

# Inspection of Blythe Bridge High School

Cheadle Road, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST11 9PW

---

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Blythe Bridge do well socially and academically. Leaders promote the school's culture and ethos, including the values of pride, respect, and kindness (PRK) effectively in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils develop into respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society.

Students in the sixth form describe the quality of the relationships between staff and students as strong. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. If behaviour occasionally interrupts learning, there is a fair system in place to address this. Pupils are not worried about bullying. They say if they are upset about something, they trust staff to sort it out.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. These expectations are realised. All pupils successfully go on to employment, education, or training.

All pupils have access to a rich set of experiences. The school offers a wide range of clubs. This includes sport, music, drama, and chess. Pupils are proud of their garden and the vegetables and fruit they grow.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the subjects pupils can study. This includes a wide range of subjects at key stage 3. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study the full range of courses. This prepares them well for the choices they make at key stage 4. The school offers a range of academic and vocational courses at key stage 4 and 5, but the number of pupils with SEND who continue into the sixth form is relatively low. Leaders have plans to address this. They are looking to increase the number of courses on offer. For example, next year they are introducing a BTEC National Diploma in finance into the sixth form.

Leaders provide pupils with highly effective careers education, advice, and guidance. This starts in Year 7. Pupils have many experiences linked to the world of work. This includes external speakers coming in to speak to pupils from a range of jobs, apprenticeships, and further education. Consequently, all pupils sustain a place in education, employment, or training.

Leaders give priority to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy. Pupils read in tutor time, Year 11 listen to younger pupils read and staff donate books to the school library. As a result, more pupils are reading for pleasure. However, there is still work to do. Leaders' information shows that girls are far more likely than boys to borrow a book from the school library.

The school provides staff with a wide range of training opportunities. This includes leading on teaching and learning projects and sharing good practice across the

school. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Teachers deliver lessons that support the planned curriculum. Pupils regularly recap their prior learning. This means that they can remember more and do more. In mathematics, for example, this is leading to pupils becoming more independent in their learning. Sixth-form students appreciate the specialist teaching they receive. Consequently, almost all students in the sixth form complete their courses.

Staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Usually, pupils realise these expectations. But in geography, and design and technology, sometimes the curriculum is not ambitious enough and pupils find some of the work too easy.

The school provides good care for pupils with SEND. Classroom support plans provide staff with advice about how to support pupils' learning. However, the plans are not precise enough. This means that teachers and teaching assistants are not always clear about the best way to help pupils learn. This limits their progress.

Staff apply the school's behaviour policy well. Pupils engage well in their learning. Staff adopt a consistent approach to dealing with any inappropriate behaviour. This includes the use of the refocus room. As a result, the number of repeat suspensions is reducing over time.

Pupils say they appreciate how much 'extra' they get at Blythe Bridge. This includes being a student ambassador, a member of the PRK committee or organising fundraising events. Students in the sixth form can become a higher sports leader or take part in the young enterprise scheme.

All staff speak highly about the support they get from leaders. This includes those who are new to teaching. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. For example, they changed the way in which detentions were organised. This significantly reduced the number of times staff must be on duty. Staff morale is high.

Governors are committed to the school and its pupils. They provide an effective balance of support and challenge to leaders. For example, they make sure that pupils who are unable to attend school due to ill-health are set appropriate work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' welfare seriously. Leaders make sure that staff receive the appropriate training. Staff know how to report concerns. Leaders follow these up effectively. The school has strong links with external agencies. Families get the right help at the right time because of these good links.

Appropriate checks are completed on all adults who work at, or visit, the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online through computing lessons, tutor time and assemblies. Students in the sixth form learn about how to stay safe at festivals. As a result, pupils say they feel safe. Parents agree.

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

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

- Pupils' classroom support plans are not as helpful as they could be in promoting effective learning. This means that teachers and teaching assistants do not always know which strategy to use that will best support pupils' learning. This limits pupils' progress. Leaders should ensure staff are provided with sufficiently clear and precise advice to support the learning of pupils with SEND so that they achieve the best possible outcomes.
- In a couple of subjects, the planned curriculum is not as ambitious as it should be. This means that some pupils find the work too easy. These pupils are therefore not fulfilling their potential. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is appropriately demanding across all subjects and supports pupils to build their knowledge well over time.

## 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>	124396
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226972
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	999
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	112
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Boumford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Johnson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bb-hs.co.uk">http://www.bb-hs.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 – 25 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, two new deputy headteachers and a new assistant headteacher have been appointed.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about 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 received since COVID-19 began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the governing body including the chair, other leaders, staff, and pupils.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, geography, art and design technology and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors talked to pupils at unstructured times during the day.
- The inspectors evaluated a range of school documents and looked at information on the school's website.
- The lead inspector checked the single central record and met with the school's safeguarding leader.
- The inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They also considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

## Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Godden	Ofsted Inspector
Adele Mills	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022