

Bridgnorth Endowed School

Northgate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 4ER

Inspection dates

17–18 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has raised the school's expectations for pupils' conduct, attitudes to learning and achievement. As a direct result, standards in the school are rising noticeably.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and set work which is generally well matched to pupils' prior understanding.
- Current pupils are making strong progress in almost all subjects. Standards are high in English, physical education and the humanities subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and those who enter the school with low prior attainment, receive effective support.
- Although standards are now rising rapidly, there is a significant legacy of underachievement in the sixth form.
- Leaders have not ensured that students in the 16 to 19 provision take up sufficient opportunities for leadership and the development of key skills.
- Safeguarding is effective.

- In both 2016 and 2017, pupils left key stage 4 having made average progress. Progress in humanities subjects has been above average.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has risen. Across the school and in different subjects, their progress is now generally in line with that of other pupils.
- Pupils' conduct at social times is impressive. They display courtesy towards adults and towards each other.
- Governors know the school in detail and hold leaders to account. They have maintained financial stability despite the falling school roll.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is typically very good. Sometimes, however, they are too reliant on their teachers to make them work hard.
- Teachers usually provide the stretch necessary for the most able pupils to make good progress. On occasion, however, these pupils complete too much routine work and so do not deepen their understanding sufficiently.
- Leaders have begun to look at good practice in other institutions. However, work to compare provision and standards with other schools is at an early stage of development. Pupils say that they would benefit from more engagement with outside organisations.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently set tasks which provide the most able pupils with the challenge that inspires them to fulfil their full potential
 - encouraging all pupils to take greater responsibility for deepening their own understanding.
- Improve the school's provision for students aged 16 to 19 by:
 - ensuring that leaders extend and consolidate the good practice in teaching, learning and management now evident in the sixth form
 - making sure that students make good use of opportunities to develop their social, leadership and employability skills.
- Enrich the understanding of both staff and pupils by further developing links with other educational and cultural institutions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management Good

- Since his arrival in June 2017, the headteacher has made significant progress with his declared aims: 'Get pupils in and keep them safe, get them behaving, and get them learning.' He has raised expectations for pupils' conduct and their attitudes towards their work and for the quality of teaching. As a result, standards in the main school are rising steadily. In the sixth form, where achievement was low, they are improving rapidly.
- Leaders have a very good understanding of the school, and a frank evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses has enabled them to design and implement robust plans for its improvement. Throughout the inspection, leaders' judgements, including those about standards and the quality of teaching, accorded with those of the inspection team.
- Despite the difficulties associated with a falling school roll, leaders have retained the confidence of the very large majority of staff. In part, this reflects the consideration leaders have given to staff workload, and their clear but upbeat approach to school improvement. Staff speak highly of the professional development and support that they receive, which have been strongly focused on classroom performance.
- Leaders have reorganised the curriculum, establishing precisely what pupils should learn in each unit of work. The school has a strong commitment to the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), and most pupils study a modern foreign language and a humanities subject at key stage 4. Pupils can now study for GCSEs in the single sciences.
- The headteacher has encouraged staff to set more challenging targets for pupils, and in particular the most able. Regular assessments enable staff to identify those pupils who need to catch up. Teachers' judgements are checked against those of their colleagues in school, but only some are compared with standards in other schools.
- Heads of academic departments are proving effective in using the monitoring of teaching and outcomes of assessments to adjust provision and to provide additional guidance for teachers. Leaders plan the support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively, and teaching assistants are well trained to fulfil their roles.
- Leaders have spent the grants provided to increase the progress of particular groups of pupils wisely. Well-targeted expenditure, together with the general improvement in the quality of teaching, is leading to these pupils making increasingly strong progress.
- Extra-curricular activities make a strong contribution to pupils' development and to their enjoyment of school. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of sporting and creative activities, and to work towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Many pupils benefit from revision and support lessons after school.
- Leaders develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness effectively and do not tolerate any form of discrimination. Their success is reflected in pupils' respectful attitudes towards each other and towards adults. Pupils in every year group benefit from a planned programme of activities that introduces them to higher education and the world of work. Nevertheless, some pupils told inspectors that they

would appreciate a greater exposure to the wider world.

