

# Walton Le Dale High School

Brindle Road, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire PR5 6RN

## Inspection dates

13–14 June 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of leadership and management is variable. The headteacher provides effective leadership, but leadership roles require strengthening.
- Subject leadership is variable. The quality of teaching across and within subjects lacks consistency.
- Senior leaders do not consistently hold middle leaders to account in the areas for which they have responsibility. The impact of the Year 7 catch-up funding, pupil premium funding and that provided for those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is too variable.
- Some leaders do not routinely monitor, evaluate and refine plans. As a result, the pace of school improvement is inconsistent.
- Governance requires strengthening, despite recent improvements.
- Despite recent improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement, variability remains, including in mathematics, science and in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers do not consistently promote the full range of literacy skills that pupils require.
- Teachers do not consistently provide pupils with work that closely matches their ability. The progress made by the least able and the most able is not routinely good.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attendance and progress is improving but remains below average.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons varies. In some instances, pupils' work lacks care and accuracy.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher and some other leaders have the capacity to improve the standard of education provided by the school. The headteacher has wasted no time in setting high standards and sharpening the focus on pupils' quality of learning. Leaders have improved pupils' progress in English and that of boys overall.
- Leaders have a sharp focus on the curriculum. They provide pupils with courses that match their needs and interests. Careers education and extra-curricular activities are strengths of the school.
- Pupils, parents and carers value the school's inclusivity. Peoples' differences are recognised and valued. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for at school.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that senior leaders consistently hold middle leaders to account in the areas for which they have responsibility
  - insisting that leaders monitor, evaluate and refine improvement plans routinely, so that rates of improvement gather pace
  - eradicating variation in the quality of middle and subject leadership
  - securing consistently good governance, so that school leaders are routinely and effectively held to account
  - strengthening the leadership of the use of Year 7 catch-up funding, the pupil premium, and funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - removing variations in the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics, science and in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
  - insisting that teachers consistently set work which promotes pupils' use of a full range of literacy skills
  - ensuring that the most able pupils are routinely set work which stretches their thinking
  - insisting that pupils with low starting points are routinely supported and challenged, so that they make the progress they should.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - removing instances of poor behaviour in lessons
  - ensuring the regular attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The standard of education provided by school leaders declined after the previous inspection. School leaders did not provide a sharp enough focus on securing good learning for pupils. Consequently, teaching was routinely weak. Leaders did not demonstrate the capacity required to improve the school. The appointment of a new headteacher in September 2017 has resulted in improvements and, despite remaining variability in teaching and pupils' progress, the standard of education the school provides is improving.
- Senior leaders recognise the school's priorities for improvement. The newly appointed headteacher has sensibly refocused the plans of leaders and teachers, so they place far more emphasis on securing consistently effective teaching and pupils' good progress. The positive differences senior leaders have already made, such as improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in English, demonstrate the capacity to further boost the standard of education provided.
- Middle leadership, including subject leadership, is more effective than previously, but variation remains. Partly, this is because some senior leaders do not hold middle leaders to account with sufficient rigour. Improvement is not fully evident, and the momentum secured in some areas, such as English, are not replicated elsewhere. Where middle leadership is weaker, staff do not routinely check on the areas of provision and outcomes for which they are responsible.
- The current headteacher has insisted upon a sharp focus on setting high expectations to ensure pupils' good progress. The training staff receive reflects this. Classroom teachers now have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Staff who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the training they receive. Senior leaders are securing more consistency in the quality of teaching and assessment than was the case previously.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum. Pupils study a wide range of subjects which meet their interests and needs at key stage 3. This includes an 'opening minds' course, in which pupils explore a wide range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. However, because of inconsistency in the quality of teaching, some pupils do not learn at the same depth as others in this subject. Pupils' choices at key stage 4 are designed to prepare them well for the next stage of education and careers. However, some pupils are not currently being prepared as well as they should, because of variability in leadership and teaching.
- School leaders provide a varied range of cultural, creative and sporting activities which take place beyond lessons. Leaders ensure that the significant minority of pupils who do not live within walking distance of the school are provided with transport options, so they can attend after-school clubs. These activities are popular with pupils and are well supported. Pupils accurately view the extra-curricular programme as a strength of the school.
- Leaders provide a strong and effective careers guidance programme. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about the advice they were given and the impact

this has had on raising their aspirations. Almost all pupils move on to education and/or employment when they leave the school.

