



Birchwood High School - Annual Equality Report 2024/25

Birchwood is a comprehensive school comprising 1466 students aged 11 to 19. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all members of the school community, whatever their gender (including gender- reassignment), age, race, disability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity or paternity, having or not having dependents or background.

This report covers a number of important criteria, alongside summary statistics:

Equality Information 2024-25: Students

Age

Birchwood High School is a 11-18 single academy trust. This means we enrol students at the age of 11. All students continue with their education up until 16. The Sixth Form is an academic level 3 provider. Students are required to achieve specific GCSE grades to continue which results in around 50% of students staying on and 50% leaving to study at FE College. The school works hard to ensure that CEIAG is unbiased and appropriate to need. As a result, our target each year is for 0% NEETs.

Gender:

669 students are female (45.6%) and 797 are male (54.4%) – the school does not publish the number of trans or non-binary students and is proud of its support and education in terms of equality which was judged to be outstanding in June 2018.

Free school meals

14.6% of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average (22.3%). The school has a dedicated Pupil Premium fund to provide additional financial support for families for items such as uniform, trips and music lessons. The school prioritises Pupil Premium students in the classroom and this had led to the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students closing pre-Covid. This gap has widened post- Covid and the school is re-prioritising.

Ethnicity

Birchwood High School welcomes and celebrates having students from all cultures and ethnicities and has a large number of students from minority ethnic groups. Some of our students have refugee status.

Ethnicity	% of Total
Any Other Asian Background	0.8%
Any Other Black Background	0.1%
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.5%
Any Other Mixed Background	1.2%
Any Other White Background	0.3%
Bangladeshi	0.3%
Black - African	1.7%
Black - Nigerian	0.1%
Black Caribbean	0.1%
Chinese	0.7%
Egyptian	0.1%
Gypsy / Roma	0.1%
Hong Kong Chinese	0.8%
Indian	1.4%

Ethnicity CONTINUED :	% of Total
Information Not Yet Obtained	0.2%
Italian	0.1%
Kosovan	0.1%
Kurdish	0.1%
Latin/ South/ Central American	0.1%
Other Black African	0.1%
Other Ethnic Group	0.1%
Other Mixed Background	0.1%
Other White British	0.1%
Pakistani	0.1%
Portuguese	0.1%
Refused	0.4%
Turkish/ Turkish Cypriot	0.1%
Turkish	0.3%
White - British	73.8%
White - English	1.8%
White - Irish	0.4%
White - Northern Irish	0.1%
White Eastern European	0.5%
White European	0.1%
White Other	8.4%
White Western European	0.1%
White and Any Other Asian Background	0.1%
White and Any Other Ethnic Group	0.2%
White and Asian	1.5%
White and Black African	1.1%
White and Black Caribbean	1.8%

SEND

The school is proud of its highly inclusive intake. There are currently 18.2% of students with SEND support and 2.2% with an EHCP. This is in line with national averages. The school has a dedicated SEND Centre (PLC) but the majority of students are taught in mainstream lessons supported by an LSA where applicable.

Disabilities range from Physical Disabilities to Speech, Language and Communication Needs. All staff are responsible for meeting the needs of these students.



Year Profiles

The number of students, the %FSM, SEND and EHCP are detailed below:

Year	NOR	FSM	SEND	EHCP
7	240	18.3 %	44	10
8	229	22.3 %	31	12
9	241	14.5 %	31	5
10	268	17.5 %	20	8
11	240	12.5 %	21	3
12	135	3 %	9	6
13	113	2.7 %	2	0
Total	1466			

Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment

The school does not collect information on the sexual orientation of students. Were it to be communicated to the school regarding a pupil, it would be confidentially maintained. No data is collated by the school about gender reassignment.

Religion

The school does not have a religious determination. RE and its focus on World Religions is taught to all students at Key Stage 3 and it is an option subject at GCSE and A-Level together with relevant topics taught through the PSCE curriculum. Assemblies focus on moral and ethical themes. Assemblies at different times of the year celebrate many religious festivals.

