

Ribblesdale School

Queen's Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1EJ

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their starting points, students make good progress and reach standards which are above average across a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students is good. The gaps between these students' attainment and progress and that of other students is narrower than seen nationally.
- Teaching is good. Teachers' questioning is used well to push students to think hard and express themselves fully. This enhances their oral and communication skills.
- Students' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves well in lessons and as they move around the school.
- Students' attitudes to learning are positive. They work hard and follow instructions well. They enjoy their learning because activities capture their interest.
- Students' attendance is above average and they are always punctual to school and lessons. They arrive to lessons well prepared for learning.
- Students are safe in school and say they feel safe. They understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet.
- Leaders have worked effectively to ensure that teaching has improved since the last inspection. As a result, the achievement of different groups of students has also improved and is now good.
- Middle leaders have a clear view of their role to ensure improvements have been made. They work closely and effectively with senior leaders. Together, they have communicated plans for development effectively and clearly. As a result, teaching and achievement are now good.
- Governors challenge leaders well and, as such, have effected improvements in the quality of teaching and the achievement of students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not secure outstanding achievement for students.
- Checks made on students' learning do not always result in teachers providing activities closely matched to learning needs.
- The achievement of the lower-ability students and some groups of students with special educational needs is not as consistently good as that of other groups of students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of part lessons, two of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to students during lessons and at break times. They also met formally with groups of students from Key Stages 3 and 4. The team also observed a tutorial session and an assembly.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work to monitor teaching and looked at case studies of certain students' needs and students' work in their books. They also reviewed a range of documents, including the school's arrangements and policies for safeguarding, performance management procedures and the students' attendance data. In addition, they looked at information about students' progress and attainment.
- Inspectors considered the views of 176 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the school's survey of parents and pupils over the past academic year, as well as responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Fiona McNally, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British.
- There is a smaller proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported through the pupil premium, than seen nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students or students who have special education needs is below the national average.
- A number of students attend alternative provision settings on a part-time basis. Oswaldtwistle, The Heights Free School and The Alternative School, which are pupil referral units, support students with behavioural needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and hence continue to raise achievement, particularly for lower ability students and those with special educational needs, by:
 - using the checks made on students' understanding to consistently provide activities which are matched closely to the learning needs of different groups of students
 - ensuring that the feedback given to students always matches the highest quality already seen in the school and that students respond to that feedback
 - ensuring lower ability students are able to achieve their best in learning activities by providing them with the support they need
 - ensuring that students with special educational needs always receive support that is closely matched to their individual needs
 - continuing to drive the recent improvements in special educational needs provision.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership has strengthened considerably since the last inspection, thanks to the strong lead of the headteacher and the support of the governing body. Leaders have effected strong improvements in the quality of teaching, which is now consistently good. In turn, students now achieve well.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers receive strong professional development opportunities, suited to individuals' specific needs, in order to improve classroom practice. As a result, teaching and achievement have improved. In addition, the focus to support the development of better attitudes to learning through more engaging teaching, has led to students' improved behaviour. The management of teachers' performance is good. It has ensured that teachers are accountable for students' performance at different examination and assessment points. As a result, the overall achievement of students is good. It has also meant that leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and the impact this has on students' achievement.
- Leaders judge the school's performance accurately. They rightly identify significant improvements in teaching, behaviour and achievement since the last inspection and are ambitious about the next steps to continue those improvements and move the school further forward. They are also aware of which areas are not as strong as others and are using the best practice seen in the school to support further improvement.
- Middle leaders are very clear about their role in the school. Senior leaders clearly communicate high expectations and all leaders, therefore, work well together to ensure that key priorities are realised. As a result, middle leaders feel they work with a good amount of autonomy and their views are respected by senior leaders and governors. They also feel well supported by senior leaders and believe there is a positive atmosphere that enables them to take considered opportunities in order to further enhance provision.
- The leadership of the provision for disadvantaged students is good. These students now achieve well and they make good progress during their time in school. Progress and attainment gaps are closing well and consistently across different subject areas. The pupil premium funding is used well to enhance these students' understanding of the importance of examinations and working hard. It is also used to provide these students with a wider range of life experiences, to foster better behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Leadership of the provision for students with special educational needs or who are disabled has strengthened recently and students' achievement is starting to improve as result. However, it is too early for the impact to be fully evident. Some of these students with special educational needs are still not achieving well as well as they should because they are not provided with support that focuses sharply enough on their individual needs. Those students who have a statement of special educational needs receive good support from well-trained teaching assistants and, therefore, achieve well over time.
- The assessment of students' achievement is regular and the system clearly identifies any underachievement when it occurs. This leads to timely discussions with teachers and regular checks on the impact of any extra support these students then receive. As a result, gaps in their learning are filled and they make good progress over time.
- The leadership of behaviour is strong. This is another area of improvement since the last inspection. School leaders have worked effectively to continue to improve attendance, reduce lateness to school and lessons and train staff to deal effectively and consistently with any low-level disruption in lessons. As a result, such disruption is rare and more serious misbehaviour has reduced.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Students enjoy a variety of subjects in both Key Stages 3 and 4. They are given useful careers information, advice and guidance to help them make choices about their next stages of learning, including information about post-16 providers and different pathways they can choose.
- School leaders ensure that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is enhanced well. The school's curriculum enrichment programme is outstanding in providing students with highly-effective teaching of subject areas which interest and engage them. Students learn about very pertinent issues, from terrorism to the positives and negatives of using social media websites. They report that the programme is interesting and inspectors' observation showed it to be a particular strength of the school. As a result of this programme and the different special events which support lessons, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses the local authority to assure the quality of the work it is doing. The local authority agrees with the school's accurate evaluation of its provision. It praises the effective work of the school over the

