

Inspection of West Craven High School

Kelbrook Road, Barnoldswick, Lancashire BB18 5TB

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The principal of this school is John Bates. This school is part of the Pendle Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anita Ghidotti, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rob Pheasey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils at this school have a strong appetite for learning. However, pupils do not achieve as highly as they should. This is because, in some subjects, the curriculum is not delivered effectively.

The school has considerably increased its expectations of how pupils should behave. Many pupils now behave well. They are polite and articulate. However, there remain some pupils who do not engage as positively as they should with their learning.

Most pupils demonstrate respect towards each other. They do not perceive bullying to be an issue and they value the support that they receive from staff. However, at times, some pupils are subject to the use of derogatory and discriminatory language by their peers. While pupils are aware that the school does not tolerate this, sometimes they are not confident to report it. This means that, at times, when the use of derogatory language occurs, it is not swiftly addressed.

There are opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs and to take on roles of responsibility in the school. For example, the school has a number of 'ambassadors' and some pupils have completed training in mental health and anti-bullying approaches. Pupils also take part in a range of competitions and events.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. This includes careful consideration of the choice of courses available to pupils in key stage 4, as well as the essential knowledge that pupils should acquire over time.

In some subjects, pupils achieve well. In part, this is because staff's expectations of what pupils can do are high. Moreover, in these subjects, teachers typically deliver the curriculum well. Teachers routinely check that pupils are not developing misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. This helps pupils to build securely on what they know already in these subjects.

In other subjects, staff's expectations of what pupils can learn are not as high as they should be. In these subjects, staff do not select activities that are well matched to the ambition of the curriculum. Added to this, staff do not check carefully enough what pupils know and can do. As a result, staff do not know whether pupils have grasped key concepts or when adaptations are necessary for pupils to learn successfully. Pupils do not achieve well in these subjects. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged.

Reading has been prioritised and the school provides many opportunities for pupils to read regularly. There is support in place for those pupils who struggle to read accurately and fluently. However, this support is not as effective as it should be,

which hinders some pupils from becoming confident and proficient readers. Nonetheless, the school is beginning to address this issue.

The school has effective strategies in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. Staff receive appropriate information which equips them to support pupils with SEND well. However, the weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum mean that some pupils with SEND do not learn successfully.

Although most pupils behave well and know what is expected of them, there are still a small number of pupils who do not behave well enough. This means that, from time to time, some pupils' learning is disrupted.

There are groups of pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should. This includes some pupils with SEND and some who are disadvantaged. The school has taken considerable steps to provide the right support for these pupils and their families. As a result of the school's actions, many of these pupils have improved their rates of attendance.

The school has invested considerably in pupils' personal development. Pupils receive extensive advice about careers, as well as learning what it means to be an active citizen through their work in eco-club and other community events. Pupils are provided with appropriate support that helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps when they leave school. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to meet with local employers and to visit colleges.

Pupils with SEND are given additional support to help them to acquire the knowledge that they need in readiness for life in modern Britain. However, some pupils' experiences of school are variable. At times, some of these pupils encounter homophobic and racist comments.

There is now greater strength and stability in the staffing and leadership of the school. The trust has provided extensive support to ensure that where there have been gaps in staffing, disruption to pupils' learning has been minimised. However, work to develop some aspects of leadership is ongoing. This includes sharpening the processes for evaluating the impact of the school's work. At times, this has hindered the pace of improvement.

Staff appreciate much of the support that they have been given. Governors and trustees have taken appropriate action to ensure that the well-being of staff is prioritised and that workload is fully considered.

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, staff's expectations of pupils' learning are not high enough. Staff do not select the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn the knowledge in the curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they should. The school should ensure that staff raise their expectations of pupils' achievement, and that the delivery of the curriculum supports pupils to successfully build their knowledge in these subjects.
- In some subjects, staff do not use assessment strategies well to check what pupils know and can do. This hinders staff from pinpointing pupils' misconceptions or gaps in knowledge and from using this information to shape future teaching. The school should ensure that staff are suitably equipped to swiftly identify and remedy pupils' gaps in knowledge so that pupils can learn well in these subjects.
- Some pupils do not behave as well as they should in lessons, and some other pupils subject their peers to the use of discriminatory language. This disrupts some pupils' learning and hinders other pupils from having a positive experience in school. The school should ensure that staff apply the behaviour policy consistently well so that any unacceptable behaviour is addressed rapidly and appropriately.
- The school's work to strengthen some aspects of its quality assurance processes is at an earlier stage. From time to time, there are some areas where improvement has not been as rapid as it could be. The school should ensure that it has robust processes in place to accurately identify and address weaknesses in all aspects of its 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	142856
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10337709
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	616
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rob Pheasey
Principal	John Bates
Website	www.westcraven.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Pendle Education Trust.
- 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.
- The school makes use of four registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, the director of education and a range of other leaders. They also met with a number of teachers, including early career teachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, geography, art and design and physical education. They discussed the curriculum design with leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers about the curriculum from the lessons they visited.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with members of the board of trustees and the local academy council.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses and correspondence from other parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, both in response to Ofsted's online survey and from meetings with groups of pupils from across the school. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Zoe Enser, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Meldrum	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector

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