- The headteacher has visited other schools which demonstrate the high expectations to which he aspires. In some subjects, leaders have forged links with particular institutions. However, leaders and governors recognise that more needs to be done to benefit fully from the support and challenge that can accrue from working in partnership with others.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Individual governors bring particular strengths to their roles, such as financial expertise or a knowledge of safeguarding. Governors have been well trained, for example in the interpretation of performance information.
- Governors know the school well. Governors visit the school often, and link governors meet with leaders to discuss in detail progress in those aspects of the school for which they are responsible. Through these visits and through rigorous scrutiny in governors' meetings, governors hold leaders to account for their impact on the school.
- The governing body ensures that leaders fulfil all their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They check on the single central record and that all staff are familiar with child protection guidance. Some governors are trained in safer recruitment, so that they can make sure that safeguarding receives proper consideration during the appointment of staff.
- Governors scrutinise the additional money provided to support the learning of identified groups of pupils. They have set a balanced budget, despite the challenge presented by the steep decline in pupil numbers. Governors involve an independent adviser in their management of the headteacher's performance so that their decisions on his role are fairly judged.
- Governors are aware of the benefits of drawing on expertise and fresh ideas from outside the school and are developing contacts with other schools. They are aware too of the importance for pupils of a range of contacts and experiences outside the town.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Staff know their responsibilities and what to do if they suspect a pupil is at risk. Leaders have ensured that staff receive regular training, including information about radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders work well with parents and carers and a range of other agencies to protect those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Agencies meet pupils' needs in a timely manner. Staff understand the risk to those pupils who do not attend regularly.
- School policies reflect the latest requirements. A major children's charity has scrutinised the policy for child protection and found it fit for purpose. Leaders keep the necessary records about staff and pupils securely.
- Leaders have taken the necessary steps to ensure that the adjoining leisure centre

constitutes no risk to pupils. Entry into the building is strictly controlled. There are appropriate checks on visitors to the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. Teachers plan lessons and sequences of lessons that are well matched to the existing knowledge and understanding of the pupils in the class. They explain new ideas clearly, and learning typically proceeds at a good pace.
- Teachers are thoroughly knowledgeable. They use the technical terms associated with their subjects accurately and expect pupils to do the same. At key stage 4, teachers use their knowledge of examinations effectively to guide pupils in maximising the marks they can gain on particular questions. Those teachers who are examiners make good use of their additional expertise.
- Teachers generally use questioning well. They check regularly and effectively the extent to which pupils have understood the work, so that they can adjust the direction of the lesson if necessary. Teachers also use questions to probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to develop their first responses. For example, in a Year 9 religious education lesson, questioning promoted very thoughtful discussion about crime and punishment.
- Clear objectives for lessons and regular feedback help pupils to identify and address their misconceptions. Teachers were sometimes able to anticipate what pupils might find difficult to grasp, and so pre-empt any misunderstandings.
- Teachers take important measures to develop pupils' literacy. They frequently encourage pupils to frame extended spoken answers. Their emphasis on key terms helps to develop pupils' vocabulary. In some subjects, such as history, pupils are given ample opportunity to develop their extended writing.
- Teaching in mathematics covers an appropriate range of topics. It develops pupils' abilities to calculate and apply formulae fluently, and to apply their learning to practical situations. Pupils have the opportunity to reason mathematically, although this is done more orally than in writing. At key stage 4, pupils receive particularly detailed feedback on their tests, helpfully linked to the relevant sections of the revision guide.
- Relationships in the classroom are good. Pupils treat each other's ideas with respect and collaborate effectively when asked to do so. They listen carefully and concentrate well. However, their willingness to offer answers and take the initiative in developing their own understanding varies a little. As school leaders recognise, some pupils need to push themselves somewhat harder.
- In general, the work set for the most able pupils is of an appropriate standard. Expectations are usually high, and tasks are often demanding. On occasion, however, the most able pupils complete too much mundane work before moving on to tasks which really make them think hard. Sometimes when pupils are offered a range of tasks, some choose those that are insufficiently demanding. There is a little hesitancy among both teachers and pupils to move beyond the core purpose of the lesson and explore new ideas.
- Interim reports to parents provide relevant information on pupils' achievement in an

