

School inspection report

5 to 7 December 2023

Bury Grammar School

Tenterden Street

Bury

Greater Manchester

BL9 0HN

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders ensure that the school's aim of challenging and inspiring the pupils to work hard and aim high is reinforced successfully as seen throughout all aspects of school life. In line with the school's value of partnership, pupils are treated equally and feel supported by all their teachers.
2. The merger of the boys' and girls' schools in 2018 has been implemented and all aspects of school life are now continuously monitored by one leadership team which ensures equality of provision for both the boys and girls. This is a consequence of effective implementation of the gender separation policy, which provides the rationale and risk assessment to prevent against any form of discrimination.
3. Leaders and governors make sure that the school's setting provides a positive learning environment, which is reflected in the pupils' pride when talking about their school and the facilities at their disposal.
4. Pupils' positive educational experiences and good academic progress result from leaders' effective implementation of a curriculum that is well planned, carefully managed and thoughtfully resourced and which seeks to engage pupils of all abilities.
5. By providing appropriate supervision around the school site, pupils' behaviour is positive. Leaders address concerns about bullying and pupils recognise the changes made by the school to the behaviour and anti-bullying policies, which have had a positive effect on the incidents of bullying in the school.
6. The school has invested in new facilities and redesigned existing amenities to meet the needs of its pupils. The facilities are maintained to an appropriate standard.
7. Staff provide positive role models for the pupils who, as a result, demonstrate high levels of mutual respect and a genuine care for others. Pupils accept responsibility for their behaviour and are considerate of the needs of those around them.
8. Pupils are aware of the importance of contributing positively to the school community as this develops a strong sense of identity. Pupil leaders take their responsibilities in supporting their peers seriously and model responsible behaviour throughout the school. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to the local community including by working with local schools. However, these opportunities are currently limited.
9. Suitable arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Effective training makes sure that all staff have a good understanding of the part they play in keeping pupils safe. Pupils throughout the school feel safe and secure.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance, are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

- Leaders should explore and expand links that will increase pupils' involvement with the community beyond the school, in order to develop their social awareness further.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors and leaders across the school manage change successfully. They have taken the school on a process of aligning the boys' and girls' senior schools over the past five years, ensuring equality of provision for boys and girls in their teaching. Leaders have also ensured that both sexes have time to socialise during and after the school day. Boys and girls have the freedom to choose subjects in which they are interested and able, free from gender stereotypes, and to improve their communication and interpersonal skills. In September 2022, the boys' and girls' junior schools were also aligned to create the co-educational primary division.
11. A centralised approach to academic and pastoral tracking has been effectively implemented by leaders and this has led to greater oversight of pupil progress by both academic and pastoral staff.
12. A comprehensive accessibility plan to ensure equal access to the school site and to the curriculum is regularly reviewed and suitably reflects the school's developing nature, in line with Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010.
13. Effective relationships established by the leaders with all staff across the school creates a cohesive atmosphere, which facilitates the staff in their development of positive relationships with the pupils. As a result, pupils are confident in asking for help and support which, in turn, enhances their learning and progress.
14. Governors are aware of their responsibility to ensure that risks are identified and that appropriate steps are taken to mitigate these risks. They quality assure the work of both academic and pastoral leaders to ensure a safe and secure environment is established and maintained for parents, pupils and staff. Leaders have an oversight of risk management and risk assessment which ensures pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted both in school and on educational visits. Policies are applied consistently and comply with relevant legislation.
15. Leaders ensure that children in the early years have the best start to their educational journey by providing high-quality accommodation and resources and ensuring appropriate staff supervision. Leaders are meticulous in ensuring that the requirements of the early years foundation stage framework are met. They provide training in areas such as paediatric first aid and food hygiene. There is a named person responsible for safeguarding in the early years. Any complaints relating to the early years are managed in line with the school's published procedures.
16. There are effective links between the early years, primary division and the senior schools with staff from all sections working in close co-operation to enable seamless transitions. Throughout the junior school, leaders provide specialist teaching in a range of subjects, including physical education (PE) and music. This has a positive impact on the pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge in these areas.
17. A centralised and detailed academic tracking system and a quality assurance programme have been established that enable leaders to monitor and assess the impact of school developments as well as the progress of individual pupils. Leaders' self-evaluation is reviewed carefully, and the consequent analysis is shared and discussed with faculties, departments and pastoral teams to share learning. There is clear and robust reporting to the governors' education committee of those faculties and departments that require additional support or have had greater levels of scrutiny.

