

Inspection of Bramhall High School

Seal Road, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 2JT

Inspection dates: 25–26 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are warm and friendly to each other and to visitors. Year 7 pupils say that it is easy to settle into their new school.

Pupils and parent and carers say that behaviour is good. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. The corridors are calm. Pupils say bullying does not happen very often. They are confident that their teachers will deal with it well if they report it.

Pupils listen to their teachers and each other. They work hard in lessons. They are proud of the work that they produce. They know that their teachers will help them. Leaders have high expectations for their pupils' behaviour and achievement. However, leaders have not ensured that all pupils benefit from a high-quality curriculum during their time in key stage 3.

Pupils engage in many extra-curricular activities. Most pupils attend the many lunchtime clubs that are available. Pupils also raise money for charity. There is a range of trips both abroad and in this country. For example, there has been a music trip to Salzburg and a joint geography and geology trip to Switzerland.

Pupils are encouraged to be active and participate in a variety of sports. They are encouraged to take on responsibility, for example as anti-bullying ambassadors or prefects.

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

Leaders have brought about considerable improvement since the last inspection. They have focused on preparing pupils to be successful in their external examinations at the end of Year 11. Their actions have led to a steady improvement in pupils' GCSE examination results in the last three years. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils in key stage 3 benefit from a curriculum that is as ambitious as that outlined in the national curriculum.

During Year 8, pupils choose which optional subjects they will study in preparation for their GCSE examinations. They stop learning the subjects that they do not opt for at the end of Year 8. This means that pupils have a limited depth and breadth of knowledge in the subjects that they choose not to study in key stage 4. Their learning in these subjects is restricted. This in turn limits the knowledge and understanding that they can draw upon in their further studies and later life.

The limitations of the key stage 3 curriculum particularly affect those pupils who already have gaps in their knowledge when they join the school. There are times when some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) struggle to keep up. These pupils do not achieve as highly as other pupils in the school.

In some subjects, such as science, mathematics and English, teachers help pupils to remember previous learning. However, in other subjects, teachers do not routinely provide activities to help pupils to recall prior knowledge. Many of the pupils that spoke to inspectors could not remember what they had previously been taught.

Behaviour throughout the school has improved. Pupils are considerate and respectful. The dining area and playground are lively but friendly places to be. Pupils are attentive, focused and keen to learn. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

A small proportion of pupils have difficulty in regulating their own behaviour. Leaders put support in place to help these pupils to engage in their learning. The proportion of pupils that are excluded from school is reducing. That said, far too many disadvantaged pupils are still excluded from school.

The diversity of the school's population is celebrated. Pupils take part in a range of festivals from different cultures throughout the school year. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. They understand that all people should be treated equally regardless of their background or beliefs. Leaders encourage pupils to be confident and responsible citizens.

The importance of good attendance has a high profile throughout the school. Most pupils attend school regularly. Few pupils are routinely absent. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is considerably lower than that of other pupils nationally.

Staff are appreciative of the support that they receive from leaders. They feel that leaders take their well-being into consideration.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are well trained to protect pupils. They understand the school's safeguarding procedures. They are aware of the need to share any concerns. They do so promptly.

Pupils feel safe and cared for. There is always somebody to talk to when they need help. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Limitations in the key stage 3 curriculum offer close down early pupils' opportunities to develop a deep knowledge of the subjects that they are taught. Leaders should develop the curriculum further by identifying where subject knowledge and content have been narrowed or reduced and take action to address this, thus increasing the depth and breadth of pupils' learning in key stage 3. Leaders need to make sure that all pupils benefit from a curriculum that is at least as ambitious as the national curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers routinely provide pupils with activities that help them to recall previous knowledge that they have learned. This will help pupils to remember important knowledge for the long term.
- Although the number of exclusions has reduced in recent years, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are excluded remains high. Leaders need to further support these pupils to regulate their own behaviour more effectively.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is considerably lower than that of other pupils nationally. Leaders need to further support these pupils to attend school regularly.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	106139
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10087828
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,026
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Brown
Headteacher	Lynne Fox
Website	http://bhsweb.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school currently uses alternative provision at Broadstones School, Pendlebury and Cedars to contribute to the education of a small number of key stage 4 pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. We held meetings with senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- We reviewed documentation, which included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and the school development plan. We scrutinised information about attendance and behaviour.
- We considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 167 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as parents' comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. We considered the 192 responses to a questionnaire for pupils and the 79 responses to a questionnaire for staff.

- We focused deeply on science, geography, art and physical education during the inspection. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. We also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- We reviewed a range of documentation about the school. This included information about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and support for pupils. We also spoke to representatives of the alternative provision used by the school.

Inspection team

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