

# Inspection of a good school: Burnham Grammar School

Hogfair Lane, Burnham, Slough, Buckinghamshire SL1 7HG

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2022

## Outcome

Burnham Grammar School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enthusiastically embrace challenge and enjoy learning here. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, benefit from high aspirations set for them by leaders and staff. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers are passionate about their subjects and this helps them to inspire pupils to do their best. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils consistently meet these expectations. As a result, pupils learn in calm and purposeful lessons. Pupils willingly hold the door open for each other. They are polite and respectful. From the minute they join the school, they learn the importance of being responsible citizens who take an active part in their education.

Bullying occurs very infrequently. On the rare occasions when it does happen, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively. Pupils told inspectors that they feel happy and safe at school. There is a strong focus on supporting positive mental health in pupils and staff. Some older students receive training as 'Mind ambassadors'. Different-coloured lanyards indicate trained mental health champions. Pupils appreciate being able to seek support from their peers as well as from adults.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum with a focus on high-quality education for all, including pupils with SEND. Through the curriculum, pupils learn to become responsible learners and to embrace mistakes. The curriculum is well sequenced at key stage 3 and prepares pupils for future learning. Leaders' focus on strengthening curriculum thinking is particularly evident in English and mathematics. Many students stay to complete their studies in the sixth form. As at GCSE, there is a broad offer of subjects, and students follow appropriate courses to prepare them for future study or work. Sixth-form students achieve well.

In the majority of subjects, leaders ensure that teaching supports high-quality delivery of the curriculum. Teachers have strong, and in many cases exceptional, subject knowledge. Leaders ensure that curriculum teams have sufficient time to work together to plan and refine the curriculum. Staff regularly check pupils' understanding of the curriculum. Purposeful homework activities identify where gaps in knowledge or understanding are. Teachers use assessment tasks in class to pinpoint precisely where misconceptions are and quickly address these with appropriate teaching activities. Trained specialists swiftly and accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. This enables them to provide teachers with detailed information about pupils' needs so that the teachers can modify or adapt the curriculum appropriately. Expert support staff work alongside teachers to help pupils with SEND achieve their best possible outcomes.

Staff appreciate the support and time they get to develop their own subject expertise. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. Leaders have adopted an approach to assessment that is manageable for staff and purposeful for pupils.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff inspire pupils to love reading and to read widely. Some older students volunteer at a local primary school to support pupils with early reading. Leaders direct support to a small number of pupils who are less confident or whose reading is less fluent than others. The programme of support is in its infancy and leaders are aware of the need to evaluate the effectiveness of this.

The wider personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. The personal, social, health and careers education (PSHCE) programme teaches pupils, among other things, about beliefs, rights and responsibilities. There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer to develop interests and build character. Some older students run their own clubs and activities. Pupils benefit from participating in a plethora of extra-curricular activities. Similarly, a wide variety of trips and visits play an integral part in enhancing the curriculum and provide memorable experiences for many pupils. Careers information education, advice and guidance is also a strength of the school. Students in the sixth form value the personalised and extensive approach to the individualised support and advice they receive.

Students aspire to be young leaders. They desire to be promoted to positions of responsibility. There are many opportunities to take on positions of leadership, formal and informal. The prefect system is well regarded. There are many voting opportunities for pupils. As a result, pupils have a deep understanding of democracy. The teaching of spirituality and morality permeates many activities. Visiting speakers bring expertise to the PSHCE and assembly programme. Students feel that they have a voice here. Vertical tutoring is extremely well regarded by staff and pupils. Pupils benefit from informal and formal mentoring opportunities in mixed-age classes. For example, students in the sixth form support pupils in Year 10 with examination preparation and technique.

Staff say that leaders support them well. They value the professional development opportunities on offer to them and the family feel of the school. Subject leaders speak passionately about their autonomy and the collaborative nature of working with other subject and senior leaders to continue to improve the school.

Trustees and local governors have a clear vision for the school. They are ambitious for the quality of education pupils receive. The strategic growth of the alumni network is providing valuable support to the school in many ways.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority of this school. Leaders are meticulous in how they protect pupils from risk of potential harm. The experienced designated safeguarding lead is supported by a team of knowledgeable safeguarding and pastoral staff.

Staff receive timely and appropriate training and updates. This helps them to respond effectively when they have a concern about a pupil. Strong relationships between staff and pupils mean that staff are alert to changes in behaviour which may be worrying. Clear reporting systems enable staff to raise concerns in a timely manner.

There are many opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn how to stay safe. For example, in the PSHCE curriculum, pupils are taught about online safety and safe relationships.

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

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

- In a very small number of subjects there is some variability in the quality of the curriculum's implementation. This means that pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently across all subjects so that pupils achieve as highly in these subjects as they do elsewhere.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137564
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211507
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<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>	1,264
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	344
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Andy Frith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Andy Gillespie
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.burnhamgrammar.org.uk">www.burnhamgrammar.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has relocated to a refurbished building which opened in November 2021.
- The school is part of the Beeches Learning and Development Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- 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 ungraded inspection under section 8 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 held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with governors and a representative of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, history and physical education. 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 reviewed a small sample of work and lessons in art, design technology and modern foreign languages.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with staff, pupils and parents to gather their views. They considered 338 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 189 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 89 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils while on inspection and took account of 624 responses to the pupil survey.

## **Inspection team**

Linda Culling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ginny Rhodes

Ofsted Inspector

Wendy Martin

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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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