18. Leaders maintain a readily accessible website which provides details of academic performance in the previous school year, and key information for parents of current and prospective pupils. Leaders implement the school's complaints policy effectively and maintain a detailed log of any complaints.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders have developed effective curriculum plans which ensure that pupils have access to appropriate areas of the curriculum. Teaching staff throughout the school have the relevant subject knowledge and expertise that enable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), to make good progress.
21. Although, senior school pupils are taught academic lessons in single-sex classes, this is conducted departmentally across the school site to ensure equal access to all subjects within the curriculum. Outside of academic lessons, senior school pupils participate in co-educational trips, drama, outdoor education, Combined Cadet Force (CCF), clubs, societies and careers provision.
22. Lessons are planned and managed well and use a wide range of resources and methodologies which enable pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding successfully. For example, in science, senior school pupils analyse results from their investigations and make predictions for further tests based on their assumptions. In mathematics, older pupils use their knowledge and understanding of differentiation and integration to answer complex problems. Pupils in the junior school develop their writing skills well. They develop their understanding of prepositions, relative pronouns and embedded clauses as they discuss and evaluate the grammatical features in sentences.
23. Teachers assess and evaluate pupils' progress regularly and keep parents and pupils well informed of this through the effective reporting systems. External examination results at GCSE show that pupils achieve results which are well above the average and at A level are above average.
24. Pupils are supported at school and know where to seek help. Teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils about their work and their progress so that pupils understand how they can improve.
25. In lessons, pupils are highly engaged, disciplined and keen to learn. Pupils speak confidently, articulately and clearly during group discussions and collaborate effectively with each other. Pupils are reflective about their learning and demonstrate a self-motivated and determined approach to their learning.
26. Leaders complete frequent lesson observations to ensure teaching is appropriate and actively promotes fundamental British values.
27. Pupils in the early years and in the primary division have access to a well-structured curriculum that meets their individual needs and provides them with appropriate educational experiences. The extra-curricular provision for older pupils contains a rich range of sporting, intellectual and leisure experiences which engage and develop skills and knowledge and have a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
28. Most children in the early years achieve well and reach a good level of development. They build up a secure bank of skills and knowledge in the prime areas of learning such as literacy and numeracy, which is built upon successfully as they move through the junior school. They are natural and curious learners. Teachers develop positive behaviour strategies, and children respond to these successfully. On-going assessment provides clear next steps and targets for children.

29. Pupils who have SEND and those with EAL are catered for appropriately. These pupils are given the support, resources and time allocation that enable them to make progress at least in line with their peers. Staff are very much involved in the monitoring and support processes and links between the academic and pastoral team and the SEND team are effective. Staff use the individual learning plans for pupils who have SEND to ensure that teaching methods and work set is appropriately accessible to pupils with specific needs.
30. Leaders have developed a diverse and extensive programme of recreational, intellectual, social, creative and physical activities that offer pupils opportunities to develop their own interests, daily living skills and independence. Pupils engage well in a range of these activities and enjoy them.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 31. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

32. Effective implementation of the behaviour and anti-bullying policies supports pupils' wellbeing. Leaders consulted the pupils on the changes to the new rewards and sanction policy and pupils had a significant part in the re-writing of it. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of these policies. Any issues are dealt with promptly and appropriately by staff.
33. The school premises are clean, tidy and well maintained. Pupils display a care and appreciation for their surroundings and each other, resulting in appropriate behaviour in lessons, activities, lunch and break times and movement around the school site. Pupils know to whom they can go if they want to report matters of concern or if they need more support pastorally or academically.
34. There are clear and effective levels of organised supervision. Pupils feel safe and staff are always present to support them if needed. Pupils receive appropriate medical and timely first-aid support if required. Pupils know what to do in case of fire and understand the key principles of a safe evacuation.
35. Children in the early years develop their confidence and self-awareness. Children in the setting feel safe and happy, clearly demonstrating this in their interactions with adults and visitors to the setting. Their physical and personal health is given priority by providing a range of stimulating activities which develop their gross and fine-motor skills.
36. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are evident to the inspectors, and pupils feel that the leaders in the junior school help them in this area through appropriate challenge and support. They understand how to build positive relationships knowing this leads to a harmonious and happy environment. Pupils are emotionally literate, understand their feelings and are encouraged to express them clearly and in an engaging manner.
37. Due regard to all aspects of health and safety ensures that the school site is well maintained. In practical lessons, pupils adhere to clear health and safety advice from teachers, wearing goggles and lab coats and following instructions diligently. For example, pupils in Year 7 worked safely and carefully in a food technology lesson as they made lemon drizzle cake, demonstrating how to carry knives safely and how to use an oven.
38. Provision for physical education and pupils' physical health meets the needs of pupils. The school provides a wide range of activities such as water polo, yoga, cheerleading, trampolining, water aerobics. In the senior school, a girls' football team and provision for a boys' netball team have recently been established to enable boys and girls to have equal access to team sports.
39. The school has an appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) policy. Pupils learn about the differences between people in an age-appropriate way. There is a spiral scheme of work for both personal, social and health education (PSHE) and RSE which enables continuity from Year 1 through to Year 12. Pupil and parent feedback prompts appropriate changes to be made to the curriculum when appropriate.
40. Pupils are given the opportunity to take roles of responsibility throughout the school. For example, form, vice and sports captains in both the infant and junior schools, peer-elected school council

members in the senior schools and the leadership roles of school captain, head girl and Combined Cadet Force leaders in the sixth form. Pupils are proud of these and they help pupils to learn more about themselves and the school, to increase their self-confidence and to prepare them for life after school.

