

# Benton Park School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108083
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	356301
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Ripley HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1429
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tony Addison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Foley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Harrogate Road Rawdon, Leeds West Yorkshire LS19 6LX
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 32 part-lessons and met groups of students, staff, governors and representatives from the local community. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation form, development plan and analysis of student data. Inspectors also looked at the 237 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers plus questionnaire responses from the students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Current standards and the progress of students across the school.
- Whether the quality of teaching and curriculum are good enough to bring about improving outcomes for students.
- Whether the school leaders are driving improvement and demonstrating sufficient capacity for sustained improvement.

## Information about the school

Benton Park is a much larger-than-average secondary school serving communities in north west Leeds. Most students are of White British heritage. Fewer students than average are known to be eligible for free school meals but the number is rising. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school was re-designated as a specialist technology college in 2008. It holds many awards including the Stephen Lawrence Standard, Inclusive School, Artsmark Gold and International Status. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Benton Park provides its students with a satisfactory and improving quality of education. It has a number of strengths including the good curriculum and the high standard of care and support students receive throughout the school. The outstanding sixth form provision brings out the very best skills and personal qualities in the young people who attend it.

Students generally enter Benton Park with standards that are slightly above average. Their attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in most years has been high, representing satisfactory progress given their starting points. However, students' attainment at the end of Year 11 in 2010 dipped sharply because students did not make the progress expected of them. The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE or equivalent qualifications, including English and mathematics, fell to broadly average whereas it had been high in 2008 and 2009. This dip in school performance can largely be accounted for by staffing difficulties experienced in some subjects and a curriculum offer that did not fully meet the needs of this group of students. These issues have now been resolved and internal data suggests that students throughout the school are currently on track to achieve their targets and are making satisfactory progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to their peers.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. While there is some good and occasionally outstanding teaching especially in the sixth form, it is not consistently good enough throughout the school to enable all students to make the best progress they can. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively. The pace of learning in lessons is frequently pedestrian. This is because teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to plan work that provides appropriate levels of challenge for students. The quality and frequency of written feedback is too variable. Teachers' comments do not always explain to students what they need to do next to achieve their targets or set out clearly how they can improve their work.

The headteacher and governors demonstrate an accurate and perceptive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They have tackled previous underperformance with determination and rigour. The development plan is accurate, well-structured and appropriate. Some systems and procedures that underpin it are yet to become firmly embedded. The team of leaders and managers has been restructured resulting in clearer lines of accountability, and a renewed sense of urgency. Several new posts have increased capacity and resulted in more rigorous financial management, improved assessment and tracking systems and strengthened behaviour support and pastoral care. Consequently, the school demonstrates it has good capacity for sustained improvement and provides satisfactory value for money.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the main school and the sixth form so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - using assessment information to plan activities that are well matched to students abilities and meets their needs and interests
  - sharing existing good practice effectively
  - reviewing the use of support assistants in lessons so as to maximise their impact on students' learning and progress
  - improving the consistency and rigour of marking to ensure that written feedback lets students know how they can improve their work further.
- Ensure all students make better progress by:
  - sharpening and strengthening the systems and procedures used by senior and middle leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and learning
  - regularly and consistently monitoring, reviewing and evaluating actions to ensure that they have the maximum impact on outcomes for students.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Students generally enter the school with slightly above average attainment. Results from GCSE examinations and inspection evidence show that students make better progress in some subjects than they do in others. For example, in biology, history, physics, physical education, Spanish, design and technology and health and social care, students do particularly well and their attainment is above average as a result. Students' attainment in science rose considerably in 2010 when compared to previous years.

Students are courteous and polite to adults and each other. Their good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning in lessons, although they can be boisterous when unsupervised at break times. Exclusions are very rare. Attendance has remained stubbornly around average over a number of years, mainly because of a few students who are persistently absent. The school has recently introduced a number of strategies to tackle this and actions such as alerting parents to absence at an earlier stage are beginning to have a positive impact.

Most students in the main school say they feel safe and enjoy their education. They particularly appreciate the efforts staff make to broaden their experience through the vast range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Attendance at all these activities is very high. A good range of sporting and fitness-related activities support students' good knowledge and understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. Students are active fund-raisers and specialist subjects are being used well to develop links within the community and in the wider world. All these factors enrich the curriculum and contribute strongly to the students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students' development of

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workplace skills is satisfactory and they report feeling well informed about future career options. This is borne out by good progression rates into further learning and education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

There is a wide range in the quality of teaching in the main school. The best lessons are well planned, and carefully managed to include all learners and use any support assistants wisely. Teachers use their extensive knowledge and a good variety of tasks to capture students' interest and make learning relevant. There is a brisk pace and good quality questioning that challenges students. In these lessons students respond quickly to staff and apply themselves wholeheartedly to learning. Weaker lessons are characterised by too much 'teacher talk', mundane and uninspiring activities and an over-reliance on worksheets. In the sample of students' work that inspectors scrutinised, the frequency of marking and the quality of written feedback varied considerably and there was too little attention paid to how students presented their work.

