

# Queensbury School

Deanstones Lane, Queensbury, Bradford, BD13 2AS

**Inspection dates** 14–15 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' attainment is not as high as it should be. In 2013, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C including English and mathematics was below average, despite the school predicting a significantly higher figure.
- While the majority of students make the progress expected of them from their individual starting points, not enough do better than this in English and mathematics.
- Not enough students make good progress because the activities they are set to do in classes. Questioning is not always challenging enough. Marking is not always effective enough in showing students how to improve their work.
- Attendance is below average. The attendance of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than that of other students and the gap is closing too slowly. Weaknesses in attendance are not tackled rigorously enough.
- The quality of leadership and management varies too much. Some senior leaders and subject managers are not yet fully effective in carrying out their responsibilities. As a result, the quality of teaching and students' achievement has not improved at a good rate.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the quality of teaching and achievement between different subjects vary too much. Students' skills in studying independently are not always developed well enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides the school with strong and purposeful leadership that is making the school more effective.
- The school is using information about students' progress much more sharply.
- Effective support ensures that disabled students, those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- Students feel safe in school and most behave well around the school and in lessons.
- The governing body has improved its effectiveness. It knows the school well, providing strong support to the headteacher and increasing levels of challenge to leaders and managers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons taught by 37 teachers. Three of the observations were carried out jointly with senior school leaders. Inspectors looked closely at samples of students' written work across a range of subjects. They also watched behaviour on corridors, on the playgrounds and in the dining hall.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, four groups of students, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation and development plan summaries; data relating to students' attainment and progress; analyses of attendance; documents and records relating to behaviour and safeguarding; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning and of performance management; and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors analysed 33 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and summaries from questionnaires sent out by the school and returned by parents. Inspectors also analysed 21 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Isobel Short	Additional Inspector
James McGrath	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Queensbury is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly above average. The range of ethnicities is wide.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- Thirty post-16 students attend South Bradford Vocational Centre on a part-time basis to study chiefly vocational courses and/or to prepare to resit GCSE examinations in English and/or mathematics.
- The proportion of students who join and/or leave the school at other than normal times is higher than average.
- The school enters some of the most able students early for GCSE in English.
- The headteacher has been in post since April 2013. A new deputy headteacher took up post at the end of April 2014.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently at least good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form to raise achievement further by:
  - making sure that activities are always challenging enough for different groups of students
  - improving students' independent study skills in the sixth form
  - ensuring that questioning is used consistently well to check on students' understanding and deepen their understanding
  - making sure that marking always shows students what they need to do to improve their work and that they act on the advice given.
- Improve the attendance of students known to be eligible for free school meals so that they attend at least as well as other students by making sure that leaders and managers responsible for attendance are more rigorous in identifying patterns of poor attendance and in tackling them effectively.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on raising achievement and improving achievement in the main school and the sixth form by:
  - making sure that leaders and managers have an accurate view of the quality of teaching so that actions to improve it can be targeted more sharply
  - ensuring that all senior leaders and subject managers manage their areas of responsibility equally well and are held rigorously to account for how effectively they carry out their responsibilities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement in Years 7 to 11 requires improvement because attainment, although starting to improve, has not been high enough in recent years and not enough students have made good progress from their individual starting points.
- Achievement in the sixth form also requires improvement because there is too much variation in attainment and progress between different subjects.
- Students join the school with attainment that is generally below average. In recent years, attainment by the end of Year 11 has been below average. Despite the school's predictions that the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at Grades A\* to C in 2013 would be significantly higher than in 2012, the figure was lower.
- Current school data, supported by inspection evidence from scrutiny of students' work, discussions with students and observing learning in lessons, show that attainment is rising and is moving securely towards being closer to the national average in the coming years.
- In recent years, most students have made the progress expected of them in English and mathematics from their individual starting points. However, the proportion making better progress than this has been below the national figures. Again, inspection evidence confirms school data showing that the proportion making more than the progress expected of them is growing securely.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals attained approximately one GCSE grade lower than their classmates in English and mathematics in 2013. While school data and inspection evidence show that the gap is starting to close, progress is not as fast as it could be because too many students who are known to be eligible for free school meals are too often absent from school.
- The proportion of the most able students who attain the higher GCSE grades was significantly below average in 2013 and has not been as high as it should in recent years because the activities that students are given in lessons are not always challenging enough. New leadership is starting to reverse the trend and school data and inspection evidence show that more of the most able students are achieving well.
- Students who are disabled or with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language generally achieve well because of the strong and effective support that they receive.
- The majority of students who join the school at other than normal times make the progress expected of them and more are now doing better than this because much more effective use is being made of information to track their progress and provide the support they need.
- The school liaises regularly with the South Bradford Vocational Centre to check on students' attendance, safety and progress. Information presented by the school shows that the majority of these students make good progress.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE in English. Results dictate whether students will continue to try to improve their grade or whether they will concentrate on studying English literature at GCSE. There is no evidence to show that early entry has any detrimental effect on achievement.
