

Inspection of Bramhall High School

Seal Road, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 2JT

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 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?

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They foster strong relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils said that the school takes any concerns they have seriously. Typically, pupils feel listened to and cared for.

The school has high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum, which is broad and balanced. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and behave well. They achieve highly.

The school encourages pupils to help others. For example, some pupils support each other as mental health ambassadors. Pupils contribute to the wider community through charitable activities, such as collecting donations for food banks.

Pupils are provided with a wealth of opportunities to nurture existing talents and interests, as well as to discover new ones. Performing arts clubs are popular, and many pupils show enthusiasm for taking part in music and drama performances. Some pupils spoke with delight about exploring new interests. For example, pupils who attend 'bee club' gain knowledge and experience of bee keeping, from the setting up of hives through to the harvesting of honey. Pupils proudly explained that there is something for everyone to get involved in.

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

The school has strengthened the quality of education provided. The curriculum has been designed so that pupils' knowledge builds logically from Year 7 to Year 11. The curriculum is typically delivered well. Staff have strong subject knowledge, which they use to clearly explain new concepts to pupils. Overall, staff make careful checks on whether pupils can remember the important information they have learned. Most pupils build strong bodies of knowledge within each subject.

The school has taken steps to strengthen the provision for pupils with additional needs. These pupils spoke positively about some of the recent changes. For example, they value the 'thrive room' as a quiet space. The school has robust systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. However, these pupils are not consistently well supported to access the curriculum. Although most pupils with SEND achieve well, a small number do not achieve all that they should.

The school has developed a rigorous approach to identifying pupils who are struggling to read. Well-trained staff provide some of these pupils with the help that they need. However, this programme is still in development. A small number of pupils who need this support do not receive it quickly enough. This hinders how well these pupils can access the wider curriculum.

Pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment. Most are attentive to their teachers. The school has recently introduced a new approach to dealing with pupils who

struggle to regulate their own behaviour. Pupils said that this is helping them to make better choices in the future.

While most pupils attend well, some do not go to school as often as they should. The school is taking steps to improve this.

The school has expanded its provision to support pupils' personal development. During form time and 'skills for life' days, pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships and online safety. They value this learning. It prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils receive the information that they need to make informed choices about their next steps in education or employment. Pupils in Year 11 spoke enthusiastically about the valuable insights that they gained from their work experience.

Governors have expanded their expertise since the previous inspection. They are sharply focused on working with the school to continue to improve the quality of education that they provide, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils.

Most parents and carers are appreciative of the ways in which the school engages with them to support their child's education.

The school consults staff about the introduction of new policies or systems to ensure that they are not overly burdensome. Staff are incredibly happy and proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few pupils with SEND do not receive a consistently high-quality education across the curriculum. Consequently, some of these pupils do not achieve all that they should. The school, including governors, should continue to review, evaluate and improve how well staff are trained and supported to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, ensuring that pupils can achieve highly and fulfil their aspirations.
- The school's reading curriculum is in development. As a result, a small number of pupils who are behind with their reading knowledge do not get the timely support they require to catch up with their peers. The school should embed the new reading curriculum and ensure that staff are well trained to help pupils to catch up quickly with their reading knowledge.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106139
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10268326
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	1,322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Brown
Headteacher	Paul Williams
Website	www.bhsweb.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 and 26 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders use two registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning. An inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts the interests of pupils first.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents and records relating to pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector
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