past two years and the rapid progress it has made to improve teaching, students' behaviour and achievement. Local authority support since the last inspection has been good, and has contributed to the improvements that the school has made. Now that leadership has strengthened, the local authority has been able to take a step back and let the school work increasingly independently.

- Although some students with special educational needs do not make rapid enough progress, the school strives hard to promote equal opportunities for all. This is evident in the improved achievement for different groups of students since the last inspection. As a result of the enrichment programme and the behaviour system, there is very little discrimination and, when this does occur, leaders deal with it swiftly so that it is not repeated. The school fosters positive relationships between different groups of students and they understand that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are effective. As a result, students are safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. Staff are trained regularly to ensure they can support students' safety.
- Students who attend the alternative provision do so regularly and achieve well because their behavioural needs are well met. The school's leaders regularly liaise with the alternative providers to check on students' progress and behaviour.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors have a clear understanding about the school's performance data and the quality of teaching. They cite specific detail about the school's strengths and where improvements have been most significant.
 - They support leaders well. The challenges they have provided for leaders have been a strong contributing factor to the school's significant improvements in teaching, achievement and behaviour since the last inspection.
 - The school's finances are well managed. The pupil premium funding has been used well and has had a positive impact on these students' achievement.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the performance management system and, with the headteacher and other senior leaders, have ensured that it has been used well to make teachers more accountable for their performance and hence to improve the quality of teaching. They use the system, to reward good and better teaching, as well as tackling underperformance, where necessary. As a result, achievement has improved since the last inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are proud of their school and report how much behaviour has improved in the last two years. They consistently conduct themselves well and consider each other's needs when moving around busy corridors. In class, they listen to the teacher and each other respectfully and always follow instructions immediately.
- Students rarely disrupt learning or waste time. Behaviour records show a decline in the number of sanctions for low-level disruption over the past two years. They also show that more serious misbehaviour has reduced, although the number of exclusions is still slightly above average.
- Students display positive attitudes to learning. This is because activities are generally well matched to their needs and are engaging and interesting. Teachers are skilful in dealing with any minor disruption so that it does not escalate. They also have the respect of the students, who believe teachers care about them and help them to do well in their examinations. The students' willingness to participate orally in lessons demonstrates their enthusiasm for learning and also has a positive impact on the progress they make.
- Leaders have worked hard and effectively to continue to improve attendance, which is above average. They have also succeeded in virtually eradicating late arrival at school or at lessons.
- Staff use the behaviour system to warn students where behaviour does not meet their high expectations. This consistency of use means students are clear about the school's expectations of their behaviour and they report the system is applied fairly.
- The students who attend alternative providers do so regularly. They also behave well which is positive, given that the reason many of them attend such provision is because of poor behaviour in the past. Students, parents and staff all believe that behaviour is good and well managed and has improved considerably since the last inspection.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe and can explain why. They appreciate the presence of staff at different times of the day, so that they can consult them about personal issues or about their work. The presence of student leaders also helps them feel that there is always someone to talk to if they have a concern. Students know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when they use the internet.
- School leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate and regular training in safety and safeguarding. This includes higher-level training for staff with particular responsibility for students' safety and pastoral needs.
- The school ensures that students are aware of different forms of bullying, including prejudiced-based and cyber bullying. As a result, students know what constitutes bullying, whether it occurs at school or when using the internet at home, and to whom they should report such bullying if it occurs.
