

Inspection of The Byrchall High School

Warrington Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire WN4 9PQ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Trustees, governors and leaders have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They have a clear and ambitious strategy for school improvement. This has pupils' best interests at its heart. The recent improvements that leaders have put in place have made a real and positive difference to the quality of pupils' education.

Pupils study a well-designed and ambitious curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress well through the curriculum.

Adults in the school care about the well-being and safety of pupils. Pupils said they feel safe. They are confident that they can approach staff for help if they have a problem. Classrooms are calm and orderly places to learn. Pupils behave well around the school site at break and lunchtime. Pupils told inspectors that, on most occasions, staff deal with incidents of bullying.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. They gain the knowledge that they need to live safe and happy lives. Staff provide many extra opportunities, including clubs and school trips, to enhance the curriculum. Many pupils are keen to take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about the wider world.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders, trustees and governors have brought about considerable improvement to many aspects of the school. They have made many changes to the school's curriculum. In the past, a weak curriculum in some subjects meant that pupils were not well prepared for the next stage in their education. This is no longer the case. In all subjects, leaders have implemented a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. The curriculum is well ordered to help pupils build their knowledge across a broad range of subjects. As a result, pupils, especially those in key stage 4, understand and remember more of their learning.

Subject leaders have designed curriculums well. They have listened to the advice offered by senior leaders and external advisers. They have thought carefully about the order in which they want pupils to learn key knowledge. Pupils build up their knowledge in a logical way. Curriculum design is particularly effective in some subjects. This is because there are highly ambitious opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning.

Teachers have secure and, in some cases, very strong subject knowledge. This helps them to deliver curriculums well across the school. Teachers typically choose activities that stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm. They also make sure that pupils recap important learning. However, in a small number of subjects, some teachers do not ensure that pupils' learning builds securely on what they already

know. This prevents some pupils from learning more and remembering more in those subjects.

Pupils behave well around the large school site. Lessons take place without disruption. Pupils' positive attitudes to their education help them to learn well. Leaders study patterns of behaviour and act swiftly if they identify any problems.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are becoming increasingly confident in using the information that leaders provide to support pupils with SEND to learn well. This helps pupils with SEND to progress through the same ambitious subject curriculums as their peers.

Leaders' systems to identify pupils who are behind with their reading knowledge are well thought through. These systems enable leaders to pinpoint and remedy the specific problems that individual pupils face when reading. Most pupils become confident readers. Recently, leaders have made reading widely and often a priority for all pupils. This work is beginning to encourage more pupils to read for pleasure.

Pupils told inspectors that they find their personal development lessons interesting. Leaders have recently given more time in the school week to this area of the curriculum. As a result, pupils benefit from opportunities to learn about and discuss a wide range of issues. These opportunities include learning about relationships and sex education and health education, British values and more practical issues, such as how to manage money. A few pupils are trained as mental health ambassadors, allowing them to offer support and guidance to their peers.

Pupils receive age-appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance. Leaders have reintroduced work experience following the lull during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Since the last inspection, the local governing body and trustees have taken a more active role in supporting the work of school leaders and holding leaders to account. Governors and trustees know the school well. They play a significant part in all aspects of the school's work. Staff appreciate the work of leaders, governors and trustees to protect them from excessive workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at Byrchall High School.

Staff receive frequent and effective training from school leaders. As a result, staff know how to spot the signs that pupils need early help or are at risk from harm. Staff share their concerns with leaders in a timely manner. Leaders work well with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable get the help that they need.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They learn how to keep safe when out in the wider community and when online, through assemblies and in their personal development lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small minority of subjects, some teachers do not deliver the planned curriculum effectively enough. This is because they do not ensure that pupils' learning builds securely on what they already know. This prevents some pupils from learning as well as they should in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the planned curriculum is delivered consistently well across all subjects.

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.

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	138699
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10244607
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1016
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Tushingham
Headteacher	Alan Birchall
Website	www.byrchall.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at one alternative registered provider.
- 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 graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and subject leaders.

- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector met representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who completed Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, geography, history and art and design. Inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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