

OFSTED

In May 2011, OFSTED described Birches Head High School as a school that as steadily and consistently improved to become a good school” where “purposeful direction from the headteacher and senior team and improved leadership from subject and departmental heads have ensured that the school’s improvement strategies have made a positive impact on provision and outcomes for students since the last inspection.”

OFSTED Quotes about Birches Head High School:

The **innovative curriculum** and **good quality of care, guidance and support** ensure that the needs of all students are well met. Consequently, students **enjoy** their learning, respond positively to their teachers and feel they are **well cared for** and encouraged to **achieve their best**.

Students are **proud of their school** and take pleasure in participating in a variety of activities beyond the school day. They are **effective members of their community** and many are involved in leadership activities, for example in school ‘action teams’ providing advice on learning and developing school policies or working in the local community as sports or dance leaders or on charity fund-raising events.

Students have **well-developed spiritual awareness** gained through various opportunities for reflection and the ability to empathise with others, inspired by their studies through the creative curriculum. Overall, **students collaborate well**, and demonstrate a range of **skills, attitudes and competences** that prepare them well for their **future working lives**.

The curriculum is successful in providing a variety of good learning opportunities for all students. It is **flexible and innovative**, having been suitably adapted to meet the needs and aptitudes of students more fully. At Key Stage 3, the **‘Futures Curriculum’** is effective in developing students’ key skills and providing a solid platform for future learning. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is **suitably varied and personalised** through **excellent collaboration** with a **range of external partners** to meet students’ differing needs and aspirations. A wide variety of vocational pathways ensures that all students can achieve, including a significant number who have failed in other institutions. **Exemplary partnership** working is promoting highly positive outcomes for students.

The **quality of support, care and guidance for students is good**. Pastoral care is strong, **students are well known to staff** and their **needs are carefully considered**.

Teachers consistently demonstrate **good subject knowledge**. They plan their lessons in detail, incorporating a variety of suitable activities and using **technology well to enhance learning**.

Relationships with students are **highly positive**, creating a positive environment for learning. Teachers are encouraging and supportive in their approaches. They **check frequently** on **students’ understanding** and employ a range of suitable assessment techniques; this **helps students** to gain a **clear understanding of the levels they are working at** and **what is**

The **school understands its local community well** and **makes considerable efforts to communicate with parents and carers**, including those who are difficult to reach.