Marriage and civil partnership

No data is collected or held by the school about parents'/carers' marital status, apart from the titles and names given for home contacts and information about whether letters home and reports are to be sent to two addresses, unless specifically requested by a parent/carer or student.

Attendance

Historically attendance has been above national averages (95.3%). For 24/25, attendance has averaged 93.5% which is similar to national averages. This lower figure has been affected by Covid and Winter Flu.

Exclusions and incidents

There were two permanent exclusions in 23/24 and three permanent exclusions over the last 5 years.

Equality Information 2024-25 – Staff

Birchwood High School employs 132 teachers and 76 non-teachers.

Ethnicity:

No data has recently been collected or held by the school about the ethnicity of the staff.



Sex:

Position	Male	Female
Teachers	49	83
Support Staff	19	57

Disability:

There are no members of staff that are registered as having a disability.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment:

In general, no data is collected or held by the school about sexual orientation or gender reassignment in the staff population.

Religion:

The staff includes members of a wide range of religions and beliefs (including no religion or belief). The school does not routinely collect or hold this information, unless specifically requested by a member of staff. The school's absence policy allows time-off for major religious observance days for all faiths.

Marriage and civil partnership:

No data is collected or held by the school about the marital status of members of staff, apart from the titles and names given on application forms and emergency contacts, unless specifically requested by the member of staff.

Pregnancy, maternity and paternity:

The school operates the council's policies for maternity leave, paternity leave and flexible working (reduced hours). All pregnant staff have a meeting to assess their individual needs and steps are taken to ensure these are met.

In 2022/23, 2 people have started maternity leave during this academic year.

In 2022/23 there was 3 people who took paternity leave. There are no further planned paternity leaves yet to be taken so far this year

Equalities Objectives 2020-24 review

It should be noted that these objectives appear to have been set to cover a four-year period. I do not propose to track progress over each of the four academic years they cover but to summarise the position at the end of 23/24. Target 2 seems to have a very narrow focus and it is very hard to measure the impact of this.

1. To close gaps in students' performance through monitoring of performance data and responding and intervening where variations between groups of learners show progress could be made.

Following the pandemic, there was a fall in performance for all student groups within the school. In summer 2023 progress for disadvantaged students was -1.24 (non-disadvantaged students were at -0.44). This was a significant concern as it was larger than the national gap and showed our disadvantaged students performing at around 0.8 of a grade less well in terms of progress.

In 2024 the provisional outcomes show disadvantaged students at -0.66 with non-disadvantaged students at -0.13 . Whilst this is not where we want to be it does show a significant closing of the disadvantaged gap and a rise in overall performance in a year when national figures fell.

This change in performance came as a result of a number of key strategies:

A change in our systems for data collection and analysis

A tighter focus on accountability for outcomes in line management and performance management of staff

Targeted revision activities for key students including after school, weekend and holiday sessions



The main focus of work up to summer 2024 has been the performance of disadvantaged students as this was the school's biggest concern. This will remain a key priority but we will also be addressing other key groups in gender and prior attainment.

2. To improve knowledge, skills and attitudes, to enable pupils to appreciate and value difference and diversity by promoting greater awareness of cultural and religious diversity in the assembly programme

The assembly rota was streamlined during 2023/24. This was to give a clear focus for each week in the school calendar. These topics were based on key calendar events (e.g. Black History Month) or key themes to support our PSHE curriculum. There was also flexibility built in to address any themes that were emerging during the year.

The impact of this work is hard to evaluate but we will be looking at retention of key themes in our new PSHE assessment processes in 24/25 and through student surveys during the year.

3. To improve support for students' mental well-being, to help students remain in education through a school-wide approach that aims to promote resilience, recovery, ownership and empowerment.

The pastoral and wellbeing supported within the school has always been a strong element as recognised in previous inspection reports. In the post pandemic there has been a significant rise in the number of students experiencing mental health challenges.

