

The Burton Borough School

Audley Avenue, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7DS

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Wide-ranging changes made by the new principal came too late to ensure good outcomes for pupils in all GCSE examinations in 2017.
- Despite leaders' best efforts to recruit high-quality permanent teachers, there have been many temporary teachers in the school which has disrupted continuity. This is an important reason why pupils do not make consistently strong progress.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including the quality of teachers' planning from individual pupils' starting points.
- Although improving, pupils do not make good progress in science.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop the skills to write at length, when this is appropriate.
- The most able pupils, including disadvantaged pupils who are most able, are not achieving their potential. They are not challenged sufficiently in their learning.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils and set work that is sometimes too easy. Pupils are not routinely challenged, and their work is not always presented well.

The school has the following strengths

- The new principal is highly ambitious for the pupils. Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of how to make the necessary improvements to pupils' progress. They are beginning to improve teaching, especially in English.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained, and records are clear and secure.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful, polite and well mannered. Relationships between pupils and staff are highly positive.
- Governance is effective. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. They challenge senior leaders effectively.
- The broad and balanced curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of clubs and after-school activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' achievement, particularly for the most able pupils, by making sure that all teachers:
 - provide work that is appropriately challenging for all pupils and makes them think hard and engage more actively in their learning
 - provide pupils with opportunities across the curriculum to develop the skills to write at length, when appropriate
 - make clear their expectations for presentation to encourage pupils to have pride in their work.
- Accelerate the improvements to teaching and learning in science by ensuring that teachers:
 - are fully aware of any gaps in skills and knowledge that pupils have, and use this information to plan activities which help pupils to catch up quickly
 - use assessment information, including the outcomes from tests, to plan activities that help pupils to correct errors and misconceptions.
- Further improve the impact of leadership and management on school improvement by:
 - robustly evaluating the impact that strategies to improve teaching and learning have on accelerating pupils' progress, particularly for the most able pupils and those pupils who are disadvantaged
 - continuing to reduce the need for temporary teachers by recruiting and retaining specialist subject teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the school has had three different principals. The present principal has been in post since September 2016. Since that time she has, with the support of governors, made considerable changes to the way in which the school is organised. For example, the creation of 'small schools' has allowed staff to get to know the pupils in their school well and address their academic and pastoral needs holistically. The principal has a very clear vision and is highly ambitious for the pupils.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking effective action to make improvements. They have implemented strategies and systems that are starting to make a difference to pupils' outcomes. Leaders at all levels can show how these actions are starting to work. However, it is too early to see a substantial, measurable impact on the progress that pupils are making.
- Over the last three years, there has been a large turnover of staff. Long-term staff absence has also affected the quality of teaching. Recruiting effective new teachers has proved very difficult, especially in science. Leaders are working hard to ensure that the school is fully staffed from September 2018 and staff absence has reduced significantly.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum that ensures that all pupils have access to a wide range of subjects. Pupils benefit from a variety of extra-curricular activities, which helps them develop additional skills and talents, for example pupils have taken part in an expedition to Borneo and members of the Burton Borough Band have competed in international competitions.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is well planned. A variety of opportunities help pupils to become reflective and caring citizens. For example, all pupils study religious education, enabling them to develop their understanding of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds.
- Pupils are well prepared to enable them to take an active role in modern Britain. Pupils in all year groups benefit from a wide range of opportunities to take part in enrichment activities, in and outside the classroom. Pupils take part in life skills lessons and 'extending and enriching curriculum' days; for example, inspectors observed pupils discussing 'When did banter become a euphemism for bullying?'
- Staff value the professional development provided by the school's leaders. Many staff spoke positively about the training they had received on questioning and higher-order thinking skills and how this was supporting pupils to make better progress. Due to the difficulty in recruitment and temporary teachers, teaching in some subjects is not improving as rapidly as it could. However, in subjects where this is more stable, such as English, it is improving quickly.
- Trainee teachers feel well supported by school leaders. They value their induction, professional development and support they receive from leaders and colleagues.
- The school uses the catch-up premium for Year 7 pupils in English and mathematics successfully. Pupils' needs are accurately evaluated when they join the school. The school's assessment information shows that a large proportion of pupils supported by

the funding make strong progress, especially in their literacy skills.

