

Barking Abbey School

Sandringham Road, Barking, IG11 9AG

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of students gaining five good passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has remained above the national average.
- Students enjoy the family community atmosphere of the school, at the core of which lie the values of tolerance and respect. These are central to promoting exemplary attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour.
- The sixth form is good. Standards and success rates are improving across GCE A-level subjects. Almost all students go into education, employment or training at 16.
- The headteacher is a highly effective leader supported by a strong team of leaders and managers. The improving trend in students' results demonstrates that the school has the necessary expertise to ensure that achievement and teaching become outstanding.
- Teaching is good, as the majority of teachers build on students' high levels of motivation through well-structured lessons.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make at least the progress that would be expected, across subjects. Some make good progress in English and outstanding progress in mathematics.
- Younger students who are behind with their reading and numeracy skills and students who speak English as an additional language are exceptionally well supported. They make good progress across most subjects.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Across many subjects, some teachers do not plan learning so that higher attaining students and boys of White British heritage are fully supported in making good and outstanding progress.
- Year 12 students do not receive a well-structured induction that helps all of them successfully complete their AS-level courses and progress to Year 13.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 53 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior and middle leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle managers, four groups of students, a group of parents and carers and a representative from the local authority. Short discussions were also held with a few groups of students during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), in planning the inspection, and the comments made by a small number of parents and carers during the inspection.
- They observed the school’s work, and looked at a wide range of documents, including the school’s assessment data on students’ progress over time, internal lesson observations, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring documentation and records related to behaviour and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Meena Kumari Wood, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Joanna Beckford-Hall	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Kevin Morris	Additional inspector
Desmond Dunn	Additional inspector
Janet Morrison	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Barking Abbey is a much larger than average-sized secondary school. The larger than average-sized sixth form has an increasing number of students on roll.
- Three quarters of the students are from minority ethnic groups and one third of these speak English as an additional language. The largest groups of students are of Black African and Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals and to be eligible for the Pupil Premium is significantly above that found nationally.
- The proportion of students identified as disabled or with special educational needs is below that found nationally. The majority have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and are supported by school action plus. The proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is below the national average. These students have moderate learning difficulties.
- A small number of students attend vocational work-related courses at Barking College and Redbridge College.
- The school has specialist status in sports and humanities.
- The school is currently above the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in all lessons so that the majority of teaching is outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan lessons that are adapted to meet the needs and abilities of all students, especially higher attaining students and boys of White British heritage
 - teachers monitor students' progress closely in lesson activities and tasks to ensure that they are appropriately challenged and supported in their learning
 - verbal and written assessment, including marking, always gives students consistently detailed feedback on how to improve and that this is consistently followed up so that students act upon the guidance
 - robust scrutiny of internal lesson observations evaluate and extend the professional development programme, so that teaching staff, all leaders and the governing body are better informed about the impact of teaching activities on students with different ability levels.
- Increase the proportion of Year 12 students who successfully complete their AS-level courses and progress to Year 13 through:
 - well-structured induction in Year 12 that identifies the gaps in students' subject knowledge and critical thinking skills
 - using this information to adapt teaching more precisely to meet students' needs
 - closer monitoring of the progress that Year 12 students make across their courses.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in the school by the end of Year 11 have risen over three years. The rate of improvement is outstanding in mathematics. In English, standards declined slightly on the previous year, but were still above the national average.
- In most subjects, the majority of students make good progress. Higher attaining students, however, do not make the progress of which they are capable in some subjects. For instance, the number of GCSE A* and A grades is significantly higher than the national average for mathematics, science and geography. Students make exceptional progress in these subjects to reach challenging targets.
- By contrast, in English and French the number of high grades is lower than the national average. This is because some teachers have low expectations of students' capability. Consequently, the work set does not match students' levels of learning.
- Students enter the school with starting points that are in line with the national average; a vast number of these are eligible for the Pupil Premium. Many have a range of complex emotional and social needs, and in addition, demonstrate weak reading and writing skills. Despite these potential barriers to their learning, most of these students make at least expected levels of progress across the subjects. This is because of the students' keen desire to learn, combined with the good quality of teaching.
- Across many subjects, including English but not mathematics, boys of White British heritage make much slower progress than their peers. However, targeted support for these students' writing and reading skills in Key Stage 3 is resulting in more rapid gains in their learning in the current Year 11 group. The majority of girls and Black African and Pakistani boys make good progress.
- Students supported by school action plus and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress as lesson activities, including peer and adult support, are mostly well adapted to their learning needs. In addition, students receive carefully monitored support outside lessons.
- In the sixth form, over the last two years, the progress students make by the end of their courses has been too variable in some subjects. As a result, some Year 12 students do not successfully complete their courses, or fail to achieve a pass grade. The school has effectively addressed subject weaknesses through professional staff development. Current students on GCE AS-level courses are making good progress. GCE A-level standards are in line with the national average.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching over time is good, with some that is outstanding. The majority of teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of students and use assessment well to ensure that work is carefully matched to the different abilities in the majority of lessons.
- Teachers use effective ways, including peer-assessment, of prompting students to develop independent thinking skills. For example, excellent use of a visualiser in a mathematics activity encouraged Year 10 students to explore calculation methods. Students enthusiastically shared individual approaches to problem solving through debate.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and inspire students in their learning. They seize opportunities in lessons to develop students' moral, cultural and social skills. For instance, less confident students made exceptional progress through responding to probing questions on the concepts of evil and power in Macbeth. They extended their learning through apt observations on the present day-context of world rulers.
- In a few lessons, challenge is lacking in tasks and activities for students and this results in some students not producing standards of work in line with their abilities. In some

