



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

BURY GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS

23 TO 24 NOVEMBER 2016



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Bury Grammar School Boys			
DfE number	351/6008			
Registered charity number	526622			
Address	Bury Grammar School Boys Tenterden Street Bury Lancashire BL9 0HN			
Telephone number	0161 6968600			
Email address	boysinfo@burygrammar.com			
Headmaster	Mr Richard Marshall			
Chair of Governors	Mr Laurence Goldberg			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils	498			
	Boys	498		
	Juniors	109		
	Seniors	297	Sixth Form	92
Inspection dates	23 to 24 November 2016			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and grade descriptors from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the junior and senior schools, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Tony Halliwell	Reporting inspector
Mr David Bown	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr James Fowler	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr David Goulbourn	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr John Sykes	Team inspector (Former Director of Studies, HMC school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
About the school	1
What the school seeks to do	1
About the pupils	1
Recommendations from previous inspections	1
2 KEY FINDINGS	3
Recommendations	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	6

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Bury Grammar School Boys was founded towards the end of the sixteenth century and was re-founded in 1725. It is one of the two Bury Grammar Schools, and is located near the centre of Bury in Greater Manchester. The school is a single-sex school for boys, comprising a junior school for ages 7 to 11 years and a senior school for ages 11 to 18 years, which includes a sixth form. The school is a registered charity and is overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has completed a new sports complex consisting of an artificial pitch, a multi-use games area and athletic facilities. Additionally, improvements in the information communication and technology (ICT) systems allow pupils and parents to access the school's computer systems remotely.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide an excellent learning environment in which each boy values academic success and where achievement is celebrated by all. Pupils are encouraged to develop a caring and tolerant attitude, whilst developing a sense of service and responsibility for their community. Additionally, the school seeks to work in partnership with parents to develop young men who are proud of their achievements and aspire to be role models.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from families living within a 20-mile radius of the school. Their ethnicity is mixed, reflecting that of the local area. There are 29 pupils who receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 16 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
1 st Year	Year 7
2 nd Year	Year 8
3 rd Year	Year 9
4 th Year	Year 10
5 th Year	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school was an ISI interim inspection in November 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:

- Improve the quality of teaching by introducing strategies which provide more opportunities for pupils to be active participants and independent learners.
- Continue to develop and promulgate assessment procedures so that they are used by all to inform teaching strategies and track pupils' progress.
- Make the quality of monitoring more rigorous at all levels.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils are hard-working and highly motivated.
- Pupils fully embrace a culture of measurable success across the school.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve high standards across the school.
- Pupils, in class, are sometimes given limited opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils show a genuine pride in their school and strongly support its aims and core values.
- Pupils enthusiastically celebrate their successes and that of their fellow pupils.
- Pupils show a caring and tolerant attitude to others in their diverse community.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Ensure that pupils are given more opportunities to engage in debate and discussion within the classroom in order to enhance their high-order thinking skills.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Both the junior and senior sections of the school are highly successful in meeting the school's aim to provide an excellent learning environment in which each pupil values academic success and where achievement is celebrated by all. Pupils' academic success, at all levels, is the result of focused monitoring of academic achievement, effort and independence. As a result, pupils receive targeted support which strongly influences academic outcomes by supporting pupil achievement.
- 3.3 The school's own assessments indicate that the pupils' ability has been consistently above the national average. The ability profile of the senior school is above the national average, with around two thirds of the pupils demonstrated to have above average ability. There are very few pupils who demonstrate ability which is below the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is below the national average. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2013 to 2015 and are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Performance at GCSE and A-level has been above the national average for maintained schools. Results for 2016 were consistent with previous years and results in IGCSE examinations have been similar to worldwide norms.
- 3.4 As a result, pupils' attainment at GCSE is good in relation to pupils of similar abilities and at A-level pupils make progress which is excellent in relation to pupils of similar abilities. The school makes careful use of assessment data to track pupils' progress across the age groups and this enables all pupils, including the more able and those with EAL and SEND, to make significant progress in relation to their difficulties or starting points, as shown by the positive value-added outcomes for these pupils. Pupils who require additional support, for example in mathematics and English in the senior school, attend directed study periods and work in the junior school is suitably planned to match the range of ability including that of pupils with a learning difficulty and more able pupils.
- 3.5 Pupils show an excellent attitude to their learning, as well as a willingness to acquire new skills and meet or exceed the targets set by their teachers, as demonstrated in a biology lesson where pupils were asked to produce innovative methods to extract juice from fruits. Older pupils were able to explain how use of the school's virtual learning environment had helped develop their research and project skills, increasing their subject knowledge. Pupils communicate clearly when conveying their understanding of complex topics and they listen carefully to others. At times, they are not given the opportunity to elucidate, debate and further develop ideas to challenge their understanding. Pupils readily accept responsibility for their own learning and are lively, hardworking and self-aware, responding enthusiastically to the academic and non-academic challenges available to them.
- 3.6 Pupil achievement is further promoted by the school's drive to ensure that success is celebrated at all levels, as seen in the 'Achiever assemblies', where pupils receive recognition for their efforts. Focused study skills days are offered to pupils in Years 7, 11 and 12 to improve their learning skills and increase their academic attainment. All pupils in the senior school take part in project-based research for a week in the summer term, working across age groups and key stages and, as a result, improve their ability to analyse problems and suggest solutions to topical issues. Pupil achievement is supported by the school's use of information and communication technology through its managed learning environment, enabling pupils to access the school's computer systems remotely, encouraging independent learning and research. Senior pupils take part in the school's HOTS programme (Higher Order Thinking Saturdays) which offers tuition and challenges to its own junior school pupils and those from local primary schools.
- 3.7 High quality leadership, management and governance ensures that the school fulfils its aims and a culture of self-evaluation and target setting strives to maintain the highest standards of pupil achievement across the school. The governing board committees are rigorous in ensuring regular policy review and the school leaders undertake regular observation of the educational provision. They also interact with staff, pupils and parents to ensure that they are fully informed. The school leadership

