lives. She works closely with governors, trustees and her talented leadership team to lead a committed team of staff who are proud to work at Burnley High School.
- Leaders at all levels have high expectations of both staff and pupils. There is an open and honest culture in the school. All stakeholders work successfully together to create an environment of trust, mutual respect and challenge.
- Leaders are effective in securing good progress for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, across many subjects and year groups. Where differences do exist, the pupil premium funding is used well to support pupils, both academically and emotionally, so that they can reach their potential. The careful and well-planned use of pupil premium funding ensures that any interventions are swiftly put into place to support learning.
- The use of Year 7 catch-up funding, demonstrated by achievement data provided by the school, is appropriate. Reading ages show significant improvements for pupils and pupils discuss with enthusiasm books they have read and how their confidence is growing.
- The spending of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully targeted to meet the different needs of individual pupils. The impact of the funding is well tracked and monitored by leaders. There are, however, still variations in progress for these pupils and leaders are working to ensure that these differences continue to diminish.
- The use of performance management is robust and enables leaders to tackle any underperformance quickly. Leaders have introduced thorough monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and triangulate observations with scrutiny of work, assessment data and pupil voice. As a result, the quality of teaching and resulting outcomes continues to improve across the school.
- The creative and innovative curriculum harnesses the interest and enthusiasm of pupils while providing a broad and balanced approach. Subjects are taught either discretely or through project-based 'expeditions', which enables pupils to learn in a wide variety of ways. As a result, pupils are developing into independent, resilient and articulate learners who are capable of producing high-quality projects, of which they are extremely proud.
- The wide range of clubs offered by the school twice weekly further extends the curriculum. Through these extensive activities, including origami, media club, scriptwriting, football, Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and art club, pupils develop their interests and broaden their experiences. Leaders are passionate about providing these clubs. They believe it helps further cement positive relationships between staff and pupils and also helps pupils to grow, both academically and emotionally.
- Many middle leaders are new to their roles and have not had time for their actions and

strategies to have had impact. Senior leaders work closely with middle leaders and there is trust and respect between staff at all levels. Training to develop the role of middle leaders is ongoing to ensure the drive for consistency and high standards throughout every faculty in the school.

- Leaders use external sources to moderate assessments so that leaders, governors and staff can have confidence in assessment data. Significant work has gone into ensuring that assessments are robust and rigorous and give a true picture of pupils' progress. As the curriculum continues to evolve and new staff are appointed, systems continue to refine and improve.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures. They have a strong commitment to community service and are keen to raise funds for charities and community groups. Pupils have a good knowledge of democracy, rule of law and individual rights. They are articulate when discussing differences and are adamant that pupils are treated as a family here, regardless of differences.
- Parents' views of the school are generally positive and the vast majority would recommend the school to another parent. Indeed, the ever-increasing number of applications for places reflects the popularity and success of the school in the local community. As one parent said, 'BHS is more than a school, it is a family.'

Governance of the school

- Both the local governing body and the board of trustees hold leaders to account. There are clear lines of accountability between the trust and the governing body. Both groups support the headteacher well in her drive to develop the school.
- The vision of the school to provide an excellent educational experience for all through an atmosphere of 'grace, love and fellowship' underpins every action of leaders at all levels. All governors and trustees are fully committed to serving the local community and are proud to be an instrumental part of this successful school.
- Governors are clear about the aims of the school and have been proactive in ensuring that the governing body contains a range of skills and expertise. Recent training has ensured that governors ask challenging questions of leaders and hold them firmly to account in most areas.
- Governors meet with leaders regularly and have a good in-depth knowledge of the school. Governors monitor the expenditure of the pupil premium funding well and are knowledgeable about the impact of this strategy. Evaluation and knowledge of the Year 7 catch-up funding is less comprehensive, hence governors are not aware of the impact of this funding.
- The board of trustees provide clear guidance for the headteacher through robust performance management and provide ongoing support as the school grows from small year groups to being oversubscribed for next academic year.
- Both the local governing body and the board of trustees have absolute confidence in the headteacher and her leadership team to lead the school with energy and passion as the school continues to go from strength to strength.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leadership of this area is very strong. All staff are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained and vigilant.
- All safeguarding procedures and policies are robust and reflect latest guidance. Leaders have developed effective links with external agencies. They work closely with them to ensure that pupils are kept safe and receive any support needed to ensure their continued safety and well-being. Leaders are tenacious in following up referrals so that pupils receive timely interventions and support.
- Pupils, staff and parents say that pupils feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. When bullying does occur, it is dealt with effectively and there is a zero-tolerance approach to bullying of any kind in the school.
- Pupils are highly involved in the safeguarding culture of the school. Pupils have recently been appointed as 'well-being ambassadors' who will be trained to provide peer mentoring and support for other pupils. External agencies regularly speak to pupils in assemblies or in lessons about issues such as sexting, online safety and child sexual exploitation. Almost all pupils say they have someone to talk to in school if they have any concerns or worries.
- Leaders work closely with families so that they are provided with sufficient information to help keep their children safe online and in the wider community.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers skilfully facilitate pupils' learning to help them make good and better progress through a variety of styles and approaches.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and these are evident in many lessons. Teachers adeptly weave opportunities for independence and tenacity through learning activities. As a result, pupils are developing into resilient and confident learners who are keen to find answers for themselves, using 'three before me' and pupil champions to support their learning. This is a strength seen in many lessons across the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan challenging activities which capture the interests of pupils. Questioning is carefully planned and targeted to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their learning. At times, the level of challenge is pitched too high and some pupils struggle to access concepts and make less progress as a result.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. On the few occasions when pupils are less engaged, occasionally in group work, for example, teachers manage this well and refocus pupils quickly.
- Additional adults know the needs of individual pupils well and provide them with good support in lessons and in intervention sessions.
- The school's marking and feedback policy is applied inconsistently. As a result, most

pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve, but some pupils do not use these comments to help move their learning forward. When feedback is used in line with school policy, such as in religious education and creative humanities, pupils' learning moves on.

- Scrutiny of books shows that the majority of work is well presented. Leaders are working hard to ensure that literacy skills are well developed across the curriculum. Clear guidance is often given to pupils to improve this aspect of their work, but is not consistently provided by some teachers. As a result, a number of pupils are unaware of misspellings or grammatical errors in their writing.
- Homework is used effectively to support learning and is pitched appropriately to meet the needs of pupils. Homework clubs are held weekly regularly after school where pupils can access the resources or support needed to help them get the most benefit. Parents' views of homework are positive and say that it supports their child's learning well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The values of 'love, grace and fellowship' inform all aspects of school life and create an environment where pupils and staff feel valued and included. Parents comment, 'We honestly feel like part of a family that encourages individuality and community spirit.'
- The welfare and personal development of pupils runs through everything the school does. All staff, including governors, are clear about their responsibilities in this area.
- Opportunities are plentiful for pupils to engage in widening and developing their skills and personal qualities. Many older pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the range of clubs held twice weekly, in which all students participate, enable pupils to experience a wide variety of activities and projects to enhance their life skills and broaden their horizons.
- Pupils relish the opportunities to undertake leadership responsibilities. There are opportunities for pupils to be involved in the school council or as well-being ambassadors. Pupils 'graduate' to the next year group by undertaking community service and fundraising and charitable activities throughout the year. This, coupled with good attendance and behaviour, are recognised in a celebration assembly at the end of the school year. Pupils are proud of their contributions to the community and thoroughly enjoy being part of this programme.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about justice, democracy and individual respect and tolerance through the curriculum and 'expeditions', weekly personal development lessons, assemblies and visits from a wide range of external speakers. Pupils understand about the dangers of sexting, radicalisation and extremism and issues regarding equal opportunities for all regardless of differences because they are well taught and fully commit to the inclusive values of the school.
- Pupils understand about all types of bullying. They told inspectors that bullying is rare,

