

Inspection of Bishop Heber High School

Chester Road, Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8JD

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Bishop Heber High School, pupils and students in the sixth form are proud to belong to the school. There is a strong sense of community. Pupils and students are welcoming and supportive of each other, living out the mantra that states all will be happy at Heber. Leaders and teachers have high expectations for all pupils and students to succeed, both academically and personally. Pupils and students achieve well.

Mostly, students, pupils, parents and carers told inspectors that there is someone that a pupil or student can talk to if they have a problem or concern. If bullying occurs, there are strong systems in place to deal with it and staff that will provide support. This helps pupils and students to feel safe in school.

Pupils and students share mutually respectful and supportive relationships with their teachers. During social times, pupils' behaviour is calm and considerate. During lessons, most pupils can learn without disruption. Leaders provide effective support for the minority of pupils who struggle to regulate their own behaviour in lessons, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The strong personal development programme provides pupils and students with regular opportunities to debate and explore relevant social issues. This gives them a strong understanding of diversity and respect for others.

Pupils benefit from wider enrichment opportunities to develop their character and confidence, for example by representing their peers on the student council or taking part in the cadet programme. Pupils and students enjoy an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

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

Leaders and governors share a clear, ambitious vision for the school. Leaders have reviewed and improved the curriculum to ensure that all pupils and students access a breadth and depth of knowledge across a range of subjects from key stages 3 to 5. Leaders' ongoing refinement of some aspects of the curriculum ensures that it continues to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Subject leaders have a clear understanding about the important knowledge that they want pupils and students to learn. They have carefully ordered learning so that pupils can build upon what they already know. Leaders are working to ensure that pupils can make further links between the ideas in different subjects.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use their expertise to deliver the curriculum well. In most subjects, and particularly in key stages 4 and 5, teachers are adept at identifying and addressing pupils' and students' misconceptions.

Leaders are revising assessments in key stage 3 so that they help teachers to better check on the important parts of knowledge that pupils have learned. This is helping to ensure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are pinpointed and addressed effectively. However, some leaders and teachers do not use these systems well enough to gain an accurate overview of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum in key stage 3.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff receive detailed and helpful information about the needs of this group of pupils. Leaders provide ongoing training to ensure that staff use this information to make appropriate adaptations to how they deliver curriculums. Consequently, pupils and students with SEND achieve well.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on the importance of pupils' and students' reading and vocabulary development in all key stages. Teachers are trained to explicitly identify and teach subject-specific words that pupils need to know. Furthermore, form tutors read to pupils in dedicated weekly time. This is helping pupils and students to develop their understanding of challenging concepts and to read more widely and fluently. However, the systems leaders have in place to identify and support those pupils who are behind in their reading knowledge are relatively new. Some pupils, particularly in key stage 4, have not received appropriate support to help them catch up quickly enough.

Typically, pupils' positive attitudes to learning mean that they can learn without disruption. When this is not the case, staff provide appropriate support for a small minority of pupils, to help them to manage their own conduct. Pupils and students in the sixth form attend school regularly.

Leaders' sense of support, care and aspiration for all is reflected in the strong programme of personal development that they have designed for pupils and students in Years 7 to 13. Leaders ensure that pupils and students learn how to be tolerant and respectful citizens. Students in the sixth form take part in well-being sessions to support their physical and emotional health. Pupils and students also benefit from a programme of suitable careers advice and guidance. Almost all pupils and students progress successfully to appropriate destinations.

Governors hold leaders to account for the quality of education. They know the school well and they provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. The large majority of staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained to identify and report concerns swiftly. Leaders of safeguarding are rigorous

in their approach to recording and reporting information, this includes referrals to external agencies, so that pupils receive timely support.

Leaders know pupils' families well and understand the specific barriers that pupils face. Leaders ensure that this knowledge feeds into the personal development curriculum to ensure that pupils and students learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, leaders have recently reviewed policy and practice to raise pupils' and students' awareness of harmful sexual behaviour. Consequently, all staff and pupils, including students in the sixth form, receive important information about this topic and are clear about school procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At key stage 3, leaders' systems to check on how well pupils are learning the curriculum are new. In a small number of subjects, some staff do not use these systems well enough to identify and address pupils' gaps in learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive further training to fully understand and implement new key stage 3 assessment systems. This is so that teachers can use assessment information consistently well to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning over time.
- Leaders' systems for supporting those pupils who are behind with their reading knowledge are underdeveloped. This means that some pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, do not receive the targeted support they need to catch up quickly in reading. This hinders their access to the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that they fully implement and embed their plans so that all pupils, including those in key stage 4, are supported to catch up quickly in line with their peers.

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	111424
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10242451
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,291
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Anderson
Headteacher	David Curry
Website	www.bishopheber.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 April 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider for a 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff. The lead inspector met representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and drama. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' and students' work and spoke with pupils, students and teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students from all year groups. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour between lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that related to safeguarding, self-evaluation documents, and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors checked on leaders' safeguarding arrangements, including the checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils, students and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector checked the arrangements for pupils who attend alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Nell Banfield	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Renwick	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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