

Inspection of Philips High School

Higher Lane, Whitefield, Manchester M45 7PH

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 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

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Philips High School is a diverse and welcoming community. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel happy and safe and they get along well with each other and staff. Pupils are accepting and empathetic of each other's views and differences. They show respect for how different people choose to live their lives.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects. This is because there are weaknesses in how well some subject curriculums are designed and delivered.

Pupils said that staff deal with rare incidents of bullying quickly and effectively. Leaders have high expectations for how well pupils should behave. Pupils are respectful and courteous and behave well in lessons and around the school.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out personal development curriculum. Many pupils enjoy various clubs and activities and take on additional responsibilities. These include music, drama, sports and a range of groups to support the promotion of tolerance and respect.

The pupil leadership group are passionate about making a difference in school and the wider community.

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

Senior leaders are committed to improving pupils' education. Leaders, including governors, and staff together form a skilled and effective team. Staff told inspectors that leaders do their best to consider their workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and they enjoy working at the school. Staff's morale is high.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects in key stages 3 and 4. Pupils can choose courses in Year 10 that make up the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Leaders have worked effectively increase the number of pupils choosing to study languages in key stage 4.

Leaders are taking appropriate steps to provide pupils with an increasingly high-quality, broad and suitably ambitious education. Some subjects have been well thought out and pupils' learning is organised logically. Leaders make sure that in these subjects, teachers are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. However, in some subjects, leaders are still finalising what content should be taught and when different aspects of the curriculum should be delivered.

Most teachers carefully consider the most appropriate ways to help pupils to learn key subject knowledge and skills. When teachers use assessment effectively, they ensure that pupils' previous learning is secure so that pupils can build effectively on

their prior knowledge. However, this is not the case in some subjects. Some teachers do not use assessment techniques effectively enough to check whether pupils' earlier learning is secure. As a result, pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. This hinders their progress through these curriculums. Across curriculums, pupils' progress is uneven.

Leaders are quick to identify those pupils who do not read as fluently as they should. Staff provide appropriate support for this group of pupils. Leaders have ensured that staff have been able to benefit from suitable training, including phonics training. This support helps pupils to develop their reading knowledge and confidence in and enjoyment of reading. In turn, this support helps pupils to access subject knowledge more easily. Leaders have identified that some pupils do not read often enough. They have plans to remedy this.

Leaders have highly effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders provide staff with important information about the needs of this group of pupils. This ensures that staff are knowledgeable about how to best support pupils with SEND in their learning. Strategies such as the 'safe space' enable pupils with SEND to benefit from additional, specialist support.

Pupils typically engage well with their learning. They listen carefully in lessons and concentrate on their work. Lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders place a high value on provision for pupils' personal development to ensure that they are fully equipped for life. Pupils play an active role in deciding how to address issues that are important to them. For example, the LGBTQ+ group and the 'diversity party' take part in many activities to promote diversity and tolerance both in school and in the wider community. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils access an age-appropriate relationships and sex education and health education curriculum.

Pupils receive the support that they need to make informed decisions about their next steps, including information about options for further education, apprenticeships and technical qualifications.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide staff with a sufficient and timely range of safeguarding training. Staff are trained well in how to use the school's safeguarding systems. They are alert to any potential issues and they know how to pass on concerns where needed.

Leaders deal with any safeguarding concerns quickly. They work effectively with external agencies to help to keep vulnerable pupils safe.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This happens through character lessons, assemblies, form times and additional opportunities to talk openly about issues that affect them such as when they are online or in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders are still finalising what pupils will study and the order in which some of this knowledge should be taught. As a result, some pupils are unable to build securely on what they know already. Leaders should continue to develop and refine the curriculums to ensure that teachers are clear about what curriculum content should be delivered and when.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to check whether pupils' earlier learning is secure. This means that pupils sometimes move on to new learning too quickly and this hinders them from making links with what has come before. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check that pupils have grasped previous learning sufficiently well so that they can build securely on what they know already.

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	105360
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10226311
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	875
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Mallon
Headteacher	Tina Owen
Website	www.philipshigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders use two registered and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils in Years 7 to 11.
- 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 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and groups of staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, French, history, mathematics and design and technology. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with those leaders responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. They also scrutinised leaders' safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks for staff. Inspectors evaluated leaders' procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their well-being and workload. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils from different year groups. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Gary Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Sheldon Logue	Ofsted Inspector
Phill Walmsley	Ofsted Inspector

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