

Inspection of Walton-Le-Dale High School

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

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They described the support and care from staff as the main reason that they enjoy school and feel safe. They are confident that there is always someone who will listen to them and help them with any worries.

Pupils understand the high expectations of leaders and staff for their behaviour. Most pupils behave well. Instances of poor behaviour outside lessons are dealt with rapidly and consistently by leaders. Pupils are confident that leaders will deal quickly and effectively with any issues of bullying that occur.

Pupils said that this is a welcoming school where all are included. There is a wide range of activities for pupils to take part in. For example, there are sports clubs such as those for table tennis and badminton, reading groups and a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender club.

Leaders want pupils to achieve well. They are in the process of designing an ambitious curriculum, but pupils do not learn as well as they should. This is because teachers do not routinely select the right approaches to delivering new learning.

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

Leaders have made many improvements at the school since the previous inspection, especially to pupils' behaviour and personal development. They have an accurate understanding of the areas that need to improve further. Leaders are in the process of creating an ambitious and well-designed curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have thought carefully about what needs to be taught and when pupils should learn this content. However, this is not the case in all subjects. This hinders pupils from building on what they already know.

Leaders have supported teachers to deliver the curriculums. Some teachers are using this training to select the most appropriate activities to deliver new learning. This is not true across the board, however. At times, teachers' strategies for imparting new knowledge do not enable pupils to gain a deep and secure understanding on which to build. As a result, pupils' achievement across subjects is uneven.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have also established effective systems to identify and support these pupils. Leaders make sure that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils at the school. That said, the weaknesses in how some curriculums are delivered mean that their achievement is not as strong as it should be.

Leaders have begun to introduce strategies to support pupils who struggle with reading across the curriculum. However, this work is still in its infancy. Some subject

departments are more adept at supporting pupils who find reading difficult than others.

Pupils behave well. Any instances of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly. Pupils' behaviour does not disrupt their learning in class. They know that the consequences for poor behaviour will be applied consistently.

Leaders ensure that the provision for pupils' personal development is of high quality. The wraparound care that leaders provide for pupils helps them to develop their wider social skills. Pupils are well supported to make decisions about their future due to the attention that leaders give to careers advice and guidance. A range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school supports pupils' learning and their personal development. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed listening to a visitor as part of British Science Week. Leaders have links with a wide range of organisations to widen pupils' experiences. Pupils have a voice in the school. They give their views through the school council and in other discussions with leaders.

The governing body brings a wide range of expertise to the school. This includes relevant local education experience. Governance has been restructured to include clear lines of accountability to both middle and senior leaders. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are guiding the school forward at pace. Leaders are aware of the pressures on staff workload and keep this in mind in all decisions that they make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils are aware of local risks and how to manage these in their everyday lives. Staff are well trained to identify any signs that suggest a pupil could be at risk of harm. Leaders follow up on any concerns quickly. There are clear systems in place to review all information regularly. Leaders work effectively with a range of appropriate agencies where required to help keep pupils safe.

Staff know the pupils well. They build good relationships with families to make sure that they can work together to safeguard pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to find out what pupils know or do not know. They do not tackle pupils' misconceptions effectively to avoid gaps in knowledge emerging. Leaders should ensure that staff have the necessary skills and expertise to check on pupils' learning and adapt the curriculum accordingly, so that pupils know and remember more over time.

- In some subjects, teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to deliver the curriculum effectively. This stops pupils from gaining a deep and accurate body of knowledge that sets them up well for later learning. Leaders should ensure that, across all subjects, teachers opt for the most appropriate approaches to delivering new learning.
- Some teachers are not making reading enough of a priority within their subjects. This means that pupils who find reading difficult do not get enough support to help them access the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the newly implemented strategies for reading are followed by all subject departments, so that reading is not a barrier to pupils' future success.

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

Unique reference number	119743
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10212289
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	778
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of the governing body	Nicola Clayton and Tony Aspinall
Headteacher	James Harris
Website	www.waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a significant change in the leadership structure of the school since the previous inspection. Two new co-chairs of the governing body have been appointed.
- Leaders make use of five alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: art and design, English, history, mathematics and science. For each

deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed aspects of the curriculum in other subjects.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs team, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the co-chairs and vice-chair of the governing body. Inspectors also considered the minutes of several governing body meetings.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding procedures, including checks made on staff. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, governors, staff and pupils to discuss wider aspects of safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents and carers and pupils around safeguarding. An inspector also checked the arrangements for pupils who attend alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including that relating to the curriculum, pupils' behaviour, improvement plans and leaders' self-evaluation summary.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility. An inspector also talked on the telephone to one parent.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nell Banfield	Ofsted Inspector
Annabel Bolt	Ofsted Inspector
Ahmed Marikar	Her Majesty's Inspector

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