- Leaders have well-thought-through strategies to support disadvantaged pupils. The school has recently added specific help and focused activities tailored to the individual needs of each pupil. While past outcomes show that these activities are not yet having the impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress compared to other pupils nationally, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3 is now similar to that of other pupils. Leaders' plans for further improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are clear and well focused.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good and improving, and well led. Pupils' individual needs are well supported because additional funding is carefully and effectively targeted.
- Leaders are aware that progress of the current Year 11 pupils is not secure. Leaders are taking strong actions to ensure that outcomes for all groups of pupils improve rapidly. There are more rigorous systems in place to check pupils' progress and to ensure that assessment information is reliable. Senior leaders and heads of department regularly monitor pupils' work to ensure that underachievement is identified and addressed as early as possible.
- The local authority supports the school effectively. The school's adviser knows the school well and supports leaders in their self-assessment activities. The school takes an active role in the local inclusion partnership and is successful in supporting pupils who have previously had a less than positive experience of education.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is experienced and provides both good support and effective challenge to school leaders. Governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors are committed to the school and share the principal's ambitious vision and ethos. They gather information systematically about the school from a wide range of staff and feel better informed about where the school is now. They carry out their statutory duties effectively.
- Governors allow leaders to innovate. They support leaders' innovations and make sure that leaders monitor any new initiatives carefully.
- Governors take responsibility for improving their own skills. They have audited their skills and are taking effective action to address any gaps in their knowledge.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding are appropriately trained. All staff have up-to-date training and know what to look out for to keep pupils safe. New staff have an effective induction, and this means that they know the school's safeguarding processes before working with pupils.
- Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported. Staff use a multi-agency inclusion panel to ensure that they work very well with parents and carers and the local

authority to protect pupils in need of care and support.

- The majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children feel safe in school. Pupils say that they feel safe and they know to whom they can turn if they have concerns about themselves or others.
- Statutory procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are efficiently managed and robust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable between subjects and within them to support consistently strong progress. These fluctuations also occur in some subjects where the turnover of staff has been high. Many parents also raised this concern in the feedback they provided to Ofsted. There is, however, some effective teaching in the school, for example in English, art, music and physical education.
- Teachers' planning is not consistently well matched to pupils' learning needs, particularly for the most able pupils. This is because assessment information is not routinely used to pitch work at the right level for pupils. This results in work which lacks challenge and is sometimes too easy for pupils.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in writing at length in different subjects when it is appropriate. Teachers have developed pupils' speaking skills so that they can confidently talk about what they have learned. However, this lack of opportunity means that pupils are not able to demonstrate their learning well in their written work.
- Some pupils lack resilience and positive attitudes to learning in lessons where expectations are not in line with the culture of challenge that leaders are trying to develop. As a result, not all lesson time is used productively because some pupils do not concentrate well enough and get easily distracted.
- Teachers do not set helpful homework for pupils. Pupils and parents reported that too often homework was not meaningful and did not help pupils learn. Teachers do not follow the policy set out by the school's leaders nor use the online tool available to them consistently.
- Teaching in some subjects is effective because teachers use their strong subject knowledge and passion for the subject to enthuse and engage pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils make strong progress.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and are beginning to use examination-style questions and terminology in lessons. However, they are not used regularly enough for pupils to feel confident about what they will be required to do in examinations.
- Teachers are developing the use of questions that require pupils to think deeply. Where questioning is used well it is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers are continuing to develop this element of their teaching to challenge all pupils, particularly the most able pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are welcoming, polite and courteous to others in and around school.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' welfare is supported both in and out of school. For example, they teach pupils about sexting and online safety. They make sure that pupils know about risks they may face, including sexual exploitation, consent and drug awareness. As a result, pupils feel more confident and know how to keep themselves safe.
- The prevailing culture of mutual respect prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils work and socialise well together, valuing and respecting each other's views.
- Pupils told inspectors that the pastoral staff in the new 'small schools' provide good support when pupils have personal or emotional issues. Pupils are confident that staff will help them.
- Pupils' mental well-being is a priority for leaders. Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to guidance about mental health and receive appropriate support when it is required. During the inspection, pupils told inspectors about how important and valuable this mental well-being provision is to them.
- Pupils told inspectors that there have been some bullying incidents in school, but that their teachers deal with them well. A number of pupils raised concerns through the inspection questionnaires about bullying. Inspectors scrutinised the systems for dealing with bullying, the training for teachers and the way in which incidents in the past have been dealt with. The instances of bullying are reducing over time and are managed appropriately.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have established a clear system of 'phases' that pupils say promotes good behaviour. In most lessons, and in all year groups, pupils' behaviour is improving.
- Around the school site, in halls and corridors, pupils are generally calm and respectful of one another. Inspectors' observations and the school's own records show that this is typical.
- Pupils look smart in their new uniform, are punctual and well prepared for lessons. As a result, learning time is hardly ever wasted. Most pupils respond promptly to instructions from teachers and support staff.
- Permanent exclusions are very rare, and fixed-term exclusions are below national levels. Both fixed-term and repeat fixed-term exclusions are falling, and this reflects the increased focus leaders have placed on good behaviour. The number of exclusions this year is much lower than at the same time last year, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders arrange appropriate alternative provision placements, and pupils benefit from this. Placements help to improve pupils' attendance, behaviour and progress. Leaders

