

# Inspection of a good school: Belle Vue Girls' Academy

Thorn Lane, Bingley Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD9 6NA

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 December 2021

## Outcome

Belle Vue Girls' Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Belle Vue Girls' Academy are proud of their school. They like the diversity, the fact that they meet people from a range of cultural backgrounds. Pupils say that behaviour in lessons is good. They enjoy being able to focus on their work without disruption. There is a calm, positive learning atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are respectful and kind towards one another. The corridors are busy, but pupils feel safe. They are pleased to see so many staff on corridors. Staff know the pupils well. Pupils respect the staff who work with them. The school takes incidents of bullying seriously. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Most pupils and parents believe that staff deal with bullying effectively.

Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have established a curriculum that enables pupils to succeed academically. Leaders continue to take steps to develop pupils' love of reading. The school has a strong focus on the development of pupils' character and personal qualities. The chances the school offers for pupils to take on a leadership role are just one example of this.

Many extra-curricular activities could not take place last year due to COVID-19. Activities have restarted now at lunchtime and after school. Pupils enjoy the variety of clubs on offer.

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

Over time, pupils have made strong progress by the end of key stage 4. Leaders have a clear vision for the curriculum. There are detailed curriculum plans in place for each subject. These show the sequence in which knowledge is to be taught. Curriculum leaders have identified the 'golden threads' of knowledge that teachers need to stress the most. For example, in modern foreign languages, teachers know the importance of the past tense. So, they introduce it in Year 8 and teachers use sensible strategies to revisit this knowledge regularly so that pupils can remember it. Lessons usually start with an activity to recap on previously taught content. As a result, pupils can talk in detail about what

they have learned and remembered in many subjects. There is some inconsistency. Some curriculum leaders talk about curriculum planning with less clarity and precision than others. Leaders are aware of this. They have plans in place to provide the necessary help on an individual basis to those curriculum leaders.

The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. These pupils study the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders provide teachers with up-to-date information on the needs of individual pupils. Education, health and care plans (EHC plans) are detailed and useful. Leaders use teaching assistants effectively to support pupils with SEND.

Leaders understand the need to develop reading skills and a love of reading. Every pupil has a suitable reading book and staff encourage them to read. Reading aloud in class is a regular activity across the school.

Leaders acted decisively after the disappointing sixth-form examination results in 2019. Leaders now ensure that advice and guidance during the options process is thorough and wide-ranging. The right pupils are now on the right courses. Leaders have improved the quality of education in the sixth form since 2019. They plan the sixth-form curriculum with the same rigour as they do in the rest of the school. Students are positive about life in the sixth form. They receive a clear indication of the progress they are making when teachers mark written tasks. Teachers provide helpful advice on how students can improve their work.

Leaders prioritised the personal development curriculum. They deliver this through assemblies, in tutor time and across a range of subjects. Tutors feel well trained to deliver the content. Leaders do not shy away from difficult or sensitive issues. Pupils talked to inspectors, for example, about the work they had done on relations between Palestine and Israel. Other pupils talked about the work on gender and in particular LGBTQ+ issues. Leaders also offer great scope for pupils to take on leadership roles. On inspection, two of the school's anti-bullying ambassadors talked with great passion about their work making sure pupils did not feel lonely or isolated.

Leaders show no complacency. Even though attendance is broadly in line with the national average, they are determined to increase it back to the pre-pandemic level. Governors and trustees know the school well. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The staff survey and conversations with staff showed clearly that staff's morale is high. Staff feel that leaders are supportive. Many staff talk about the way leaders have gone the extra mile to support them in developing their careers.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is at the forefront of leaders' minds. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The leaders of safeguarding take their role seriously and this

area is well led. Safeguarding training for adults is comprehensive. As a result, staff are quick to see any problems which arise.

Pupils feel safe. The strong relationships in the school mean pupils have an adult they can talk to. Furthermore, they have faith that adults will help them solve any problems or concerns they may have.

Staff are vigilant. Leaders of safeguarding quickly follow up individual cases, using a wide variety of external agencies. They are persistent. No stone is left unturned to keep pupils safe.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have worked hard to embed the principles of good curriculum planning. However, there is a lack of clarity and precision in some subjects. This means that curriculum planning in these subjects is not as strong as it should be. Leaders should continue their plans to work with these curriculum leaders and ensure that the quality of curriculum planning is consistently strong in all subjects.
- Attendance has been hit by the pandemic. Overall attendance for this academic year is down to 90%. However, leaders are determined to bring the figure up to the level it was before COVID-19. They need to ensure the pastoral team and attendance leaders continue to be relentless in their efforts to improve attendance.
- The improvements in the sixth-form provision since 2019 are clear. However, due to the pandemic, there have been no externally validated results to show the improvement in the quality of education in the sixth form. Leaders need to continue their focus on the sixth form so that the next set of results show that students are making much stronger progress than they did in 2019.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Belle Vue Girls' School, to be good in July 2012.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138087
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200354
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,128
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Tessa Mason
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Mulligan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://bvgacademy.co.uk/">https://bvgacademy.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- From August 2016, Belle Vue Girls' School has been a partner school with Bradford Diocese Academies Trust.
- The school is average-sized.
- The present headteacher was promoted to the headship in September 2018.
- The academy uses two alternative providers: Bradford College (a registered provider) and Pipeline Productions (an unregistered provider).

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the secondary director for the trust. The lead inspector met a group of five governors, including the chair of governors (via video link), and had a telephone conversation with the head of one of the alternative providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, art and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Additional visits were made to observe learning across science, religious studies, Spanish and the provision for personal development in tutor time. The lead inspector met with leaders for safeguarding and reviewed records of the school's work to protect vulnerable pupils. An inspector looked at the record of vetting checks made on adults who work in the school. Meetings were held with pupils to explore their understanding of how to stay safe.
- Inspectors looked at 10 responses to the pupil survey, 76 responses to the staff survey and 34 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. Inspectors also considered 15 free-text responses from parents.

## Inspection team

David Pridding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John McNally	Ofsted Inspector
Zoe Helman	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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