41. Thorough and appropriate procedures ensure that the attendance and admission registers are maintained as required. Staff quickly follow up any daily absences and the destinations of pupils who leave and ensure removal from the admissions register.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 42. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

43. Leaders actively promote a culture where pupils work harmoniously with others and seek to have a positive impact on society. There is a strong sense of social cohesion and mutual respect across the school and the various age groups. Pupils understand behavioural norms, and this is reflected in their positive interactions with one another. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. This is achieved through for example the effective implementation of the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme.
44. Children in the early years develop their social skills for example in reading time and free play and they understand how to behave co-operatively and share. Children develop control of their emotions and respond appropriately to other children around them.
45. Political views are brought to pupils' attention in debates across a range of subjects; these provide a balanced presentation of opposing views. Pupils listen to the views of others and complete due diligence in fact finding before debating.
46. Leaders provide impartial careers guidance about a wide range of careers, apprenticeships and degrees, supporting pupils to make informed choices. Pupils in the sixth form consider the advice when making decisions about their A-level choices and degree applications. Pupils are well prepared for life after school including through activities such as cookery classes, which helps them manage their diet whilst away from home, and a focus on financial management and budgeting.
47. Leaders pay due regard to The Equality Act and place a particular emphasis on developing the pupils' understanding of differences between people. Pupils' knowledge of inclusion, equality and diversity is well developed. Through the school's democratically appointed equality committee, pupils deepen their understanding of the rights of different groups of people in society.
48. There is a range of responsibility posts that help strengthen pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils in the sixth form are enthusiastic about providing service to the school community by volunteering to work in the primary division. As well as helping younger pupils, this has a positive impact on pupils' personal and social skill development.
49. Pupils are culturally aware and show appreciation, respect and tolerance for others in the school community regardless of their background or beliefs. Pupils genuinely welcome the difference and richness that this brings.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

51. Appropriate and effective arrangements are put in place by school leaders and governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. The PSHE and RSE programmes raise age-applicable awareness of issues that could affect pupils' daily lives. Governors take an active role in supporting the safeguarding team in the school. They ensure that both staff and governors receive suitable training and that appropriate policies are regularly reviewed and updated. They also maintain oversight of the safer recruitment procedures.
52. There is effective staff safeguarding training that takes place online and in person. Staff know how to deal with any concerns they may have. Staff and pupils undertake regular safeguarding questionnaires, and their findings are acted upon by school leaders, thereby mitigating risks for those who may be at greater risk of harm. Leaders are clear on areas for development and work proactively towards these.
53. Pupils know how to stay safe online by protecting their personal details and being aware of online threats. They understand the importance of contacting a trusted adult if they have any concerns. A filtering system is in place and pupils understand that this is designed to protect them from harmful website searches.
54. The named safeguarding person for the early years collaborates effectively with the school's wider safeguarding team. Staff in the early years are appropriately trained in safeguarding. Safeguarding notices in the school reinforce to pupils that they should talk to an adult if they have any concerns.
55. Comprehensive records of safeguarding concerns of child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and violence, and racial discrimination are robustly and appropriately logged by the safeguarding team. Detailed tracking of trends and patterns emerging from these logs helps to guide leaders' approaches and school systems. Staff consult with external agencies when appropriate.
56. Staff know where to go to report concerns about pupils, including any low-level concerns regarding members of staff. There is suitable induction training for new staff. The necessary pre-appointment safeguarding checks are conducted and recorded accurately.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 57. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Bury Grammar School
Department for Education number	351/6008
Registered charity number	526622
Address	Bury Grammar School Tenterden Street Bury Greater Manchester BL9 0HN
Phone number	0161 696 8600
Email address	schooloffice@burygrammar.com
Website	burygrammar.com
Proprietor	Bury Grammar Schools Limited
Chair	Mr Richard Smyth
Headteacher	Mrs Jo Anderson
Age range	3 to 18
Number of pupils	1353
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2023

Information about the school

58. Bury Grammar School is a co-educational day school. The school consists of a kindergarten and reception, a primary division, separate boys' and girls' senior schools and a sixth form all on the same site. The school is a registered charity and is overseen by a board of governors.
59. There are 55 children in the early years comprising two Nursery and two Reception classes.
60. The school has identified 123 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. English is an additional language for 170 pupils.
62. The school states its aims are, to challenge and inspire pupils to work hard, aim high, achieve and celebrate academic success, to foster generosity of spirit, open-mindedness, confidence, resilience, a sense of service and an unwavering commitment to equality, to encourage all pupils to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, developing a lifelong love of learning and to work harmoniously with others and seek to have a positive impact on society.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

5 to 7 December 2023

63. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

64. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

65. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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