- The school's enrichment programme gives very close consideration to the issues facing young people in modern Britain. As a result of regular and engaging lessons, which go beyond academic learning, the students are very aware of how to protect themselves from certain potential dangers and are very confident to discuss these matters with adults and their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is strong and is having a good impact on achievement. As a result, more students are exceeding expected progress when compared with national averages. There has also been an increase in the proportion accessing higher level work and, therefore, reaching higher levels of attainment across different subjects. Teachers know their students well. This generates a positive climate for learning, which students value.
- Teachers always mark students' work and check what they have understood. The large majority offer specific feedback to which students respond. This regular correction of work leads to improvements. However, in a small minority of classes this does not happen regularly, with the result that progress is slower. Teachers' questioning of students is a consistent strength across the different subject areas. Students are always expected to offer full answers and to provide reasons for them. This ensures that students have to think hard. Supplementary questions are also used to challenge the most able even further. As a result, oral and communication skills are taught well and students display a great deal of confidence when speaking to adults and in front of their peers.
- Teachers' planning for lessons is careful and mostly takes account of students' needs. In the best instances, teachers pinpoint exactly what students need to do to move learning on very rapidly. As a result, progress is outstanding. Occasionally, progress is slowed because, although the teachers check on students' understanding, they do not take this fully into account when planning follow-up activities. The teaching of literacy, including reading and numeracy, is good. Students who enter the school with lower than expected skills are given catch-up sessions to improve their reading and mathematics skills and the impact of these sessions is good. Students make rapid progress in Year 7, meaning they are far better prepared for their learning at the school across all subject areas. Literacy is a focus for all subjects and, when marking students' work, teachers identify inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, progress in English is good.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly since the last inspection, with more focus on students applying their numeracy skills to real-life situations. As a result, students are now making good progress in mathematics.
- The teaching for lower-ability students and some students with special educational needs is not always as effective as it should be. Those who have a statement of special educational needs achieve well and receive strong support from teaching assistants. However, those students whose needs are not as significant do not always make sufficient progress because the support they receive from some teachers is not always effective and their needs are not considered closely enough.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students are achieving well. From their different individual starting points, they make good progress during their time at the school. The proportion reaching above average levels of attainment is increasing. This is the case across subjects, including in English, mathematics, science and humanities.
- Disadvantaged students are now making good progress from their starting points, compared with others nationally and their attainment is also rising. This demonstrates an improvement since the last inspection

and means the gaps in the progress and attainment between these students and their non-disadvantaged peers in school, and nationally, are closing.

- The progress of lower-ability students, including that of disabled students and those with special educational needs, is not consistently good. Overall, the achievement of these students has improved since the last inspection. In addition, those students with the most severe learning difficulties are doing well, thanks to good teaching and support by teaching assistants. However, those students with moderate learning difficulties do not consistently achieve as well as they should and the gaps between these students and their peers are not closing quickly enough. Provision does not always meet their needs fully because teachers do not always quickly adjust activities where difficulties in learning become apparent.
- The achievement of the most able students has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In a range of subjects, the proportion of the most able pupils exceeding expected progress is higher than average. The proportion reaching the higher grades in GCSE is also increasing.
- Students who attend other providers for part of their curriculum do well on the alternative courses provided because these have been carefully selected to suit their needs. These pupils also do well in the core subjects that they study at school. The school no longer enters students early for examinations in mathematics.
- The attainment gaps between disadvantaged students in the school and their peers are closing. In 2014, in English and mathematics, disadvantaged students were less than a grade behind their peers in school and just over a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. The gap has narrowed from the time when the school was last inspected. It continues to close for those currently in the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119716
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	462328

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrie Whittaker
Headteacher	Stephen Cox
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2013
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