

Woodhey High School

Bolton Road West, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire BL0 9QZ

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors are too generous in their evaluation of how well the school is doing. The improvements that have been made have not had sufficient impact on the progress pupils make.
- Over the last two years, disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- The improvements in teaching have not had enough impact on pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is variable and, at times, is lacking in challenge.
- Leaders and teachers do not use assessment data with sufficient focus to plan teaching for the full range of pupils' ability, or to identify strengths and areas where improvement is still needed.
- The school's policy on feedback to pupils about their work is not followed consistently. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to improve their work.
- Although now improving, the level of attendance of disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, has been lower than the attendance of most pupils nationally for the last three years.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils have regularly achieved above-average standards in eight GCSE subjects.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults.
- Pupils regularly apply for, and take, positions of responsibility in school.
- Pastoral staff, teachers and leaders support pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including pupils in the resourced provision, make good progress.
- Pupils read frequently and improve their reading skills steadily.
- Governors have developed the structure of the governing body so they can monitor improvements more closely. They regularly challenge school leaders.
- Leaders and teachers work closely with other schools in the locality to share good practice in teaching and in middle leadership.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, make faster progress by:
 - raising the level of challenge in teaching so that pupils have more opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding
 - implementing the school's policy on marking and feedback consistently across the school so that feedback helps pupils to improve their work.
- Further improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve leadership at all levels by:
 - analysing internal information carefully, firstly to identify clearly the areas that need to improve, and secondly to measure the impact of actions taken to make the improvements
 - supporting evaluative statements in the school's self-evaluation process with evidence that clearly shows the impact of actions taken to improve
 - using pupils' assessment information to plan lessons that challenge pupils of different abilities to achieve higher standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the school's evaluation of its performance is over generous. In addition, the school's improvement plans do not analyse the impact of actions taken to improve with enough rigour or detail.
- The qualitative statements made in the school's self-evaluation are not clearly supported by evidence. Consequently, staff and governors do not have a realistic picture of the school's strengths and which areas need to improve. The school's improvement plan includes details of what actions will be taken to improve, but does not describe how effective actions need to be. Hence, leaders are limited in how accurately they can evaluate the success of their actions.
- Leaders monitor pupils' progress and are aware that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is slow. Additional teaching, support and revision sessions are provided for disadvantaged pupils and other pupils who are falling behind. The impact of these interventions was not evaluated sharply enough; interventions did not increase the rate of progress or improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 in 2016 or in 2017.
- Senior and middle leaders have recently tracked and analysed carefully the progress over time of disadvantaged pupils. They are now clear about which disadvantaged pupils are achieving well and which are not. As a result of this more forensic analysis, additional strategies to develop stronger relationships with parents, and to tailor support more closely, are now in place and developing well. The progress of disadvantaged pupils, especially in key stage 3, is beginning to improve.
- Leaders have taken action to improve the quality of teaching in the school, including working with teachers in their partner schools to share good practice. However, the sharing of best practice in teaching has not had sufficient impact in some subjects. Pupils are not challenged sufficiently in some subjects and do not extend their knowledge and understanding as extensively as they could.
- Leaders do not consistently evaluate the quality and depth of learning as key factors in improving teaching, over time. More often, teaching is evaluated by observing the proportion of pupils who work successfully at the tasks given, rather than whether pupils are questioned and helped to think in depth about what they are learning.
- The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. Many pupils achieve good standards in eight GCSE subjects, and particularly in English. However, attainment in some subject areas such as media, design technology and computer science is lower. The school is planning to adjust the subjects offered so the curriculum meets a wider range of pupils' interests and talents. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities is well used by pupils.
- Though pupils in both key stages practise examination and assessment questions, they are not always clear about what is expected at each grade or level in the subject.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, are taking more responsibility to improve teaching and achievement in their subject. Pastoral leaders are beginning to analyse

attendance more closely to identify group attendance more accurately so they can see where improvement needs to happen. The analysis of trends in exclusions for groups is underdeveloped so it is hard to see patterns over time.

- The catch-up funding for pupils in Year 7 is used effectively to improve pupils' reading skills and to support pupils having difficulties in achieving well in Year 7. Although the extensive reading support for pupils with weaker reading skills is effective, there are less robust plans in place to strengthen all pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across subjects. A working party is in place to introduce strategies for all teachers to strengthen reading, writing, spelling and numeracy skills across the school, but these are in the early stages of implementation.
- Leadership of the resource base is good. Pupils' learning is well supported; each pupil spends the majority of their time in mainstream lessons and follows life skills courses in the base itself. Pupils have individual timetables according to their needs and feel secure and supported. They are helped to be independent by learning ways to organise themselves, prepare for lessons and complete homework.
- The school provides good careers advice and guidance. Pupils make their subject choices in Year 8 and start their courses in Year 10. The school arranges careers interviews in Year 8 and again in Year 10. Consequently, pupils have good guidance in choosing future pathways and careers. Pupils spoke positively about the additional information given in assemblies and the opportunity for work experience in Year 8.
- The school regularly arranges surveys of parents' and pupils' views about a range of issues. The majority of parents agree that the school is well led and managed and would recommend it to others.
- Displays around school, assemblies and special days make sure pupils have the chance to explore attitudes and to develop understanding of different lifestyles and beliefs. Pupils spoken to described a day organised to help them understand more about diversity. Most pupils believe it is safe to be different. The school offers a range of trips, visits and competitions such as the Young Engineer competition. Pupils have extensive opportunities to follow leadership courses and to experience a range of art and drama. As a result, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.
- The school checks regularly on the progress of pupils attending courses at Bury College. The small number of pupils attending the college are following courses suited to their interests and talents. They are making sufficient progress to be on track to achieve well on the linked accreditation and in English and mathematics.

