

Benton Park School

Harrogate Road, Rawdon, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS19 6LX

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There is not enough good or better teaching to secure good progress for all students. Some teachers do not plan lessons to help students learn well taking account of their ability. Marking does not always help students to know what to do better next time.
- Some students do not make the progress expected of them in English and mathematics. Not enough make better than expected progress, particularly in mathematics.
- The progress made by students with special educational needs is not good enough to close the gap between them and the students who do not have these needs.
- The students for whom the pupil premium provides support are not making good enough progress and the gap in performance between them and other students is not closing fast enough.

The school has the following strengths

- There is a strong focus on the improvement of teaching and this is beginning to help students learn more effectively in the classroom.
- Revised targets for students are challenging. The tracking of the progress of students is accurate. Arrangements to support students who do not make enough progress are beginning to show positive results.
- The sixth form is good. Achievement is good and almost all students move onto higher education, employment or training.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. The schools' work in this area has been celebrated in the school and beyond.
- The two acting headteachers have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have changed the culture of the school by helping everyone feel they have a part to play in increasing students' achievement through improving teaching.
- Governors have taken time to make sure they understand how to judge the progress the school is making and are providing clear support and effective challenge to raise achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons involving 40 teachers. Two lessons were jointly observed. Four registrations and one assembly were observed.
- Meetings were held with a group of governors, a representative of the local authority and one from a partner school, senior and middle leaders, staff and students of the school.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of school documents including information related to teachers' performance and minutes of the governing body. They examined school policies, whole-school and departmental plans and reviews as well as records of observations of the quality of teaching and progress of students.
- Inspectors analysed 73 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and considered the analysis of 250 parental responses to surveys carried out by the school over this academic year.

Inspection team

Pankaj Gulab, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila Kaye	Additional Inspector
Robin Fugill	Additional Inspector
Shirley Fall	Additional Inspector
Wendy Bradford	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, from forces families and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is lower than average.
- The percentage of students for whom English is not the first language is lower than the national as is the figure for students from minority ethnic families.
- The proportions of special educational needs students supported through school action and also those supported through school action plus or a statement are lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which sets minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of students at Skillz, Hunslet Boys and Girls Club, Youth Point, YMCA Training and Yorkshire College of Beauty.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better so that progress overall and particularly for students with special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium is good by:
 - making sure teachers use the information they have on students to plan work at the right level of difficulty that gets the best out of all students
 - improving the use of questioning so that it checks students' learning and is used to adjust the next steps of the lesson to promote better learning
 - building on the good practice in the school to develop the consistency of guidance given to students on how to improve and giving them the chance to do so.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that all development plans identify the impact of actions in a measureable way so their progress can be regularly checked through the year
 - completing the pupil premium plan and checking that the actions planned are helping these students to make good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the standards at which students have joined the school over the last three years have been above the national average and when students reach the end of their Year 11 studies, the standards reached are broadly average even though some are above. Although this does not represent good progress, during the past three years standards have been rising year-on-year. Lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and the school's own tracking show that this rising trend is continuing for students currently in the school.
- The rate of progress students make in English and mathematics, given their starting points in Year 7, is not as good as it should be. The progress students make in English is stronger than that made in mathematics. In 2012, some students in English and more in mathematics failed to make the progress expected of them. The proportion making better than expected progress is also below the national average. Tracking information held by the school of the current Year 11 students suggests that the levels of progress for both English and mathematics are on course to be better than the national rates last year.
- Students who are supported through the pupil premium are not making good progress. Consequently, their attainment as measured by average point scores in English and mathematics is not closing rapidly enough when compared to other groups. The percentage of pupil premium students who secure five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics is well below that for other students. The school, through the prompting of the governors, is reviewing its pupil premium plan to make it more effective in addressing the gap between these groups. Early indications in the school's tracking of performance suggests pupil premium students are doing better and the gap is likely to close further by the end of this academic year.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs did not make good progress in 2012 compared to those who do not have these needs. A review of the arrangements for these students is being undertaken to identify how best to improve provision for them. Additional arrangements to support these students and curriculum changes are in now in place. Some of these are helping students to learn effectively and the school can demonstrate that many are now making better progress.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- A small number of students access learning away from the school with different organisations for part of their study time. These students gain appropriate qualifications and some achieve well.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students in the sixth form study more subjects than the national average and reach individual scores that are high. These scores help to ensure that every student who applies secures a place in a university. Staying-on-rates in courses and from Year 12 into Year 13 are higher than the national average. Students spoken to feel they are listened to and have a wide range of opportunities that contributes to their personal development.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inspectors saw teaching that ranged from outstanding to requiring improvement with none that was inadequate. However, the proportion that requires improvement is still too high to help students to learn effectively and improve the achievement of students. Teaching over time has not been sufficiently good to ensure that students make good progress.
- In lessons where teaching requires improvement teachers fail to plan activities that challenge and engage everyone. Questioning is poorly used and does not inform the next steps of the lesson. Too often the work set is too easy and expectations on how much students can do are too low. Few opportunities are given for students to take charge of their learning and they

become dependent on the instructions of the teacher. When these are not shared clearly students do not do much and make little progress.