monitor these pupils well at their placements to make sure that they are safe and that their personal development and welfare are secure.

- In a small minority of lessons, a few pupils lose concentration when teaching is not pitched appropriately or when they do not know what is expected of them. When this occurs, some pupils, especially boys and those whose prior attainment is low, are less likely to produce work that is well presented and complete.
- Attendance is broadly average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the attendance of other pupils in the school. However, because staff work closely with pupils and their families, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- While standards overall have been above average, Year 11 pupils who left the school in 2017 made less progress than they should have, considering their high starting points.
- In both mathematics and science, pupils have underachieved for some time. This is due, in part, to the lack of permanent science and mathematics teachers at the school.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) core academic subjects at key stage 4 was well below average. Progress in English was average, after being significantly below average previously.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils did not get good enough grades in a range of subjects across the English Baccalaureate. The outcomes for this group were affected by a small group of pupils who did particularly badly. However, their progress overall was still below the national average.
- On average, the most able pupils attain less well than other most able pupils nationally in English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages. In other subject areas, they attain similar grades to other pupils from similar starting points. In most year groups, progress for the most able pupils is improving, but as yet they are not reaching their full academic potential because teaching is not challenging enough.
- Although improving, the progress of current pupils is not consistently strong. There is too much variability because pupils are not always taught well enough.
- Pupils' progress is stronger in key stage 3 than it is in key stage 4. An important reason for this is because younger pupils have had far fewer temporary teachers.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is better this year than in previous years. Teachers have worked to improve these pupils' confidence and when they are falling behind there is effective support put in place to help them catch up. However, there are still some disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4 who do not make good enough progress, given their starting points.
- The current progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with that of other pupils. These pupils receive specific support from teaching assistants and from the inclusion team. As a result, they are making good progress at key stage 3.
- Pupils read widely and with better fluency than in the past. Leaders have used reading intervention programmes effectively and their records show that pupils who were struggling with their reading are catching up with other pupils in the school.

- Pupils who attend alternative provision are well supported to make progress from their starting points. Inspectors scrutinised the alternative provision's records and found that these pupils are doing well. The school retains close links with these pupils to ensure that they are ready for the next stage in their learning.
- While pupils' progress across the school is still not as it should be, most are able to cope with the next stage of education, training or employment because standards are above national figures.

School details

Unique reference number	123574
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	10042835

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

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	1,060
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Scollay
Principal	Christine Raymont-Hall
Telephone number	01952 386500
Website	www.burtonborough.org.uk
Email address	burton.borough@taw.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school is slightly bigger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities support is below average. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is below average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils have taken up education placements at a range of alternative providers, including two local football clubs, NOVA training and Rodbaston College.
- The principal took up her post in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with governors, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, middle leaders, a group of staff who are new to the school and a parent.
- Pupils' current progress was evaluated by scrutinising pupils' work and looking at information on pupils' progress and current levels of achievement.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils both formally and informally, took account of the 254 responses to an online pupil survey and observed lessons in all key stages.
- Parents' and carers' views were considered through the 156 responses to Parent View, including the 125 free-text responses, two letters from parents and the school's own record of parental surveys.
- The views of staff were considered through the 72 responses to an online survey, and inspectors spoke with many more informally.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including information about leaders' self-evaluation, safeguarding, bullying, attendance, behaviour and exclusions.
- Inspectors observed learning in 51 lessons. Some observations were done jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited tutor time and observed pupils' conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Lois Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Adele Mills	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
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