have encouraged an open-minded and reflective culture amongst their middle managers and leaders and, through this shared culture, leadership is positively affecting pupils' achievement.

- 3.8 Pupils achieve high levels of success in sport, drama and music through the extensive extra-curricular programme for all age groups. Pupils benefit from a range of activities offered before school, during the lunch break and on activity afternoons, all of which enable pupils to achieve success in a specialist interest area. Junior school pupils have achieved notable success in rugby, water polo, karate and fencing and one pupil attended the world BMX championships. Senior school pupils have excelled in rugby, football, basketball, cricket, water polo and athletics at either regional or national level and a pupil recently attended an Under 15 England football selection camp. Older pupils have opportunities to take part in leadership challenges through an international voluntary service scheme. Fifty-four pupils gained certification in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE), including 22 Silver and 10 Gold Awards. Additionally, pupils take part in, and are highly successful, in activities such as the local college's mathematics challenge, sign language qualifications and Royal Yachting Association (RYA) sail training awards. One pupil has received an Emergency Hero Award for his actions in a challenging situation.
- 3.9 The school has responded to the recommendations in the previous inspection report, further developing pupil tracking and monitoring systems which have contributed significantly to raising pupils' achievement in both the junior and senior schools. Teaching strategies implemented since the previous inspection have resulted in pupils becoming more focused learners, as pupils' achievements are now compared to data, specific to their age and key stage. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a large majority of parents were positive about the school overall. The vast majority felt that pupils were able to attain high levels of achievement at the school and develop appropriate skills for the future. Almost all pupils in their responses to the questionnaires indicated that their teachers were supportive and, as a result, this enabled them to make good progress. A very small minority of pupils felt that the marking did not help them improve their work. However, pupil discussions during the inspection and scrutiny of pupils' work did not support this view.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Their highly developed personal qualities reflect pupils' understanding of the values of the school, known as the 'C.O.R.R.E' values, which are community, opportunity, respect, responsibility and expectation. In discussion, pupils felt that these values had a significant impact on their behaviour as they progressed through the school. In discussion, the Year 8 and 9 pupil representatives on the school council commented on how pleased they were to serve on the school council and work with the older pupils and a Year 7 pupil appreciated the commendations he received from sixth form pupils after presenting a reading to the school in assembly. The strong sense of common purpose, which permeates both the junior and senior schools, helps the pupils to fulfil the school's aim of being caring and tolerant, with a sense of service and responsibility to their community.
- 4.3 There is a strong sense of mutual support throughout the school, with older pupils taking responsibility for younger pupils, as exemplified by their participation in the Saturday morning 'HOTS' programme. Pupils' confidence and resilience is strengthened as a result of the high priority given to pastoral care in the school. Staff know the pupils well and treat them as individuals. As a result, pupils felt that bullying was not an issue at the school and that if any form of bullying did occur, they had confidence that it would be dealt with quickly and fairly. A senior prefect holds an annual school assembly in which he makes an anti-bullying commitment on behalf of the pupils, demonstrating an excellent pupil initiative to achieve a common goal. Pupils are creative in approaches to problem solving when given the opportunity to do so and show high levels of perseverance. They also possess a shared determination to succeed. The house system is very strong within the school and inter-house activities, mostly led by the pupils, create a healthy atmosphere of competition which pupils enjoy. Individual sporting success is promoted by older pupils assisting in the coaching of younger pupils at senior and junior school level in sports such as football and basketball.