- Leaders' use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not fully effective. Despite some signs of improvement, the attendance and progress of these pupils do not routinely match that of others nationally. Leaders are not consistently precise and robust in assessing, evaluating and refining the actions they take to improve these pupils' education. Consequently, this aspect of leadership requires further strengthening in order to quicken the pace of improvement.
- School leaders' use of the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is variable. Pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are too weak to consistently secure good outcomes. Leaders' actions to rectify the weaknesses inherent in these plans are appreciated by parents, with whom school leaders typically work effectively. As a result, pupils are generally well supported in their emotional, physical and other needs, because the actions adults take are matched to pupils' specific requirements. However, because not all support plans for pupils, or the quality of teaching for them, are good, those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not consistently make the progress they should.
- Leaders' use of Year 7 catch-up funding lacks precision. As a result, the support pupils receive does not consistently help them to progress as well as they might in literacy and/or numeracy. Some pupils catch up with their peers, others do not.
- Leaders plan to ensure that pupils are emotionally prepared for Year 7. Staff share effectively the information that they gather from visits to primary schools. As a result, the Year 7 pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about the school. Staff also gather information about pupils' academic performance. However, this information is used inconsistently, and the work pupils in Year 7 are set does not routinely match their requirements because of variation in the quality of leadership and teaching.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors failed to take effective action to avoid the dip in pupils' outcomes following the previous inspection. This decline motivated them to reflect upon their effectiveness. As a result of recent appointments to the governing board, and training, governors have improved their capacity to secure a good standard of education at the school. Consequently, aspects of governance have strengthened. However, despite these improvements, governance is not consistently good.
- Governors understand their role in setting and securing the school's vision. They do this effectively. Governors ensure that staff, including school leaders, are clear about the sharper and more rigorous focus on pupils' learning that is expected.
- Governors' expertise in financial management means the school has a secure financial base from which to strengthen the quality of education it provides.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are secure.
- Checks made by inspectors found that staff, including non-teaching staff, are appropriately trained to identify potential risks to pupils. There is an obvious culture of

safeguarding.

- Checks made by inspectors to test the security of the school site found this aspect of safeguarding to be effective.
- School leaders work well with external agencies and parents and carers. They act swiftly when required. Inspectors checked that referrals are followed up and recorded.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. Inspectors checked there are rigorous procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including online. Pupils know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The recently appointed headteacher has placed a strong emphasis on securing consistently effective teaching. He and some other senior leaders insist that teachers set high expectations for pupils and plan activities to accelerate pupils' learning. They have challenged weaker teaching and have secured improvements by the support and training programmes they provide for teachers. The quality of teaching is improving. For example, it is typically good in English, including that for boys.
- However, because of variability in the effectiveness of leadership, teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make the rates of progress they should. Therefore, the quality of teaching requires improvements because inconsistencies remain across and within subjects, including in mathematics and science.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, are not always effective in ensuring that teachers use the information they have about pupils to plan work at the correct level. Middle-ability pupils typically learn well because they are set work which matches their ability. Teachers' planning to support the learning of pupils with low starting points is not consistently effective. These pupils' learning is weakest where they are set work that is either too hard or too easy. Similarly, the most able pupils are not routinely challenged to make good progress and attain the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Overall, pupils have benefited from teachers' training to improve pupils' reading, writing and communication skills. Senior leaders have made sensible plans to focus upon this aspect of pupils' learning. Teachers now support pupils in understanding, thinking about and responding to ideas and knowledge at a higher level. However, because of the variation in the quality of teaching, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with the opportunities to extend their literacy skills in subjects other than English. By contrast, in English lessons, pupils' use of literacy is typically strong because they regularly review and improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar, and extend and apply their knowledge through writing and speaking. However, this is not as evident in other subjects. This means the impact of the school's focus to improve pupils' literacy skills is not yet fully embedded.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning vary. Where teachers apply the standards set by senior leaders, pupils engage in and enjoy their learning. However, on other occasions, teachers' expectations are not high enough. In

these cases, pupils do not routinely work with care or precision and there is low-level disruption.

