

Inspection of Batley Grammar School

Carlinghow Hill, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 0AD

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is John Hughes. This school is part of Batley Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Samantha Vickers, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Siraj Mayet.

What is it like to attend this school?

Batley Grammar School is a calm and welcoming environment. Its values of 'respect, community, resilience' are understood and shared across the school. This is apparent from the polite way the youngest children speak to each other, to the pride of older pupils in being part of the combined cadet force.

In lessons, pupils concentrate and work hard. Behaviour systems have recently been strengthened. This is helping to ensure that relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Pupils in all years are confident that they will get help if they are worried about something. School council members at primary and secondary work together with adults to ensure pupils have a voice in the development of the school. Pupils take great pride in the history and tradition of the school and its buildings.

In all year groups, teachers receive clear information about pupils. They use this to ensure that in lessons, pupils are supported to do well and achieve their best. For example, in the secondary phase, the development of the 'personalised learning centre' and the 'hub' mean that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the help they need to enjoy school and access a broad curriculum to prepare them for the future.

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

Leaders' vision of a strong school community is realised in the design and provision of the school curriculum. The development of on-site alternatives for those pupils struggling with mainstream provision and the use of trust resources, such as the 'SMART' academy, ensure that the needs of all pupils are considered. In primary, tailored adult support is targeted at disadvantaged pupils. This ensures all pupils can access the curriculum and supports the development of a culture of togetherness, which is evident across the school.

In most subjects, the curriculum identifies the most important knowledge pupils need. 'Connect' activities in lessons help pupils to remember what they learn. For example, primary-age pupils were enthusiastic when recalling learning about electric circuits in science. Older secondary-age pupils spoke with confidence about different artistic techniques they had learned about.

In some subjects, the curriculum does not precisely identify the specific knowledge pupils need to learn. Leaders also recognise they should strengthen the sharing of good practice across primary and secondary phases so there is more precision and purpose in how the curriculum builds from the early years to key stage 4. Sometimes, in early years, the design of play-based activities does not support the intention of the curriculum, for example in developing precise subject-specific vocabulary.

Support for those at the early stages of reading is strong across the school. For the youngest pupils, including children in early years, there is a strong foundation in phonics due to the expertise of staff and the consistency with which the phonics curriculum is

delivered. Primary-age pupils are enthusiastic about the books they read. They understand how class reading books connect to the curriculum they study in, for example, history. In the secondary provision, pupils are supported through different interventions to develop fluency, expression, comprehension and decoding. Identification of pupils' specific needs ensures this provision is targeted appropriately.

Attendance is strong. Strategies such as targeted phone calls support vulnerable pupils to come to school regularly. Attendance is rising for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils. Teachers communicate their instructions and expectations clearly. Pupils understand the work they are asked to complete. This contributes to the positive relationships evident across the school.

An appropriate personal, social, health and economic education curriculum and careers programme are provided. In addition, the school uses employment fairs organised by the trust effectively. Primary-age pupils are invited to school-based careers events. In secondary, there are opportunities for older pupils to work with their younger peers on reading activities. The school offers a range of activities for pupils such as the school production of 'Annie', which is currently in rehearsal. In the primary phase, pupils celebrate birthdays together. These routines help to build a sense of friendship and respect in keeping with the school's ethos. Stronger oversight of the links between primary and secondary provision would help to create more purposeful opportunities for pupils to work together on different events.

Leaders, with effective support from the trust, have introduced the 'Stronger Together' forum for parents and carers. This ensures the school builds productive partnerships for the benefit of pupils. Governors and trustees support the school's work to develop and enhance staff well-being programmes. Staff are proud to work at the school. While the school is ambitious for all pupils, there are times when secondary and primary colleagues do not work as closely as they could, for example in designing the curriculum.

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 in the curriculum, component knowledge is not precisely identified. This means pupils cannot build a more sophisticated body of knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that the important knowledge and skills pupils should learn are set out clearly in line with best practice in the school.
- In early years, some activities are not precise enough in their design to ensure pupils are taught appropriate knowledge to prepare them for key stage 1. This means children are occasionally not as well prepared for key stage 1 as they could be. Leaders

should ensure they design precise curriculum activities to support the learning of the most important knowledge for pupils.

- The connection between leadership of primary and secondary phases does not consistently ensure oversight of important aspects of school provision. This includes, but is not limited to, personal development. This means there are differences in the quality of experience for pupils at primary and secondary. Leaders should ensure that they design and implement systems for strategic oversight and collaboration at all levels of school provision.

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	137487
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10338289
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,006
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Siraj Mayet
CEO of the trust	Samantha Vickers
Headteacher	John Hughes
Website	www.batleygrammar.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Batley Grammar School is part of the Batley Multi Academy Trust. The school has joined this trust since the last inspection.
- Since the last inspection, there has also been significant change in the leadership of the school, including the appointment of a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The school makes use of four alternative provisions, one of which is unregistered.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 the with headteacher, the head of primary provision, the CEO of the Batley Multi Academy Trust and other members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also spoke with a governors and trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in modern foreign languages and geography.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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. Inspectors also considered the ways in which the school manages low-level concerns about staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, including single-sex groups of pupils, in both formal meetings and at social times.
- Inspectors visited a sample of extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors met with leaders for the provision of SEND, visited the school’s specialist settings to support pupils with SEND and spoke to leaders for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils and parents, through Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Tudor Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
John Davie	Ofsted Inspector
Shameem Hussain	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Lomas	Ofsted Inspector

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