instances, boys of White British heritage are not engaging in activities because they lack the subject-specific skills they need to successfully complete the tasks.

- Verbal feedback and marking in history, geography and mathematics provide students with clear targets for improvement. The marking of classwork and coursework, in some other subjects, does not always consistently offer step-by-step feedback. More importantly, teachers do not always ensure that students have acted on detailed guidance where it is helpfully provided.
- Sixth form students enjoy the opportunities they have for independent learning and demonstrate great maturity of thought. In a few cases, teachers do not give them sufficient opportunities to deepen their critical thinking skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is exemplary and leads to a positive climate for learning. They are respectful and courteous towards each other and towards adults. In lessons, students often take a productive lead in their learning, especially when they are working in groups or pairs.
- Students feel exceptionally safe. This is because what constitutes acceptable behaviour is reinforced firmly and equally by all students, staff and leaders. Parents and carers who expressed a view stated that the school promotes high standards of behaviour.
- The school has thorough processes for securing the well-being of students whose personal circumstances may make them vulnerable to poor attendance and behaviour. Of particular note are the excellent behaviour and engagement of these students in lessons. Consequently, attendance is outstanding and exclusions are very low.
- Strengths of the school that contribute significantly to the high expectations of behaviour include academic mentoring sessions by teachers and peer mentoring. In addition, sixth form students provide academic and emotional support for younger students through a school community service scheme.
- Students demonstrate a mature and exceptionally good understanding of different types of bullying, including name calling, homophobic and racist bullying. They have a clear understanding of e-safety.
- All occurrences of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff, including any extremist behaviour. Students report that victims of any incidents are well supported. Discussions with students confirmed that relationships between students are very good, and a major strength of the multicultural school is the way that all students from different backgrounds are accepted for who they are.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a strong inclusive vision for the school, and has been quick to implement the changes needed to address weaknesses in the quality of teaching. His aspirations for raising achievement for all students are reflected through the effective actions of his senior leadership team, and subject and pastoral managers.
- Departmental and key stage improvement plans clearly identify the actions to raise achievement. Managers monitor closely the gaps in learning for groups of students and provide extra support for those who are underachieving.
- Leaders and managers are driving improvement in teaching across the school through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development. They are adept in sharing good practice, for instance, through staff observing strong features of teaching in humanities and mathematics.
- The curriculum is exceptionally responsive to the needs of students in all key stages. Literacy objectives for students are in place in lessons across subjects, and teachers are beginning the process of evaluating the progress students make against these.
- The school provides good opportunities in lessons and assemblies and through visiting speakers that help students successfully explore spiritual beliefs, moral and social values.
- The school's sports specialism has a highly positive influence on maintaining a cohesive

school community. Notably, the school's successful contribution of basketball athletes to the Olympic Games this year has increased national recognition for the school's Sporting Academy. This has created aspirational role models for students.

- Effective partnerships with neighbouring colleges mean that the school makes a strong contribution to ensuring students at 16 enter further education, training or work. The small number of students in Years 10 and 11 who follow work-related courses, successfully progress to higher level specialist courses or apprenticeships.
- Although sixth form managers systematically monitor students' progress, they recognise that induction processes require strengthening to identify early gaps in students' prior subject knowledge and skills.
- Safeguarding is a strength and requirements are met. Staff use close partnerships highly effectively with other agencies, including social services and the community police, to support students' emotional, social and learning needs.
- **The governance of the school:**

The governing body draws well on the expertise and knowledge of individual governors when challenging leaders and managers about performance and provision. The governors:

 - know the school and community well, are clear about the priorities for raising achievement and support leaders in resolving weaknesses in staffing
 - provide good support and challenge for the headteacher and are kept well informed about students' progress and pastoral needs, as well as behaviour and exclusions
 - use a good range of committees to keep equality issues and the school's progress and effectiveness, including financial management, under review
 - are involved in shaping the school improvement plan
 - are increasingly developing a better understanding of what is involved in improving the quality of teaching and the link with raising achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101241
Local authority	Barking
Inspection number	395434

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,040
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	696
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Francis Spring
Headteacher	Mark Lloyd
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 September 2008
Telephone number	020 8270 4100
Fax number	020 8270 4090
Email address	mlloyd@babbey.bardaglea.org.uk

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