attractive format. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The headteacher and governors place a high value on developing well-rounded young people who are respectful, polite and industrious. These qualities were abundantly evident during the inspection. Extra-curricular activities contribute significantly to pupils' self-confidence.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is very rare and that they know whom to turn to if any problem arises. They feel entirely safe in school. Leaders do not tolerate any form of discrimination. For example, when a few pupils exhibited racist attitudes shortly after the EU referendum, leaders addressed the behaviour robustly and ensured that pupils understood why it was unacceptable.
- Through lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education, assemblies and tutor time, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe from a variety of risks, such as those posed by the internet, by radicalisation or by unsafe social behaviour. More-vulnerable pupils who spoke to inspectors appreciated the additional help and support that they receive.
- Pupils also receive good advice and guidance on careers and the next steps in their education. This includes visits to universities, careers fairs and visiting speakers. Some pupils who spoke with inspectors believed, however, that they had not been prepared as fully as they might have been for their place in adult society.
- Leaders check carefully on the attendance and welfare of the very few pupils who attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All sections of the school community told inspectors that it had improved since the current headteacher had taken up his post. Pupils appreciate the clarity of the school's expectations and understand how better behaviour is contributing to the improvement of the school as a whole.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride, and their conduct between lessons and at social times is very orderly. Inspectors witnessed no examples of aggressive or unpleasant behaviour. Pupils treat the school's facilities with respect and drop very little litter.
- Pupils behave consistently well in lessons. They remain attentive even on the rare occasion when the work is not particularly engaging. Most pupils who spoke with inspectors said that their learning was rarely disturbed by others' behaviour. At the same time, there are instances when pupils might usefully play a more energetic part in their own learning.
- Although establishing the school's higher expectations has led to a rise in fixed-term exclusions, the rate of exclusion remains below the national average. The school

records show that incidents of significant poor behaviour are rare.

- Pupils' overall attendance is in line with the national average. The rate of attendance in the winter months fell, reflecting poor weather and bouts of illness. More recently, it has recovered strongly, reflecting leaders' robust approach to non-attendance and better engagement with parents.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are good. Observations in lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work and information supplied by the school showed inspectors that pupils of all abilities are making strong progress in English, mathematics and most other subjects. Progress is increasing as teachers respond to leaders' clear focus on improving the quality of teaching. Across the curriculum, pupils present their work tidily and pay good attention to their spelling and punctuation.
- Year 11 pupils left the school in 2017 having made overall progress from their starting points which was very close to the national average. Their progress had been average in English, mathematics and science. However, in both 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress through the school in humanities subjects was above average.
- In 2017, Year 11 pupils who had started the school with middle prior attainment made better progress than those with higher or lower prior attainment. This year, the headteacher has emphasised the need for teachers to ensure that pupils of all abilities fulfil their potential, and the impact of this new focus is clear. For example, inspection evidence showed that some less-able pupils in Year 10 are achieving commendably high standards. Increasing proportions of the most able pupils are on track to attain the very highest grades.
- Disadvantaged pupils left the school in 2017 having made progress that was in line with other pupils, both in the school and nationally. Their achievement was significantly stronger than that of the previous cohort. Inspection evidence showed that across the school, disadvantaged pupils are benefiting from the staff's insistence on high standards for all, and they are continuing to make strong progress in line with their peers. There remain two year groups where disadvantaged pupils are achieving in mathematics less well than they should.
- Pupils achieve well in English. They use a wide vocabulary and learn how to structure different kinds of writing effectively. Teachers develop pupils' analysis of literature skilfully. For example, inspectors saw essays about 'An Inspector Calls' in which Year 9 pupils made fine judgements and explained their thinking well. A systematic approach to pupils' reading of fiction contributes to progress in key stage 3.
- Established strengths in the humanities subjects and in modern foreign languages, and the structure of the school's key stage 4 curriculum, have meant that in recent years, the proportion of pupils who attained the EBacc has been above the national average. Inspectors also saw work of a particularly high standard in physical education.
- Leaders have successfully tackled the unsatisfactory curriculum and staffing difficulties which have hampered achievement in science. Although the school's information shows that pupils' progress in science still lags behind that in other subjects in some year groups, inspectors saw effective and ambitious science teaching.