- Where teaching is good or better teachers show an energy and enthusiasm for their subject. They build positive relationships with students and that encourages them to participate. Teachers plan lessons that have a range of engaging activities and a variety of challenge so that everyone in the class develops an interest in learning. Short, timed periods of activities are followed up with interesting ways of checking and sharing learning. This then determines how the next part of the lesson will progress. Clear, established expectations and habits allow students to think for themselves and ask questions when in difficulty. Teachers let students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further through questioning and clear comments in books.
- Marking and feedback to students are variable with some good practice seen in the school. However, in too many lessons it does not clearly let students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Even when this is done, students are not always given the time to respond to the guidance given by teachers. This is done well in many English lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' attitudes to learning in the classroom are positive. When given the opportunity to work together with other students and challenged appropriately, students make good progress. They keep focused, share ideas, ask questions and challenge each other well.
- Students' behaviour around the school is good. Even during lesson changeovers, when staircases can get crowded, students move in an orderly manner showing an awareness of the needs of others. During break times and in the canteen students gather in groups and interact with each other in a sensible manner.
- Students are courteous and polite to visitors and speak to them with respect. When asked, they honestly convey their feeling about the work of the school.
- Attendance has improved from being below the national level three years ago to being above the national average in 2012. The proportion of students persistently absent dropped from above to below the national average and this improvement has continued for the current year. The slight drop in attendance this year to date has been analysed and is due to an extended period of illness for many students in the autumn term. Punctuality to the school and lessons is good.
- Student exclusions have dropped from being above the national figure to well below the national in 2012 and in this academic year already much lower than the same time last year.
- Students feel safe in school and know they can turn to adults in the school for support if needed. They know the consequences of poor behaviour and expect not to have their learning disrupted. The system of rewards and sanctions is understood well. They talk about how different types of bullying are unacceptable and how to stay safe on the internet and in a number of different everyday situations.
- A small number of parents raised concerns about the behaviour of students and the way sanctions and rewards are used in the school. These were investigated by inspectors and found not to be the general experience of students in the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The two acting headteachers have a clear view on how successful the school can be by improving teaching. They have shared this well with everyone in the school. It has been understood by all other managers and staff in the school and is helping students to learn more effectively. This is appreciated by students who comment on their improved experience in the classroom.

- External reviews and this inspection show a marked improvement in teaching in the last year. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching has risen and no inadequate teaching was seen. A review by the local authority in February 2012 found a significant proportion of inadequate teaching. The school has taken very robust, successful actions to eliminate inadequate teaching although some still needs improvement.
- Senior and middle leaders feel they have been given the freedom to move forward their ideas to improve teaching and learning. Groups of staff are engaging in discussions about learning and trying out new ideas. Some of these were seen during the inspection and are helping students to learn more effectively.
- Standards have risen steadily over the last three years and information on students' progress in Year 11 suggests that they will rise much more quickly at the end of this academic year. The inspectors found evidence in lessons and in the school's data that achievement is improving for most students in other year groups too. Achievement in the sixth form has been good for several years and expected to continue to be so in the future.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has been used to put together a development plan that identifies appropriate actions to address the areas for improvement. However, the way the success of these actions is to be measured is not always clear making it difficult to securely tell how well things are moving forward.
- Performance management arrangements have been tightened and include a focus on ways of improving teaching identified through the teaching standards set nationally and the progress of students. A sensible, stepped review of responsibilities and roles has been started which links to the salary staff are being paid.
- The curriculum is mainly academic but is widened to include work-related opportunities to meet the particular needs of some students. These arrangements are made through using the expertise of organisations outside the school. Small numbers of students benefit from this arrangement gaining appropriate qualifications. Progression into the sixth form allows students to follow both academic courses and some with a work-place focus. A wide range of extra-curricular activities are on offer in the main school and particularly in the sixth form. Many of these provide memorable experiences for students and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A well attended 'amnesty group' and numerous successful charitable fundraising events are evidence of this.
- The analysis of the 73 on-line parent questionnaire shows that some parents have concerns about the school, however. The 250 returns the school has from parents' evening this academic year shows overwhelming support for the school. Many concerns raised appear to have been addressed in the current practice observed during the inspection.
- Safeguarding arrangements are well structured and followed well throughout the school by staff and students. The school takes reasonable steps to ensure the behaviour and safety of students when attending off-site provision.
- The local authority has been instrumental in supporting the development of the ability of both governors and the school leadership to make improvements. Governors and the school leadership carefully choose the external support they need to help them be more effective leaders and managers. The school's ability to carry on making improvement is good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have accurately understood the strengths of the two acting headteachers and appointed them as co-headteachers to improve the school. The two complement each other well and have shown they have the skills and determination to move the school forward quickly. Governors themselves have undertaken training to make sure they call the school to account for its actions. They meet regularly and have identified that some groups in the school are not making enough progress and have engaged an external advisor to review the arrangements for special educational needs. They have also asked for a clearer pupil premium plan to be drawn up so that it is more effective in supporting the learning of these students. Governors receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and are aware of the improvements taking place. They are appropriately involved in performance management

arrangements and have begun the process of looking at the responsibilities teachers carry and the pay they receive. Governance is now good and so an external audit is not recommended by the inspectors.

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	108083
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	405151

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,396
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Oakley
Headteacher	Delia Martin/Steve Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2011
Telephone number	0113 250 2330
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