

Inspection of Parrenthorn High School

Heywood Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 2BW

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

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?

There are strong relationships between staff and pupils at Parrenthorn High School. Pupils told inspectors that they are happy and proud to attend the school. They trust and respect staff. Teachers regularly signpost the different sources of help available to pupils should they need it. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These expectations are made clear to pupils. Most pupils display the 'habits of excellence', behave well and are keen to learn. They interact positively with their peers at social times.

Staff and pupils are proud to celebrate the school's cultural diversity. For example, pupils spoke highly of a recent 'diversity week'. Pupils act in a respectful manner towards each other. When incidents of bullying do happen, staff deal with these quickly and appropriately.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities, such as a 'women in leadership' programme and lessons on positive masculinity. They enjoy competing eagerly against each other in inter-house competitions.

Pupils are keen to raise money for local charities during 'charities week'. Pupils readily take on a range of responsibilities, such as acting as hate-crime ambassadors and as reading buddies.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum and they have carefully considered the order in which topics are taught. Mostly, leaders have identified the powerful knowledge that pupils need to learn. Added to this, they have afforded pupils enough opportunities to revisit important learning to secure key ideas before building on these. For the most part, teachers use assessment strategies well to check that pupils remember earlier learning. As a result, pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Many teachers have secure subject knowledge. This allows them to deliver the curriculum skilfully and to make appropriate use of resources to design learning. However, from time to time, some teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils learn the knowledge that leaders intend.

Leaders have made some changes to the curriculum to ensure that more pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils are choosing to study a language at key stage 4.

Leaders are cultivating a culture of reading across the school. They have carefully considered the books that pupils should read. Leaders have effective systems in

place to identify those pupils who find reading difficult. Those pupils in key stage 3 who struggle with reading receive appropriate help to catch up. That said, some pupils in key stage 4 do not benefit from this support. This hinders these pupils from accessing the curriculum and learning as well as they should.

The majority of pupils focus well on their learning. Staff deal with any incidents of poor behaviour appropriately. As a result, pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve pupils' rates of attendance. Nevertheless, some pupils still do not attend school regularly. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders work collaboratively with parents and carers to identify swiftly the additional needs that pupils may have. Staff play a pivotal role in communicating well with parents. Pupils with SEND are involved in all areas of school life. They are supported successfully to achieve well.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is logically ordered and includes age-appropriate topics. These include topics such as knife crime, misogyny and mental well-being. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They take part in democratic processes in school. Leaders have designed a carefully considered careers programme. This encourages pupils to have high aspirations.

The restructuring of the governing body has enabled governors to have a clearer understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. This is allowing governors to hold leaders to account better than they did previously.

Leaders are mindful of staff's workload. Staff told inspectors that they feel proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear procedures in place for managing any safeguarding concerns. They have created a culture of vigilance where staff are trained well to recognise potential signs of harm.

Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and the processes for reporting any concerns. Leaders act swiftly to follow up these concerns. They work closely with external agencies to secure help for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From time to time, some teachers do not select the most appropriate activities to help pupils learn the knowledge that leaders intend. On occasion, this hinders some pupils' learning of the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff are well trained in effective, subject-specific strategies to deliver the curriculum and to help pupils remember more.
- Some pupils in key stage 4 do not receive sufficient support to catch up in reading. This prevents this small number of pupils from accessing the full curriculum and achieving as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that they identify any gaps in pupils' reading knowledge and ensure that staff support these pupils to catch up quickly.
- There are some pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, who do not attend as well as they should. As a result, these pupils miss out on important learning. Leaders should ensure that they continue to work proactively on improving these pupils' rates of attendance.

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	105358
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10244612
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,014
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christina Critchley
Headteacher	Christopher Bell
Website	www.parrenthorn.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, two new deputy headteachers have been appointed.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Leaders make use of two registered and two unregistered alternative providers 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 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 representatives of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with some representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages, design technology and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, spoke to pupils about their learning and spoke to teachers.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum and assessment in some other subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with those responsible for safeguarding. They checked on leaders' policies and procedures for safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff to evaluate the culture of safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plans and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors met with pupils to talk about their experience of school, including behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during unstructured times.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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