- Boys who left Year 11 in 2017 had made less progress than girls, particularly in English. Inspection evidence showed that although a gap remains between the progress of boys and girls currently in Year 11, in general boys are now achieving as well as girls.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The 16 to 19 study programmes require improvement because there is a significant legacy of underachievement. In 2017, the weak progress of students following academic courses meant that the school fell below the Department for Education's minimum standards. Too few students follow work-related programmes for a judgement on their achievement to be valid. Some students are reluctant to take up all those opportunities available to them to extend their learning beyond academic study.
- In the past, the relatively small number of courses on offer and limited information and guidance led to some students choosing courses for which they were ill-suited. Inspection evidence showed that this is now the case only rarely. From September 2018, students will be able to access courses taught at another nearby school, greatly increasing the range of subjects available.
- Leaders have taken major steps to improve the provision, and the study programmes are improving rapidly. They have begun to implement in the sixth form approaches and procedures which are working effectively in the main school. In particular, leaders now monitor rigorously both students' progress and the quality of teaching on 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Leaders have provided extensive professional development for teachers of sixth-form classes. In particular, training has guided teachers on how to match work to the needs of students starting academic courses with markedly differing levels of prior attainment.
- During the inspection, inspectors saw good teaching in the sixth form. Teachers questioned students very effectively to deepen their understanding. Feedback in a variety of forms gave students a precise indication of how to improve their work. Students told inspectors that teaching was 'never boring', and that they believed that the small classes gave teachers the opportunity to provide individualised guidance. Just occasionally, inspectors saw the same hesitancy and reticence sometimes evident in younger classes.
- The quality and quantity of students' work scrutinised by inspectors confirmed the achievement information presented by the school. This showed that current students are making considerably stronger progress than in the past. Most pupils are now on track to meet their targets. Students retaking their GCSE examinations in English or mathematics are making good progress towards securing higher grades.
- Students in the sixth form behave responsibly. This academic year, leaders have successfully implemented a stricter dress code. Students told inspectors that they get on well together, that bullying behaviour is rare and that they have adults in whom to confide should the need arise. They receive age-appropriate guidance on how to stay safe.
- The school provides students with a comprehensive enrichment programme. For

example, they have the opportunity to market Tanzanian coffee, thereby learning about both enterprise and fair trade. Some students adopt leadership roles with pupils in the main school, most commonly with sports teams. They receive guidance on the next steps in their careers, such as university entrance and apprenticeships. A high proportion of students achieve their intended destinations. Nevertheless, some are critical of the wider curriculum and believe that more could be done to prepare them for their future lives. Work experience is patchy.

School details

Unique reference number	139143
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10048298

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	590
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	82
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mark Freathy
Headteacher	Barry Worth
Telephone number	01746 762103
Website	http://bridgnorthendowed.co.uk
Email address	admin@bridgnorthendowed.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2016

Information about this school

- Bridgnorth Endowed School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, and the roll has been falling sharply.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is well below average.
- At key stage 4, a very few pupils access full-time alternative provision at The Orchard Centre, Wolverhampton.

- 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.
- The headteacher took up his post in June 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 31 lessons and during one learning walk. Two observations were conducted jointly with a senior leader. Inspectors also observed an assembly and took note of pupils' conduct between lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body.
- Four groups of pupils, three chosen at random and one by the school, met with inspectors. Inspectors spoke with a great many pupils informally.
- The inspectors looked at many pupils' workbooks in their visits to classrooms. With a senior leader, they scrutinised in depth the books of most-able pupils in Years 7 and 9, and less-able pupils in Years 8 and 10. They also looked in detail at the work of students on 16 to 19 study programmes in psychology, history and English literature. The lead inspector gave careful consideration to information about current pupils' academic performance.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included a development plan and an evaluation of the school's progress; minutes of governors' meetings; school policies; curriculum plans; and reports to parents. Inspectors scrutinised in detail records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 72 responses made to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, comments made using the free-text service and representations from individual parents. They also considered the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire, and the views of individual staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Warner	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Steed	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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