Governance of the school

- Governors challenge school leaders and the monitoring and evaluation committee regularly checks on standards and progress, including the exclusion of boys and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Governors are aware that these two groups are not improving their achievement. Nevertheless, they feel the school is taking appropriate action, and are of the view that the school is using pupil premium funding effectively.
- Governors access the more detailed pupil progress and attainment information through the published minutes of the monitoring and evaluation committee meetings. This information is passed to all governors through the minutes but opportunities to discuss

the main messages are missed at full governing body meetings. This limits the scope for all governors to challenge school leaders about progress and standards.

- Though governors question leaders about improvement plans and about self-evaluation, they share the overgenerous view of the quality of teaching and provision. They are not fully aware of the weaknesses in self-evaluation, or in the school's evaluation of the impact of the actions taken to improve. They have supported the headteacher in his recent, more forensic, analysis of the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and in the planned steps to focus more closely on those individuals who are not attending well.
- Governors have supported the headteacher through some challenging financial decisions.
- Governors make suitable arrangements for the headteacher's performance management, including objectives to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in the targets. They also review the arrangements to improve the performance of teachers and have challenged the headteacher's recommendations on occasions.
- Governors have had appropriate training for safeguarding and are aware that the school meets requirements in this regard.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is a safe place for pupils and parents agree that their children are safe in school. School leaders have taken steps to adjust the use of outdoor spaces to ensure safety following an increase in the number of pupils joining the school in Year 7.
- All necessary policies are in place. Reporting systems to recognise and follow up safeguarding concerns are used effectively by staff. Staff are appropriately trained and all are aware of the latest areas of concern for pupil and staff safety. Risks are suitably identified and managed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low, and pupils do not attain high enough standards where this is the case. Pupils' first answers to teachers' questions are accepted too readily at times, and pupils' deeper thinking and knowledge is not probed further. Occasionally challenging vocabulary is not explored sufficiently to enable pupils to remember it and to try to use it in their own writing.
- Teachers do not follow the school's marking and feedback policy consistently. While some teachers write clear comments and make helpful suggestions about how work can be improved, some pupils do not respond and so do not benefit from the advice. Some books are not marked regularly. A small number of parents expressed concern about the lack of marking of their child's books.
- Sometimes teaching is planned for most pupils in the class with all completing the same tasks: these are not sufficiently challenging for more-able pupils. Some pupils lose interest and give the work superficial attention while others find it too difficult.

More challenging tasks are not set early enough in lessons for some most-able pupils so they are not consistently inspired or interested enough to work at higher levels. Similarly, the least-able pupils can become dispirited by working at a task they find too difficult. As a result, pupils' progress is limited. For some pupils this can lead to inattention and occasionally to some minor disruption.

- Inspectors observed well-planned teaching in a number of subjects, including English, science and modern foreign languages, where pupils were asked carefully planned questions to probe their thinking. Such good practice has led to pupils explaining what they had learned to others. This developed pupils' knowledge and understanding of more complex issues. Good questioning was seen in history where pupils were asked to name changes in the use of medicine and surgical procedures at a particular point in the middle ages. After they had done this, they were asked whether it was positive change, why, and what might have been negative about the changes. Pupils remembered the changes more clearly as a result and could write a more complex paragraph on the topic.
- Pupils in key stage 3 know their targets for the end of the school year. However, they are not clear about what stage they have reached currently, and whether they are making enough progress to reach their target. Pupils in key stage 4 are clear about the level they are expected to reach by the end of Year 11, especially in English, mathematics and science. Pupils described how the marks from their regular assessments give them an idea of how close they are to their target.
- In some lessons pupils are offered a range of tasks of escalating difficulty. The teacher guides choices so all pupils are clear about the teacher's high expectations of what they can achieve. This motivates pupils to reach higher standards.
- Pupils read widely and often. Close attention is given to measuring their progress so pupils improve their reading skills rapidly. Teaching literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is developing; some teachers correct misspellings but not all. Some pupils, even more-able pupils, misspell commonly used words and only some pupils receive support for improving spelling.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including pupils in the resourced provision, make good progress. This is as a result of regular and well planned interventions and the good expertise of staff, including staff in the school's resource base.
- The progress of pupils who are educated away from the school site is regularly checked to ascertain that they are making 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 are confident, polite and self-assured. Pupils generally listen well in lessons. They complete their homework and understand that the efforts they put into their work now will reap benefits for them in the future. There are a minority who rely on the teacher to keep them on task and take less responsibility for their learning. Pupils talked positively about the wide range of extra-curricular activities they take part in.