- Teachers use assessment data more effectively to identify and support groups of pupils who have fallen behind than was the case previously, although variation remains. For example, too many boys currently in Years 9 and 10 have not made the progress they should in English in previous years, because teaching did not match their needs. Teachers are taking effective steps to support these boys in catching up. As a result, these pupils are making better progress than previously because gaps in their learning are being addressed. However, in other areas, the use of assessments to spot and rectify gaps in pupils' learning is less effective.
- The quality of homework tasks varies. At its best, homework tasks extend pupils' learning and accelerates their rates of progress. However, inspectors found this is not consistently the case.
- School leaders provided inspectors with copies of reports they send home to parents. These documents contain clear and useful information about pupils' recent progress that helps parents contribute to their child's learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Senior leaders promote consistently and effectively a culture of care and support. Pupils are actively encouraged to be who they want to be. Difference is recognised and celebrated. Pupils and parents recognise and value the strength of this aspect of the schools' provision. Parents' positive views were demonstrated by the comments in Ofsted's survey, Parent View. The comment that 'the teachers allow each pupil's personality to shine' typified the view of many. As a result, pupils enjoy positive interactions with one another and with adults.
- Inspectors checked the school's records and spoke with pupils about bullying, and how effectively the school deals with any incidents of bullying. Inspectors found bullying is rare, and staff deal with it effectively. Where there have been cases of racist and homophobic bullying, or bullying regarding pupils' differences, these have not been repeated. Inspectors noted a number of examples where pupils have moved to the school because of its reputation as a place where inclusivity is a strength.
- Pupils value the high-quality, independent careers guidance programme they receive. They accurately view it as a strength of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are routinely aspirational and well informed about their next steps in education and opportunities for employment.
- Leaders generally carry out their responsibility for pupils' mental and physical health. They take steps to ensure that these aspects are promoted through pupils' learning and through support services. Pupils are taught how to access or refer others directly for emotional support, including at the on-site counselling service. Pupils learn how to remain safe online and to protect themselves from exploitation. Leaders are reviewing the range and availability of healthy eating options available at breaktime and

lunchtime to match pupils' learning about their diet.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. They regularly learn about fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures. Leaders review and refine the curriculum to strengthen pupils' understanding and respect of differences. Consequently, pupils with whom inspectors spoke recognise and value differences, and respect views different from their own.
- School leaders manage effectively the personal development and welfare of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is typically positive. At breaktime, lunchtime and at the change of lessons, pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. Most pupils arrive punctually at lessons.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is variable. Where teachers' expectations match those set by senior leaders, such as in English lessons, pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning, and take pride in their work. However, there are instances where pupils' conduct is not good. Learning is disrupted, pupils' work is careless, and they do not make the progress they should.
- Pupils' attendance has improved recently, because leaders have focused on instilling a culture of good attendance with pupils and their families. The criteria for authorising holidays in term time have been tightened. Overall, attendance is now average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average. Systems introduced to secure the good attendance of these pupils are beginning to be effective and a greater proportion of these pupils are starting to attend school more regularly.
- School leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the pupils who attend alternative provision.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' examination results in 2017 were variable and, overall, lower than those of others nationally. This was the case especially for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with low starting points, and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Boys made weak progress and typically did not attain the grades that they should, especially in English. Pupils' examination results in mathematics and science were poor. However, girls' results and those of pupils with mid starting points were better than those of others. They made good progress and attained grades at least in line with the national average.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work shows that their progress is improving overall. However, despite improvements, too much variation in progress remains across and within subjects, because of inconsistencies in the quality of leadership and teaching. For example, current pupils, including boys, generally make good progress in English, and are working at the standard expected for their age. However, standards in mathematics and science still require improvement.

- Current disadvantaged pupils' work shows that the differences in progress between these pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. However, this improvement is not consistently evident, resulting in disadvantaged pupils not making consistently good progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make good progress overall. Previously, the support these pupils received lacked precision, including for those who have an EHC plan. Leaders now place greater emphasis on these pupils' progress and, consequently, their learning is more sharply focused and has improved. However, overall, the achievement of these pupils still requires improvement.
- The most able pupils do not make the progress they need to attain the higher standards of which they are capable. Some pupils with low starting points are making stronger progress, but others are not.
- Leaders monitor closely the quality of education the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision. Previously, too many of these pupils did not make the progress they should. Senior leaders have taken effective action to rectify this. Consequently, current pupils benefit from an appropriate curriculum which prepares them for the next stage of their education.
- The proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training is in line with the national average. Pupils aspire to move on to challenging courses and employment destinations because of the strong careers education they receive. However, because of weak examination results recently, some pupils have not moved on to the higher qualifications of which they are capable.

## School details

Unique reference number	119743
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10045174

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	720
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Pickup
Headteacher	Mr J Harris
Telephone number	01772 335726
Website	<a href="http://www.waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk/">www.waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk">head@waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2014

## Information about this school

- The proportion of disadvantaged students is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at Larches High School, Myerscough College, St Thomas's Centre Blackburn, and Shaftesbury High School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, EHC plans, assessment information, the pupil premium funding spending plan, the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 55 staff survey responses, 50 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 36 written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered 119 responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

## Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Ofsted Inspector
Shane Ierston	Ofsted Inspector

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