

Inspection of Balshaw's Church of England High School

Church Road, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 3AH

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Balshaw's High School. They told inspectors that they are proud to attend their school. They understand the importance of respecting differences between people. They are friendly, tolerant and polite.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils know that their teachers have high standards for their academic achievement and their behaviour. The majority of pupils work hard to rise to these expectations. They behave responsibly and they achieve well.

The atmosphere around school is calm and respectful. Pupils said that there is always someone to talk to if they have concerns. Leaders deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils benefit from the opportunities that leaders provide for their wider development. For example, they take part in charity work to raise funds for local community projects. They keenly take on positions of responsibility to help other pupils, for example by becoming a literacy mentor or school librarian. This creates a strong sense of school community and helps pupils to develop their confidence and character.

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

Leaders and governors share a clear vision for the quality of education. In the recent past, they have implemented a number of improvements to ensure that they realise this vision. At key stage 3, the curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. However, a small number of pupils could not choose the combination of subjects that they wanted to study at key stage 4. This hinders how well the curriculum currently caters for their interests and aspirations. Leaders' plans to remove these limitations for future cohorts of pupils are well under way.

Leaders ensure that subject leaders and teachers have access to regular, subject-specific training. Subject leaders have thoughtfully considered the essential knowledge that they want pupils to gain. In most subjects, they order this essential knowledge carefully so that pupils can build on their prior learning. Teachers use their expert knowledge to teach the curriculum effectively. They identify and address pupils' misconceptions and help them to fill in any gaps in their learning.

Staff are well trained to identify and address the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that staff receive helpful information about the individual needs of pupils. This helps them to adapt the delivery of the curriculum effectively and to address any barriers to pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils with SEND have access to the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They achieve well.

Leaders prioritise reading. The school library is a hub of activity. A range of programmes helps pupils to develop fluency and a love of reading. For example,

older pupils listen to younger pupils read. Teachers also identify and highlight for pupils any necessary subject-specific vocabulary and help them to use it appropriately. Leaders are increasing the help that they offer to pupils who struggle with their reading. They have started to identify and put into place additional help for those with gaps in their reading knowledge. This is helping those pupils who are behind with their reading to catch up with their peers.

Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Learning is rarely interrupted. Leaders provide effective support for the minority of pupils who sometimes struggle to regulate their own behaviour. In addition, following the pandemic, leaders have secured ongoing improvements to pupils' rates of attendance. This includes the attendance rates of pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND.

Leaders have devised a high-quality programme to support pupils' wider development. Staff deliver this effectively through assemblies, form time and the curriculum. They learn about a range of issues, such as mental health, healthy relationships and respect for others. This helps them to develop social and moral awareness, as well as an understanding of how to be active citizens in modern Britain.

Leaders have recently reviewed, and further improved, the comprehensive programme of careers information, education, advice and guidance that all pupils receive. This helps the majority of pupils to progress to appropriate work, education or training when they leave the school.

Staff are appreciative of the ways in which leaders and governors provide for their well-being. They told inspectors that leaders take staff's workload into account when deciding policy. Leaders actively and effectively seek ways to engage with their local community. The majority of parents who completed Ofsted Parent View expressed positive attitudes to leaders' engagement with them to support pupils. However, a minority of parents indicated that they do not feel that leaders engage with them well enough to communicate changes and address concerns. For a small number of pupils, this hinders how well leaders and governors can work with parents to support well-being and achievement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff undertake regular safeguarding training. They are aware of the potential risks that pupils face in the local area and beyond. Staff are confident in identifying and reporting any concerns.

Leaders ensure that they identify and help pupils who may be at risk of harm. They make timely referrals to external agencies and secure the help of specialist services for pupils and families when needed.

Through the curriculum and personal-development programme, pupils receive age-appropriate information about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about online safety and harmful sexual behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For a small number of pupils in key stage 4, the curriculum does not allow the study of a combination of subjects which matches their interests and aspirations. Leaders should fully implement their plans to amend the curriculum so that future cohorts have access to the breadth of qualifications that more fully meets their needs.
- A small number of parents do not feel that school leaders and governors engage with them effectively in order to help them understand decisions and approaches to change. For a small number of pupils, this hinders how well leaders work with parents to support achievement and well-being. Leaders and governors should ensure that they identify barriers to parental engagement so that they can work effectively with parents to help all pupils to achieve highly.

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	119775
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10265452
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	921
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Woodcock
Headteacher	Steven Haycocks
Website	www.balshaws.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Church of England school is in the Diocese of Blackburn. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in July 2019.
- School leaders make use of one registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- School leaders make use of one unregistered alternative provider for one pupil.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body. She also spoke on the telephone with the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Blackburn.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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. An inspector also spoke with subject leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke to some parents on the telephone during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. They also spoke to a range of staff to discuss the support that they receive from leaders.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. They also spoke with some pupils about school life. They observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils at social times.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documentation about safeguarding and spoke with staff to understand how they keep children safe. An inspector checked the arrangements for those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector
Gil Bourgade	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Ofsted Inspector

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