Key elements of our current provision:

An employed in-house counsellor who is trained as a mental health lead

Additional bought in counselling (3 other staff) to support the increased demand for support. This means students with identified new needs can typically access counselling within a two week period

A change of focus in the new PSHE to include wellbeing and mindfulness approaches. All students are introduced to the key ideas of resilience, recovery, ownership and empowerment and strategies to address these

These themes are also addressed through our assembly and tutor rotas.

Whilst we are not seeing a reduction in the number of students needing mental health support (nor do we expect to) we are seeing an increase in awareness, understanding and our capacity to address needs as they arise.

4. To further improve support for SEND students through training and monitoring of provision to assess impact and develop specific, person-centred support.

It is significant to note that Birchwood High School (as with many schools both regionally and nationally) has seen an increase in students with SEND. As we enter 24/25 we will have 48 EHCP students at the school.

Since these targets were set we have established our Personalised Learning Centre (PLC) which runs alongside our formal curriculum. It is a space where students can receive bespoke support on a one to one or small group basis. PLC also provides a social interaction function during social times.

We have maintained and, in some areas, increased levels of staffing to support students with SEND. This is against a national trend where fewer resources are being made available to these students.

Our curriculum has a tight focus on catch up and recovery programmes for those who join the school below national expectations.

Academic outcomes for SEND students has been an area of strength in terms of both attainment and progress in recent



years.

All SEND students and their families work with school staff on a plan, do, review process during each year to ensure individual needs are addressed.

Staff training has increased to address a wider understanding of common conditions and to support specific students and their needs.

Draft Objectives and public statement for 2024/25

Equality Information

The Equality Act of 2010 was introduced to ensure individuals are protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics).

For schools, this means that it is unlawful to discriminate against students, or staff members, or treat them less favourably because of their age, sex; race; disability; religion or belief; gender reassignment; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

Under the Act, Birchwood High School is expected to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups
- As a public organisation, we are required to:
- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty. This is done via our Equality Policy, which can be found on the [Policies page](#) of our website.
- Publish Equality Objectives which are specific and measurable

Equality is at the heart of what we do at Birchwood, and our aim is to ensure that we embrace and go further than our legal obligations. In order for us to welcome, support and celebrate all members of our school community we understand that we need to ensure that all members of the school community experience equality of opportunity and treatment regardless of protected characteristics or socio-economic background. We want everyone in our school community to be and to feel included, respected and treated with dignity.

Equality Objectives 2024/25

Following the end of our latest four-year review period, we have set out four objectives for 24/25. During the year we will undertake a substantive review of our Equalities Policy and we will build on our work on our 2024/25 objectives to inform a new policy and our objectives for future years.

1. Attainment data

To review attainment data processes to ensure consistent analysis and reporting for key groups throughout the school by prior attainment, potential and (where appropriate) protected characteristics and socio-economic background. The data analysis will facilitate both the timely identification of gaps and relevant intersections and will inform further detailed work to further understand underlying causes and identify appropriate actions and interventions that will be developed into targeted plans. This work will be alongside and complement our Pupil Premium Strategy as we begin a new three year strategy period.

2. Reporting, recording and responding to discriminatory incidents

To ensure that clear and consistent systems will operate for the recording, reporting and analysis of discriminatory incidents across the school community. We recognise that such incidents can and do happen and we will ensure that incidents are not minimised or shied away from and that all staff understand the importance of recording incidents. Trends in data will be regularly reviewed and acted upon. We will ensure through appropriate training, assemblies and the PSCE programme that the impact of discrimination and microaggressions is understood by all the school community and will set out clear and supported guidelines on how staff should respond to them if they arise.

3. Personal Development

To quality assure and evaluate both the formal and informal aspects of the school's personal development work in the



area of equalities. In addition we will explore ways of measuring the impact of our work on equality across the school and identify areas for improvement.

4. Leadership and Governance

To ensure that there are clear and documented processes to ensure that all policies and key processes and decisions are regularly reviewed from an equalities perspective. For leaders to undertake training to increase their equalities awareness, including how this relates to recruitment and progression.