

Inspection of a good school: Bruntcliffe Academy

Bruntcliffe Lane, Morley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS27 0LZ

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2023

Outcome

Bruntcliffe Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bruntcliffe Academy is a school that many parents want to send their children to. The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly since the last inspection. Staff support pupils to become independent and resilient learners. Leaders, governors and trustees are proud of pupils' work and many parents in the local community recognise that pupils' experiences at the school are very positive.

Pupils build strong relationships with staff. Bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly should pupils report it. Pupils understand equality, diversity and inclusivity. As a result, they feel safe in school and know that being different is accepted.

Leaders have prioritised improving attendance. Pupils access a range of rewards for excellent attendance. The termly rewards events, which include fairground rides, are a popular incentive. There is clear behaviour policy which staff use consistently. Pupils feel that it is fair and that it supports them to behave well. Conduct around the site is calm, orderly and respectful.

Alongside a broad academic curriculum, pupils access a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The recent school production of Shrek provided pupils with opportunities to participate in its creation and proved very popular. Other clubs include sporting activities and board games. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in the CREST awards scheme. This is a nationally recognised scheme for pupil-led work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This award enables pupils to develop their scientific skills beyond the school curriculum.

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

The curriculum is ambitious. In English, for example, pupils are taught a wide range of poems which go beyond the national curriculum. In modern foreign languages, some pupils study Mandarin. Staff have developed well-sequenced curriculum plans. Teachers have carefully considered what they would like pupils to know and regularly check that pupils have secured that knowledge. Staff carry out frequent assessment and are quick to evaluate pupils' strengths and areas for development. This enables staff to adjust lesson content swiftly if necessary. Whole-school systems, such as time in every lesson for silent, independent work, allow pupils to develop resilience and independence. This rigorous routine is used effectively by staff to ensure that all pupils complete longer, more complex tasks without distraction. As a result, pupils make strong progress. Pupils value these routines; they know what to expect in their lessons and are proud to complete challenging work on their own.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have full access to the curriculum. They are well supported by staff who understand their needs and provide appropriate adjustments if required. For example, pupils with SEND who need a scribe always have one for tasks when extended writing is required. Hearing impaired pupils are supported to be fully included in all lessons through clear, stepped instructions and written tasks. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers.

Pupils who need support with their reading receive it swiftly. Staff accurately identify the needs that weaker readers have and put effective intervention in place. Some pupils complete phonics work and others work on fluency or comprehension. Passionate teachers deliver very effective intervention sessions to improve comprehension. Teachers create a love of reading through their enthusiasm and ensure that pupils are challenged to think carefully about what they are reading.

Leaders place as much emphasis on pupils' pastoral development as they do on their academic. A well-structured personal development programme is built on the multi-academy trust model of health and well-being, knowledge of the wider world, relationships and careers. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is linked to curriculum areas. Pupils are knowledgeable of different faiths and enthusiastically discuss the importance of inclusivity. The student leadership team consists of many, very keen, pupils from all year groups. They are proud of the changes they have brought about, such as improved toilets and a better queuing system at lunchtime. They feel valued and respected by leaders in school.

Pupils receive appropriate advice on their next steps after leaving school. A well-considered careers programme and strong links to post-16 providers ensure that pupils go on to appropriate destinations.

The majority of staff who work in the school are happy and feel that leaders are mindful of workload. Most staff feel listened to. Professional development opportunities for staff are provided, and leaders ensure that staff can access training within their own departments and work with others across the trust. This ensures that staff have up-to-date subject knowledge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are very mindful of the local safeguarding risks to pupils, particularly after the pandemic. They ensure that staff are well trained to spot risks which are now more prevalent, such as criminal exploitation. Reporting procedures are clear and they are understood by all staff. Leaders follow procedures when safeguarding concerns arise in a timely manner and keep detailed records of any concerns.

Pupils can also report any worries or concerns that they may have anonymously. The curriculum makes pupils aware of risks and dangers outside of school such as vaping.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	142056
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10255807
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	1146
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne McAvan
Principal	Laura Moore
Website	www.bruntcliffe.leeds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018

Information about this school

- The school is part of The GORSE Academies Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers for some pupils. Most pupils at alternative provision attend The Stephen Longfellow Academy which is also part of The GORSE Academies Trust.
- The school has significantly increased in size since the last inspection.
- The current headteacher is new to post since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors looked at information relating to behaviour, attendance and wider enrichment opportunities.

- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey. They also considered additional communications from parents.
- The lead inspector talked to the leader in charge of safeguarding arrangements. They met with a range of staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including self-evaluation documents, minutes of governance meetings, safeguarding documents and individual learning plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, drama and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with a wide range of senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. An inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust. The lead inspector also met representatives of the governing body and the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Cresswell

Ofsted Inspector

Bernard Clark

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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