

# Inspection of Bury Church of England High School

Haslam Brow, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0TS

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Simon Braithwaite. This school is part of the Bishop Fraser Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tania Lewyckyj, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lesley Durosomo.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils typically enjoy attending school. They benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award as well as national competitions. They value the vast range of sporting competitions and clubs. This promotes a strong team spirit of working together with their peers.

Pupils feel safe and happy. They are confident that teachers will listen to them if they are worried or anxious. The new safeguarding systems introduced by the trust mean that the school is better equipped to respond to pupils' concerns.

Pupils behave well because the trust-wide behaviour policies mean that they know and follow the school rules. Pupils appreciate the positive relationships that they forge with their teachers. They understand and follow the behaviour expected from them. Pupils concentrate in lessons and there is very little disruption to learning.

The trust and the school have high expectations for pupils' achievement, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, due to the weaknesses in the design and delivery of the curriculum in some subjects, a number of pupils do not build on their learning well enough. As a result, pupils' achievement across subjects is variable.

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

The local governing body and trustees hold the school to account well. Recently they have made considerable changes to staffing and policies. This has improved the capacity within the school to address weaknesses in the quality of education. The school engages well with parents and carers to support pupils' education. For instance, parents are regularly involved in discussions that keep them informed about how well their children are achieving. The school ensures that it considers staff's workload when making changes. This supports staff's well-being.

With support from the trust, a small number of curriculum areas have been successfully redesigned. Nevertheless, these changes are relatively new. In other subjects, the school's work to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced is at an early stage of development. This prevents some pupils, including those with SEND, from gaining the knowledge that they need to succeed in later learning.

The delivery of the curriculum is variable. At times, the learning activities that pupils complete do not promote a deep enough understanding of the curriculum. Pupils also lack the opportunity to meaningfully connect new subject content with prior knowledge. Some teachers do not check the learning that pupils may have missed or forgotten. This limits how well teachers effectively address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some pupils do not learn new concepts and topics as well as they should.

The school swiftly and effectively identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. However, as with other pupils in school, their achievement is uneven. This is because, at times, activities are not adapted well enough to ensure that pupils with SEND can access curriculum content.

The school has improved its systems to identify the specific barriers that cause some pupils to have insecure reading knowledge. The support that these pupils receive is effective in helping them to become confident and fluent readers. Nonetheless, the school has not been as successful in promoting reading for pleasure. Many pupils do not read widely or often.

Pupils have responded well to the new behaviour systems. Most pupils are committed to their learning. They respect their peers and teachers. In the main, pupils are punctual to lessons and attend school regularly.

Pupils are prepared well for life beyond school. For instance, pupils learn to understand and respect different faiths and cultures. They value leading a range of clubs, charity events, school performances and assemblies. Such activities help pupils to think about others and to serve their school community.

Pupils receive age-appropriate careers education, advice and guidance. Older pupils, including those with SEND, appreciate how well leaders prepare them for their next steps, for instance impartial careers advice to make informed choices about their future. Most pupils enter education, employment or training once they leave Year 11.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not well designed. It is not broad and balanced enough to ensure that pupils learn all that they should in order to achieve well. The school should ensure that it crafts a curriculum that enables pupils to build their knowledge across all subjects.
- The delivery of the curriculum is uneven across subjects and year groups. At times, pupils, including those with SEND, do not have the opportunity to build on their prior learning or deepen their understanding. The school should ensure that teachers have the training that they need to deliver a curriculum that helps pupils to know and remember more.
- Some subjects do not have effective strategies to identify gaps in pupils' learning. This hampers pupils from learning new subject content as well as they should. The school should make sure that pupils' learning is checked effectively and that appropriate action is taken to help overcome gaps in their knowledge.

- Reading for pleasure is not promoted well across school. Pupils do not read widely and often. The school should ensure that there are strategies in place to develop pupils' enjoyment in reading.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148866
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255943
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	833
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trustees</b>	Lesley Durosomo
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Braithwaite
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://burychurch.bury.sch.uk/">http://burychurch.bury.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Bury Church of England High School converted to become an academy school in January 2022. When its predecessor school, Bury Church of England High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Bishop Fraser Trust.
- The school is a Church of England academy in the Diocese of Manchester. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before March 2025.
- The current headteacher was appointed in June 2020.
- 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.
- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection. Inspectors also met with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the local governing body and the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees and the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the alternative providers.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during social times and during movement in school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, English, French, design and technology and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils.
- Inspectors also met with subject leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for personal development, pupil premium, behaviour and attendance, alternative provision, early careers teachers, careers, SEND and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, attendance and behaviour records. Inspectors also reviewed the governor and trustee meeting minutes as well as external reviews.
- 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 pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

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