- The fact that there are differences between the achievement of different groups of students, especially between those students known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates, shows that provision for equality of opportunity is not yet fully in place.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to support lower attaining students in Year 7 with developing their reading, writing and mathematics. School data show that students make most progress in reading with many improving their reading ages significantly.
- Students' progress and achievement in English and mathematics are starting to rise securely because teaching is improving and because teachers are making more effective use of information on students' progress to target extra support where it is needed.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- Although the quality of teaching is improving securely, it is not yet good because too much requires improvement and does not enable enough students to make good progress.
- Activities set for students are sometimes too easy and do not enable them to make good progress. Questioning is not consistent in challenging students' thinking and enabling them to make faster progress.
- In the sixth form, students are not always given enough opportunities to find things out for themselves. This slows the progress of some, limiting how well they are prepared for the demands of study in higher education.
- Relationships in classrooms are generally strong. Teachers know their students well and, increasingly, they are making effective use of information about students' abilities and progress to provide work that is more challenging. Consequently, the proportion of students making good progress is rising securely.
- Where students make good or better progress they enjoy solving challenging activities and respond eagerly and maturely to probing questions that challenge their thinking. For example, during a Year 9 English lesson, students made outstanding progress because the activities were planned exceptionally well to increase the level of challenge, and skilful questioning checked students' understanding and deepened their appreciation of poetry. Students responded enthusiastically and with an eagerness to give of their best.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively in lessons to support lower attaining students and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. For example, during one activity, the teaching assistant helped to provide a clear explanation of the task for the students, which helped students to complete the task.
- Students' work is marked regularly but comments on how students might improve their work are not always as clear or as helpful as they could be. There are too few examples in students' books of them following up on the advice provided in their comments.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****requires improvement**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- While the majority of students attend school regularly, overall attendance levels are below average because too many students known to be eligible for free school meals are absent too often. Despite some improvement, leaders and managers responsible for checking on attendance have been slow to pick up on this weakness and to tackle it with the necessary sense of urgency.
- In lessons and around the school most students behave sensibly. Most treat each other and the adults working with them with respect. Students say that behaviour has improved recently because there are clearer procedures for managing their behaviour that staff are applying more fairly and with greater consistency.
- Students are generally proud of their school and take good care of the buildings and the site in general. They wear their uniforms correctly and most are punctual to school in the morning and to lessons. They bring the correct materials to lessons and settle quickly to learning.
- Occasionally when activities in lessons are too easy or too hard, a minority of students lose interest and some chatter idly.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say that bullying of any sort is rare and that staff are quick to deal with it on the few occasions that it occurs. School records confirm their views.
- Students talk knowledgeably about how to deal with situations that are potentially dangerous. They show good awareness of the risks involved in using social networking sites and how to avoid them.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, achievement and the quality of teaching have not improved fast enough. For this reason, despite being judged as good at the previous inspection, leadership and management are judged to require improvement.
- The headteacher knows what the school does well and how successful it should be. She is tackling weaknesses rigorously and laying firm foundations for future improvement. There is a sharp focus on challenging leaders and managers who are not fully effective in carrying out their responsibilities.
- Central to the headteacher's drive to raise achievement has been raising targets for students' progress and improving systems to check on their progress towards them. Inspection evidence shows that, as a result, achievement is starting to rise, although the full impact of the initiative is yet to be felt.
- Leaders and managers do not yet check rigorously enough on the quality of teaching and judge too much to be good or better. This masks weaknesses and prevents them from being tackled effectively enough.
- The quality and impact of some senior leaders and some subject managers vary too much and result in inconsistencies in students' achievement between subjects in the main school and in the sixth form.
- The headteacher has made targets for teachers much more challenging and systems are firmly in place to hold teachers to account for achieving them, and linking the outcomes to decisions about salary rises.
- The curriculum meets students' needs. It provides a good range of opportunities for students to develop their basic skills in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics. The taught curriculum is enriched through a wide range of additional activities in sports and the arts that support well students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school, although some express concerns about behaviour and some do not believe that students receive enough homework. Inspectors looked carefully at these aspects and found that generally behaviour is managed increasingly well by the school and that in most, but not all, classes homework is set and marked regularly.
- The local authority has provided strong and effective support to the new headteacher in her drive to make the school more effective, especially to strengthen the quality of leadership and management.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding students are in place.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has sharpened its effectiveness through training and by some changes in membership. The governing body is now sharp and well-informed. It knows what the school does well and where it is not so successful. It provides strong support and challenge to the new headteacher in her drive to tackle weaknesses and make the school more effective. Governors take regular part in training activities that give them a firm understanding of data to show them how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools both locally and nationally. Governors receive and question regular reports from senior leaders about the quality of teaching across the school. They are increasingly insistent that the reports they receive are accurate and reflect the impact of teaching on the quality of students' achievement. They understand fully the link between the appraisal of staff performance and the links with salary progression based on meeting specific targets. The governing body has a firm grasp on finances, including the allocation and impact of pupil premium funding. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107391
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	442177

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

<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
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,033
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jayne Leech
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Hart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 882214
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