

Inspection of a good school: Burford School

Cheltenham Road, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4PL

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Outcome

Burford School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Matthew Albrighton. This school is part of Burford School, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Matthew Albrighton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matthew Willis.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils keenly come to school each day, knowing that staff want the very best for them. Across all year groups, pupils know the high expectations for both their and their friend's conduct. Should pupils have concerns or worries, they know that helpful support is available when needed.

Pupils describe extra activities as one of their favourite parts of the school day. They look forward to their clubs with anticipation. The wide variety of clubs and activities on offer mean that there is something for everyone. This results in many pupils getting involved, whether they are beginners or experts. Teachers join in too, for example learning musical instruments with groups of pupils. This not only encourages participation but also shows the school's commitment to life-long learning.

Sixth-form students value the help they receive from their teachers. They say that the sixth form allows them to follow their passions and study subjects that they like. As a result, they develop ambitious plans for their future. Sixth-form students are proud of their roles within the school such as leading cross-year-group activities or the school council. Younger pupils recognise the difference the school council makes and look forward to being role models for their peers when they are older.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all aspects of pupils' education. Curriculum development means that the knowledge pupils need is clearly identified resulting in precise lesson planning. A focus on key vocabulary helps pupils to explain their thinking. Teachers check what pupils know using methods that are consistent across all subjects. This means pupils

know how to use the feedback they receive. They say that they find these assessments useful and are confident that they will receive further guidance when needed.

Departments design lesson activities to support learning across a range of different classes. However, these activities do not routinely support individual pupil's learning as well as they could. This is because teachers are not always clear about pupils' prior knowledge and how the task will help them to learn more.

In addition, some disadvantaged pupils have previously not attained as well as their peers. The school recognises this and has put steps in place to precisely identify pupils' gaps in knowledge and then deliver targeted catch-up sessions. However, these have not yet had the impact that the school intends. Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remains a key focus for school leaders, including governors and trustees.

Reading and vocabulary are prioritised in all subjects. The school uses a variety of techniques to identify any areas where pupils need extra reading support. Pupils who are not yet fluent are helped with phonics sessions. The school's library provides a range of books for pupils. Pupil librarians play an active role, including the 'book hospital' where they repair any damaged or worn-out titles.

Processes are in place to identify and support any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils may have. Pupils with complex needs are particularly well known. Staff understand how to adapt their lessons or resources for them. However, planning and checking are not as systematic for pupils with less complex needs. This means that they do not benefit as much from necessary adaptations to their learning. The school is already aware of this and recent changes are now being implemented to remove this variation.

The school has high expectations of both pupils' behaviour and their readiness to learn. This is reflected in the school's rewards and sanctions systems. Around the school, pupils are calm, polite and friendly. In free time, pupils enjoy chatting with friends or being active playing sports with their peers. They appreciate the school's spacious site as it offers them numerous places to go. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is focused and lessons are rarely disrupted.

Pupils are familiar with the school values of 'Respect Participate Reach'. Many aspects of school life reflect these such as the house names. The school's 'pledges' reward pupils who consistently match the school's expectations and values. Pledges recognise the wide contribution pupils make such as consistently supporting others or striving to do their very best.

The school's conviction that 'by learning from each other, we can build a better society' is reflected in the well-developed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. The school has a clear understanding of how to match the teaching of important concepts with pupils' age and maturity. Pupils appreciate the wide range of guidance and discussions which they receive such as learning about positive relationships or the causes of homelessness. Careers education is incorporated into PSHE and is supported by careers

days. Pupils in Years 11 and 13 are well supported to make choices about moving on to their next phase of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Disadvantaged pupils do not always achieve as well as their peers across the curriculum and in examinations. Additionally, some of these pupils do not always gain as much from the wider personal development opportunities offered by the school. The school must monitor the impact of its initial developments in supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and resources do not consistently support all pupils to learn as much as they can. This means that some pupils are not consistently learning the ambitious curriculum that has been put in place. The school must continue its work in ensuring teachers have the expertise they need to ensure all pupils achieve highly.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2014.

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 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	138289
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10288021
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,461
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Willis
CEO of the trust	Matthew Albrighton
Headteacher	Matthew Albrighton
Website	www.burford.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a standalone academy.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of 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

- 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.

- The inspectors held meetings with school leaders, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders and other staff. Inspectors also spoke to a range of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, science and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- 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's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys, as well as speaking to staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

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