- 4.4 Pupils have an outstanding moral awareness and sense of honesty, fairness and right and wrong and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour around the school. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-discipline, a strong sense of spirituality and an understanding and appreciation of different faiths, which is reinforced through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lessons, assemblies and house meetings. Junior school pupils are proud to earn house points, receive headmaster's awards and a 'boy of the week' is nominated. Senior school pupils value merits, gain colours awards and attend an achievers' assembly, which recognises their achievements. Pupils who gain a platinum level award as achievers in the merit system are rewarded with a special outing.
- 4.5 Pupils express their views effectively and confidently, as seen in a meeting of the school council, which has representatives from each year group and is chaired by a senior pupil, with staff in attendance. In the junior school council, pupils take on leadership roles, such as working with staff on the planning of a new play and reading area. Sixth form pupils conduct themselves with maturity and are excellent role models, taking part in local community service projects, acting as reading mentors in local primary schools and assisting in the junior school. Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through developing good eating habits and by taking regular exercise. The emphasis placed on physical fitness and topical PSHEE and PE lessons successfully promotes healthy living and the pupils make good use of the new sports complex facilities which supports their active lifestyle. Pupils are very supportive of each other and recognise that others may have particular needs or characteristics and they celebrate the successes of pupils with special needs, or those whose first language is not English, equally as well as those who may be particularly talented or more able.
- 4.6 Pupils appreciate the opportunities for leadership and to take on responsibility, and they enjoy taking an active role in the school community. Pupils are encouraged to seek out leadership opportunities at all ages in the school, whether it is as a team captain or as a member of the school council. Organisations such as the school combined cadet force (CCF) provide these opportunities, whilst also promoting core British values and in the wider context, a good understanding of public institutions and

services in England. Older pupils in the junior school successfully take on the role of junior monitors. Through community service work and their charitable fund raising, pupils at all levels in the school contribute to a range of local activities and raise funds for those who are less fortunate than themselves. Older pupils also take part in challenging and inspiring international projects such as a community aid scheme, which in 2016 went to Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

- 4.7 Almost all pupils, in response to the questionnaire, indicated that they felt that the school encouraged them to behave well. A very small minority of pupils felt that staff did not treat them fairly. However, pupil discussions during the inspection did not support this view. The vast majority of parents in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school successfully promotes good behaviour and encourages pupils to respect and have tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. The school succeeds in fulfilling its aim to work in partnership with parents to encourage their sons to develop into young men who are proud of their achievements and aspire to be role models.
- 4.8 Pupils transferring from the junior school to the senior school find the transition to be a smooth and seamless process as the two schools share very close links, including a common senior leadership team and governing board. The close links between the senior boys' and girls' schools, which are adjacent to each other, further promotes the development of good relationships across the wider Bury Grammar School community. Pupils leaving the senior school for further education receive excellent preparation, including an appropriate careers advice, and as a result they have acquired the skills they require, together with the maturity to move confidently on to the next stage in their lives. The Bury Old Boys association actively support the Year 13 pupils in the transition process to university. A poignant example of former pupils' contribution to the school community was seen at the time of the inspection in the form of an art project, involving the production and installation of 145 ceramic poppies to commemorate pupils who had died in both World Wars.