

Inspection of Unsworth Academy

Parr Lane, Bury, Lancashire BL9 8LP

Inspection dates: 12–13 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Unsworth Academy is a well-run school. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They are determined that pupils will do well, and they make this message clear to pupils, parents, carers and staff. Examination results have improved year-on-year since the school opened. Pupils' work is of a good quality.

The headteacher welcomes pupils at the school gate at the start of each day. Pupils like this. Teachers and other staff take the time to get to know pupils when they join the school. This helps pupils to settle, make new friends and learn well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they feel safe and confident to be themselves. Pupils understand and respect each other's differences. They say that bullying is rare, and that staff sort any issues that might happen.

There is a calm and friendly atmosphere around the school. Pupils behave well and try hard in lessons. They are confident to speak about what they know and what they think.

Leaders are improving the curriculum to help pupils know more and remember more. Leaders' work in some subjects, such as mathematics, is making a positive difference to the work of the school. The curriculum is still developing in other subjects.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher leads by example. She makes sure that everything that the school does has the best interests of pupils in mind. Parents, staff and pupils are very positive about her leadership.

The trust and its chief executive officer do all they can to ensure that pupils are prepared for a bright future. The trust and its chief executive officer listen to the headteacher but keep a close eye on what goes on at the school themselves. They ask straightforward questions when they have any concerns. They help leaders to find solutions and make sure that improvement happens.

Staff say they enjoy working at the school. They work hard but say leaders are considerate of their workload. Teachers appreciate the time that leaders give them for training because it improves their planning and teaching of the curriculum.

The curriculum is under review by leaders and staff. Some subjects, such as English, history, mathematics and physical education, are further on in this process. Pupils know more and remember more in these subjects. They build on their prior learning in a logical way and tackle challenging ideas. This helps pupils achieve well in examinations in these subjects. In other subjects, such as art, languages and

science, some pupils struggle to recall their knowledge. Leaders and staff are developing the curriculum in these subjects further.

Leaders acted to strengthen the depth and ambition of the school's curriculum at key stage 3. In the past, there was too little time to teach pupils what they need to know. The change helps pupils to build up and remember their knowledge at greater depth.

Most teachers are experts in the subjects that they teach. This helps them to implement the curriculum accurately and confidently. Pupils like how they are taught. They say teaching is interesting and lively.

Teachers of all subjects provide opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy. As a result, pupils are not afraid to read challenging texts. They speak and write with confidence and fluency.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well. This is because the SEND coordinator makes sure that staff have the skills and training to teach pupils. Teaching assistants work very well with the pupils whom they support.

Most pupils come to school regularly. A minority of pupils struggle to attend. Leaders have not done enough to understand why this happens.

Leaders plan carefully opportunities for pupils to learn about the community and world in which they live. Pupils also learn about different careers. They get good advice about the choices and opportunities that they will have when they leave the school.

Pupils like leaders' plans to better organise extra-curricular clubs. Leaders do not yet know if these activities meet pupils' full needs and interests, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff training is regular and up to date. This means they know what to look out for if pupils are at risk and what to do if they have any concerns. The safeguarding team refers cases to social care when necessary. Leaders complete all required checks on newly appointed staff.

Pupils are taught the potential dangers when using the internet and social media. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced enough in some subjects. Therefore, the transition statements have been applied to this inspection. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are bringing this change about.
- The overall attendance of pupils is good, but a few disadvantaged pupils do not attend as regularly as others. Leaders have not explored fully the reasons for their non-attendance. As a result, leaders have not dealt with this issue well enough. Leaders must ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend well.
- Leaders are acting to broaden the wider curriculum offered to pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to strengthen their knowledge ready for their future success. However, leaders are unclear about pupils' attendance at the school's clubs and activities and whether they match the needs and interests of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders should ensure that the wider curriculum meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils, to develop their knowledge and their wider learning experiences.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143848
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10119942
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	835
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan Rouse
Principal	Sue Armstrong
Website	https://unsworthacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Unsworth Academy opened on 1 February 2017. It is part of the Shaw Education Trust.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Bury College, Craig Ormerod Associates and Fearn's Equestrian Centre.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the trust and its chief executive officer, and governors.
- We reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked the pupils about how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- We considered the views of the 310 pupils who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire.
- We considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the

responses of 71 staff to Ofsted's questionnaire.

- We considered the views of the 42 parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the 21 free-text responses, and we also considered the views of others who contacted or spoke with us.
- In considering the quality of education, we concentrated on art and photography, English, history, mathematics and science in depth. We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. We visited lessons and then talked with pupils about what they had been learning. We looked at pupils' exercise books and folders in these subjects.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Tracey Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Gaunt	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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