

Inspection of Woodhey High School

Bolton Road West, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire BL0 9QZ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Mostly, pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), feel safe. They said that there is an adult in school that they could approach if they had any worries or concerns.

More recently, leaders, and those responsible for governance, have acted to raise teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and what pupils achieve academically. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. However, some teachers do not receive the support that they need from subject leaders to deliver curriculums effectively. This hinders pupils, including those with SEND, from achieving as well as they should.

Many pupils follow teachers' instructions and focus well on their learning. These pupils want to do well and they try their best. However, pupils also told inspectors that the behaviour of a minority of their peers disrupts their lessons. This has a negative impact on how well pupils learn the curriculum.

Many pupils are confident that incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively by staff. That said, a small proportion of pupils lack confidence in leaders' systems to deal with bullying and prevent it from happening again.

Some pupils, including those who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), appreciate the activities on offer at breaktimes and lunchtimes. For example, some pupils enjoy being members of the brass group. Others are regular attendees at choir practice, netball, football and the dungeons and dragons club.

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

Over the last two years, trust representatives and those responsible for governance have acted decisively to strengthen the leadership of the school at every level. For example, members of the academy council provide a robust level of challenge to senior leaders.

Leaders have ensured that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, now access a curriculum that is increasingly broad and ambitious. Those pupils who attend the specially resourced provision also benefit from a well-designed curriculum coupled with effective support from knowledgeable staff. Increasingly, subject leaders ensure that teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. However, leaders' work to address the weaknesses in the curriculum remains a work in progress.

Some teachers do not receive sufficient support from subject leaders to design learning effectively. For instance, in some subjects, teachers are not sufficiently clear about how pupils' learning builds on what they know already. This prevents some

teachers from selecting the most appropriate activities to support pupils in learning the curriculum consistently well. Leaders are in the process of redesigning their systems to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum.

During recent months, leaders have acted to rectify the shortcomings in their systems to identify and support those pupils with SEND who do not attend the specially resourced provision. For instance, teachers explained to inspectors that the quality of information that they receive about this group of pupils has improved.

While pupils in the specially resourced provision learn well, leaders are in the process of helping teachers to adapt how they deliver the curriculum for pupils with SEND in mainstream classes. Some parents spoke positively about the changes in this area. That said, pupils with SEND in mainstream classes do not make the progress that they should. This is due to weaknesses in how well the curriculum for all pupils is designed and delivered.

Leaders have implemented effective systems to support staff to better manage pupils' behaviour. These systems are already securing improvements in pupils' behaviour during lessons and social times. That said, there are times when staff do not use leaders' systems as intended. Some pupils explained to inspectors that the behaviour of a minority of their peers disrupts learning in some of their lessons.

Staff are aware of those pupils who join the school that have fallen behind in their reading. This group of pupils receive additional support to help them to catch up. However, some staff do not have sufficient expertise to support those pupils who struggle the most with reading. This prevents these pupils from catching up as quickly as they should and from accessing the full curriculum.

Leaders have made changes to the personal development curriculum to ensure that pupils learn about issues relevant to relationships and sex education. For example, pupils can talk about the features of healthy relationships and how to be a good friend. Through the personal development curriculum, pupils also learn about the opportunities available to them for their next steps. Nevertheless, many aspects of the personal development curriculum have only been introduced recently. As a result, some staff are not well-enough equipped to deliver parts of this curriculum with confidence.

Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of those aspects of the school that require improvement. In recent months, they have set about their work to improve the school in earnest. However, due to historic weaknesses in senior leadership, some parents and carers have lost faith in leaders' ability to provide a good quality of education for pupils.

Many staff are proud to work at the school and state that leaders are considerate of their well-being. However, following a drive to raise standards, a considerable minority of staff shared concerns with inspectors about workload and how well they are supported to manage pupils' behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there are appropriate systems in place to safeguard pupils. Those responsible for governance and all staff receive relevant safeguarding training. For example, staff have received training to ensure that they understand the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil.

Leaders work effectively with external agencies, including the local authority and the police, to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate help.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For instance, pupils have learned recently about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse and gang-related violence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the past, there have been weaknesses at every level of leadership. As a result, some parents have lost faith in leaders' ability to provide a high-quality education for their children. Leaders must ensure that they continue to engage positively and effectively with parents, regaining their trust, confidence and support. This will help to ensure that all stakeholders work effectively together in the best interests of pupils.
- In some subjects, teachers are not sufficiently clear about the building blocks of knowledge that pupils should learn. Added to this, some teachers do not receive enough support from subject leaders to deliver curriculums as effectively as they could. This hinders some pupils, including those with SEND in mainstream classes, from progressing successfully through subject curriculums. Leaders should ensure that teachers are well supported to design learning, including how to order knowledge appropriately, and how best to deliver aspects of subject-specific content. This includes for pupils with SEND.
- Some staff do not have the knowledge that they need to support those pupils who struggle the most with reading. This means that a small proportion of pupils are hindered in accessing the full curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff have sufficient expertise to provide effective support for these pupils. This will help those pupils who struggle with reading to catch up quickly and access the full curriculum.
- Some teachers do not use the systems in place to manage pupils' behaviour as well as they should. This means that some lessons are disrupted by a minority of pupils. This hinders others from learning subject curriculums and achieving as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers are supported appropriately to use the school's behaviour systems to manage pupils' behaviour consistently well.

- Some teachers are not sufficiently equipped to deliver aspects of the personal development curriculum. This prevents these teachers from delivering this curriculum with confidence. As a result, pupils' experiences of the personal development curriculum vary in quality. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained to deliver the personal development curriculum, including important aspects of the relationships and sex education curriculum, consistently well.

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	148097
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10247832
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	1133
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Meehan
Headteacher	Dean Watson
Website	http://www.woodhey.bury.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Woodhey High School converted to become an academy school in October 2020. When its predecessor school, Woodhey High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement overall.
- This school is part of the Shaw Education Trust. The school joined the trust in October 2020.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This provision caters for 15 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.
- Leaders currently use one registered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.

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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff. An inspector spoke with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, a representative of the multi-academy trust and three members of the academy council, including the chair.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, art and design, languages and design and technology. Inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors met with pupils across all year groups. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at social times.
- Inspectors checked on safeguarding procedures, including recruitment checks made on new staff. Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leaders' self-evaluation and leaders' behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils. Inspectors also considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via Ofsted's free-text facility.

Inspection team

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