The curriculum is good having been broadened so that it now matches the needs and interests of students more closely. This has been achieved through the introduction of vocational courses and additional subjects. Some of these are delivered by other educational establishments as a result of the strong partnerships the school has forged with them. The specialist subjects have been instrumental in driving forward themed days, and cross-curricular projects.

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All students are supported and cared for well. There are acutely sensitive and effective arrangements in place to support students who may be experiencing difficulties for whatever reason. The student services centre is a place where students and parents alike feel very comfortable in seeking out extra help from school staff and other agencies. Students are very well prepared for the move from primary school and transition arrangements in the school are outstanding, having been recognised as an example of national best practice. The guidance given at other key points of a student's education is good.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Relationships between governors and the headteacher are good resulting in productive and effective actions and a period of rapid change and improvement. While they are rightly proud of their achievements, governors acknowledge that more training and development is needed before they can independently evaluate the school rigorously and that they have more work to do to establish clear routes through which parents and pupils can express their views. Strong links have been forged with partners and other agencies to enhance provision and meet the students' needs. The school makes well-considered and conscientious contributions to community cohesion locally, nationally and internationally. Data analysis, accountability and performance management systems have been considerably enhanced. Systems to monitor teaching are thorough and lesson observations are undertaken regularly. However, the resultant information is not yet utilised fully to iron out the variations in teaching and ensure the good practice seen in some departments and lessons is developed consistently across the school. The necessary safeguarding procedures are in place. The school takes effective steps to tackle discrimination and the promotion of equality is good. Staff and resources are deployed effectively.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

Students say that they enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and are provided with an outstanding range of experiences that helps them mature into independent learners. Their achievements as a result of their time in the sixth form are 'beyond anything they ever dreamed possible'. Outcomes at the end of Year 13 support this view. Examination results and the school's own data indicate that students consistently make outstanding progress overall taking into account their individual starting points. Their attendance is very high. A much higher proportion of students than is found nationally continue to study four subjects at A level when they move from Year 12 into Year 13. The support students receive both in terms of their academic guidance and their personal development is outstanding. This enables them to make suitable choices and, consequently, the proportion of students progressing into further learning or employment is very high. Students in the sixth form play a very active role in decision making and in the life of the school and local community, for example, through mentoring younger students and acting as sports leaders in local primary schools.

The majority of teaching observed by inspectors in the sixth form was good or outstanding. The leadership and management of the sixth form is good overall. However, strategies and actions are not always precise enough or reviewed and evaluated as rigorously as they need to be in order to achieve further improvement.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received responses from around 17% of parents and carers and they were very positive. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded were strongly supportive of school leaders. A very large majority consider students' behaviour to be good and believe that their children enjoy their education and achieve well.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Benton Park School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 237 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1429 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	84	35	140	59	9	4	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	27	162	68	5	2	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	46	19	168	71	16	7	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	22	155	65	11	5	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	48	20	162	68	10	4	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	11	144	61	45	19	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	13	158	67	33	14	3	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	20	147	62	13	5	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	19	161	68	19	8	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	23	137	58	22	9	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	16	139	59	24	10	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	51	22	150	63	8	3	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	29	153	65	7	3	3	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 January 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Benton Park School, Leeds, LS19 6LX**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and finding out what you think about your school through our meetings with you and the questionnaires you completed. We took full account of your views and those of your parents and carers who also completed questionnaires when we made our judgements.

We found Benton Park to be a satisfactory and improving school which enables those of you in the main school to make satisfactory progress in your learning and sixth form students make outstanding progress. You feel safe in school and are polite to adults and each other. Your good behaviour in lessons contributes well to your learning and you are generally well behaved, although we did notice that in areas where you were not being closely supervised, some of you were rather boisterous at break times. You have a good range of subjects you can choose to study and really appreciate all the trips, visits and extra activities staff provide for you. You all make a good contribution to the school and the local community and enjoy doing this. Sixth form students support and help younger students through the mentoring scheme and working with you in health and social care lessons for instance.

To make Benton Park even better we have asked the school's leaders to:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning and make sure all your lessons are of the standard of the best
- tighten up the systems and procedures they use to monitor and review their actions so that they will know what works and how best to support you to make better progress.

You can help to improve Benton Park even more by attending school regularly and continuing to contribute to school developments. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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