but if it did occur it would be quickly dealt with quickly. Pupils show a sensitivity to others' needs and try to live the ethos of the school daily by 'looking out for each other'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders and teachers have high expectations for pupil behaviour and the vast majority of pupils live up to these high expectations. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and based on genuine respect and care. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and mix well with each other. Pupils typically commented, 'We are just like a massive family.'
- Positive attitudes to learning are demonstrated by the vast majority of pupils. Pupils are prepared for their lessons and generally arrive on time. They take pride in their environment. No evidence of litter or graffiti was seen around the building or grounds.
- The behaviour policy is consistently applied in lessons and staff celebrate and reward positive attitudes to learning. Pupils say that behaviour both in lessons and in social times is good. Staff and the majority of parents are supportive of this view.
- Records of pupils' behaviour show that behaviour has improved over time. There have been some pupils internally isolated and some fixed-term exclusions. These incidences are reducing termly as a result of effective strategies used by the pastoral team.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress both emotionally and academically. Leaders communicate regularly with the provider to ensure that pupils are attending, are kept safe and are making expected progress.
- Pupils' attendance overall is in line with the national average but the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is higher than the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend as often as others.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make strong progress across a range of subjects and year groups from starting points that overall are in line with or slightly below national averages. Since the oldest pupils are currently in Year 9, there have been no external examination results. However, assessment information provided by the school, along with the work seen in pupils' books, provides clear evidence of the good progress made over time.
- Progress and achievement are generally high in English, geography and history. Progress in religious education and modern foreign languages is less strong due to historical staffing issues which have been successfully addressed. Progress of pupils now is more rapid and in line with expectations.
- Information provided by the school suggests that variations in progress remain, particularly for some groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make less progress in some subjects than their peers. Generally, the most able students respond well to the high levels of challenge in lessons and make good progress across the curriculum, but less so in

mathematics and physical education. Leaders are aware of these gaps and work with middle leaders, teachers and pupils to ensure that these differences are rapidly diminishing.

- The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are making progress similar to their peers. Targeted support enables pupils to build their knowledge and language skills swiftly and this helps them to achieve well across the curriculum.
- The culture and ethos of high expectations extends to academic target-setting. Leaders set high targets to encourage pupils to reach aspirational goals and outcomes. The combination of aspirational targets, high expectations and good teaching meets the needs of pupils. However, there are occasions when lower-ability pupils require more support and guidance to ensure they can access challenging concepts.
- The school has worked successfully to develop its own curriculum and assessment systems. Pupils enjoy the innovative approach to project-based learning, particularly 'wow' introductory lessons. High-quality projects are produced at the end of each unit.
- Pupils are regularly tested so that progress is checked and interventions or 'boosts' are swiftly put into place if any pupil is underachieving. Parents receive progress reports half-termly, annual reports and an annual parents' consultation evening. Parents are happy with the information they receive about their child's progress.
- In lessons, pupils generally learn well. They have very positive attitudes to learning and respond well to lessons which challenge and interest them. There are occasions, however, where progress slows for some pupils when work is too challenging for them.
- Pupils' literacy skills develop well across the curriculum, but as yet, pupils do not regularly have planned opportunities to develop and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects. Leaders are focusing on this priority shortly.
- Pupils who need to catch up make good gains in developing reading, writing and mathematics skills as a result of good-quality teaching and effective support and interventions.
- Reading is actively promoted by leaders. Staff and pupils regularly read together and there is time built in each day for pupils to read classic literature with their teachers, for example 'Jane Eyre'. Teachers use this time to read and to question pupils' understanding of texts and develop their vocabulary. Pupils are quickly developing a love of reading and have a great opportunity to widen and improve their reading skills during their time here.
- Leaders provide good-quality careers advice and guidance for pupils. Pupils are effectively supported when making GCSE option choices. Leaders are working successfully to raise the aspirations of pupils and their families through a variety of strategies, including information evenings, skill of the month, careers fairs and weekly career talks from local and national employers.
- Work experience placements are planned for when pupils move into Year 10 and staffing has been increased to further develop careers provision. Leaders, the governing body and the trust are determined to improve career prospects and life chances for pupils by widening pupils' experiences and knowledge of the worlds of education and work.

School details

Unique reference number	141028
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10022791

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mr James Royle
Headteacher	Ms Victoria Povey
Telephone number	01282 681950
Website	http://burnleyhighschool.co.uk/
Email address	victoria.povey@burnley-cs.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

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.
- Burnley High School is a smaller-than-average secondary academy free school, which opened in September 2014. The school moved on to its present site in April 2017.
- Currently, there are approximately 221 pupils on roll in Years 7 to 9. In time, the school will cater for pupils between 11 and 18 years of age.
- This is the school's first inspection.
- The school is part of the Chapel Street Trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average. A number of pupils are supported through 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 above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement and/or education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school currently uses the alternate provider Coal Clough to educate a small number of pupils.
- There are no public examination results to compare with the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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 and other activities.
- Inspectors listened to groups 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 qualified teachers and representatives from the governing body and Chapel Street trust.
- 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 of the governing body and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaks, lunchtimes, in lessons and at the start 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 71 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 22 responses to a questionnaire for staff and the 102 responses to a questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Helen O'Neill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annette Patterson

Ofsted Inspector

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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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