Pupils recently admitted to the school from other schools in the local authority sometimes have varying attitudes to learning. Nevertheless, several have improved their attendance and attitudes to learning since arriving at the school.

- Pupils said they feel safe in school, though a small number of older pupils described feeling a little vulnerable outside school. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online and using social networking sites, and know how mobile phones can be misused. Pupils understand the principles of democracy and take part in voting for representation in the Youth Parliament and to elect pupil ambassadors. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are fully aware of the risks of online networks in relation to violence and extremism.
- Younger pupils in particular are very confident about going to a member of staff if they are worried or concerned about something. A significant number of parents described the positive way in which their child had been supported through a difficult time.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the school in an orderly way and discussed aspects of their learning and their school in a self-assured and sensible manner. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons. However, a small minority sometimes become disengaged and talk rather than complete their work.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has, for the last three years, been well below the levels of attendance of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. As a result of leaders' recent actions, attendance of both these groups is now beginning to rise.
- The rate of fixed-term and permanent exclusions of boys and of disadvantaged pupils has been above national averages for the last three years. School leaders have recorded the number of exclusions since September 2017. However, they have not analysed the exclusion rates to identify trends.
- The behaviour and attendance of pupils being educated away from the school site is better than previously. Both behaviour and attendance are checked regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportion of pupils gaining good qualifications has been consistently higher than national averages for the last three years. However, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are not good.
- The range of intervention and support is wide and pupils in both key stages are supported to make faster progress if they fall behind. However, intervention and support has not been successful in improving the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' progress shows variations between subjects and key stages. For example, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 in 2017 was well below average. However, the school's own assessment information since the beginning of the school year

indicates that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 who made enough progress to reach their end-of-year targets in English and mathematics rose. These disadvantaged pupils have made similar progress to other pupils in the school since September.

- The most able pupils in 2016 made better progress and attained higher standards in English than in mathematics. Although overall most-able pupils made similar progress and attained similar standards in 2017, the progress of this group was better in mathematics than in 2016.
- Leaders collect assessment information once a term and discuss pupils' progress regularly. However, leaders are not comprehensively analysing the performance of different groups to investigate the impact of the actions taken to improve progress. For example, disadvantaged pupils continued to underachieve in 2017. There is a lack of clear and crisp information with which to plan support and strategies to improve standards.
- Provisional information shows that performance in 2017 in English, science, geography and history, art, business studies, French, and performing arts was strong, with an improving picture in mathematics. However, the same information shows that the overall progress made by boys is weak in comparison to girls.
- Progress of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, including those in the resource base, is strong. Outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language are generally good due to the good level of support given by the school.
- The progress of pupils who are educated away from the school site is regularly checked to ascertain that they are making good progress. Pupils will be tackling GCSEs or suitable alternatives in English and mathematics.
- Most pupils move on to courses at college or a sixth form, apprenticeships or employment with training when they leave school. They are well prepared and the majority follow through their chosen pathway.

School details

Unique reference number	105361
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10042462

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	1,105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Luise Fitzwalter
Headteacher	Mr Brian Roadnight
Telephone number	01706 825 215
Website	www.woodhey.bury.sch.uk
Email address	woodhey@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is larger than most secondary schools.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The school has specially resourced provision provided by the local authority for up to 10 pupils with an autistic spectrum condition. There are currently 12 pupils.

- A small number of pupils are educated away from the school site at Bury College of Further Education for some or all of the time.
- The school works collaboratively within a partnership of local schools, the Bury Secondary Learning Collaborative.
- The school meets the current government floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects and visited some classrooms where intervention sessions were taking place. A number of these activities took place jointly with the headteacher and a member of the school's senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with pupils both formally and informally in lessons and around school, and discussed their learning and activities with them.
- Inspectors studied a number of the school's documents, such as the school's evaluation of its work, school plans to develop provision further, safeguarding documents, policies, and information about the school's assessments. The school's records of attendance, exclusions and behaviour were also seen, including information about the progress, behaviour and safety of pupils educated away from the school site.
- Inspectors, together with a school leader, looked at a range of pupils' written work across subjects since the beginning of the school year. Pupils were spoken to more formally about their work and their learning across all year groups. An inspector also held a telephone conversation with the leader for the off-site provision at Bury College of Further Education.
- Several meetings took place with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and with teachers. An inspector met with a school improvement officer from the local authority, the chair of the governing body and the chair of the governors' monitoring and evaluation committee.
- Inspectors also considered the 127 responses, including 91 free text responses, to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors took account of the responses to the staff and pupils' questionnaires completed during the inspection.

Inspection team

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Elizabeth Haddock	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Arrowsmith	Ofsted Inspector

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