

Benton Park School

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

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership from the co-headteachers and senior leaders have been key in bringing about improvement in teaching and students' achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 since the previous inspection.
- From their different starting points in Year 7, students, including disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs, make good progress, including in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more good GCSE grades by Year 11 has risen strongly and is significantly above average. Students are well prepared with the skills needed for their future success.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their subjects well. Their expertise and enthusiasm motivates students to learn and questions are used effectively to challenge students' thinking.
- Students enjoy learning in a harmonious community. Attendance has improved and in Key Stages 3 and 4 is now above average.
- Students of all ages are respectful towards each other and adults. They behave well, feel safe and have a very clear understanding how to keep themselves safe. Bullying is rare. Students are well cared for.
- Students are provided with many varied opportunities to experience life beyond the classroom. They show a good understanding of British values, develop tolerance and respect for cultural diversity and, as a result, are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders make an effective contribution to driving improvements forward. They are fully involved in school improvement planning and leading improvements in teaching and in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors provide good levels of support and challenge and hold the school to account for its performance and improvement.
- Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work, sharing a strong sense of commitment and support for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Provision in the sixth form requires improvement. Students do not achieve well in some academic subjects. Expectations of what students are capable of achieving are not always high enough to enable students to reach the highest levels.
- Leadership in the sixth form is strengthening but is not yet good. Leaders are yet to ensure that sixth form teaching is consistently good and that students always attend regularly.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4, teachers do not always demand the most of their students or set work that challenges individuals equally well, particularly the most able students. Not all teachers consistently apply the school's agreed marking policy.
- Opportunities to promote students' literacy skills as part of work across the curriculum subjects are sometimes overlooked.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited a wide range of lessons or parts of lessons, eight of which were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of records and supporting documents including those relating to child protection and safeguarding, the leaders’ views of the school’s own performance, the performance of teachers, monitoring of students’ progress and the quality of teaching in lessons, students’ achievement data and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Formal meetings were held with the co-headteachers, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders, groups of students, the headteacher of a partnership school and a representative of the local authority.
- In addition, inspectors held informal discussions with students during lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes in order to gather their views about learning and behaviour across the school.
- A scrutiny of students’ work was carried out during inspectors’ observations of lessons. They looked in detail at students’ achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Inspectors analysed 30 responses to staff questionnaires and 94 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Keith Worrall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michele Costello	Additional Inspector
Gerald Fitzpatrick	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Lawton	Additional Inspector
Linda Foley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Benton Park School is much larger than most secondary schools. Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The school makes use of alternative off-site provision for a small number of students in Years 11 to 13 on a part-time basis to access some vocational courses. Alternative provision is offered in collaboration with Horsforth School, TLC North and Aspire and Achieve.
- The school has links with the Arc Teacher Training partnership and Red Kite Teaching School Alliance. The partnership activities are linked to the professional development and training for staff.
- The school is supported by a local authority school improvement adviser who provides advice, guidance and challenge for leaders.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- In January 2015, a new leader of the sixth form provision took up post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision in the sixth form so that students achieve consistently well in all academic subjects by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations of what students are capable of achieving are consistently high so that students reach the highest levels
 - students are always clear about what they need to do to improve their work
 - students' attendance continues to improve
 - the arrangements for checking that the quality of sixth form teaching is consistently good are strengthened.
- Improve the quality of teaching even further in Key Stages 3 and 4 in order to improve students' achievement so that it is outstanding by:
 - always setting work that challenges individuals equally well, particularly the most able students, so that a higher proportion reach the highest grades in GCSE examinations
 - making sure that all teachers apply the school's agreed approaches to marking and the assessment of students' work and that students are clear how to improve
 - further promoting students' literacy skills as part of work across the curriculum subjects, ensuring that errors in students' work, particularly in their spelling, grammar and punctuation, are pointed out so that students learn from their mistakes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- As a result of very clear direction and a relentless drive by the co-headteachers and senior leadership team, students' achievement and teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Teachers and governors agree with this view. Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Staff, including those new to the school and new to the teaching profession, are well supported to develop and to improve their teaching practices. Teachers say that they receive good quality induction and appreciate the many opportunities they are given to share their practices with one another. Effective strategies for improving the quality of teaching even further means that teaching continues to improve at a good rate.
- Challenging targets are set for the performance of staff and reflect an accurate understanding of the impact an individual teacher has on students' performance. Teachers are only able to progress through the pay scales if they reach these targets. Governors ensure that this is not automatic.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all students. Senior and middle leaders now undertake regular monitoring and track students' progress carefully. Data analysis is good and this information is used well. Leaders' checks of the progress and achievement of students and groups of students, in lessons and over time, are rigorous and accurate. As a result, plans to improve the school are clearly linked to improving students' achievement where it is in most need and the impact is carefully measured. The gap between the progresses of different groups of students is closing over time and any variation is checked to ensure even greater impact on gaps that are not closing quickly enough. In this respect, leaders are fully held to account for progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Middle leaders make an effective contribution to driving improvements forward. They are fully involved in school improvement planning and leading improvements in teaching and in their areas of responsibility.
- Leadership of the sixth form, however, requires improvement. Leaders are yet to ensure the quality of sixth form teaching is consistently good. Arrangements to check the quality of the sixth form are not yet fully effective. The skills of new leadership in doing so are still developing.
- The pupil premium funding is used to good effect to support disadvantaged students. Personalised learning programmes target eligible students, which impacts positively on their achievements. These students are now making good progress across the school. Previous gaps in attainment and rates of progress are closing at a good rate. A strong focus on improving the achievement of less able students has proved particularly effective and more students are achieving better results in GCSE examinations. Leaders are aware that the achievement of the most able students is sometimes held back because teaching sometimes lacks challenge. This is especially the case in the sixth form. This is why leaders are now working to ensure that expectations of what students can achieve in the sixth form are higher.
- Leaders have successfully improved attendance, reducing persistent absence and exclusion rates in Key Stages 3 and 4. Leaders are now focussing on improving attendance in the sixth form, which is not as high as it should be for some students.
- The school is a very harmonious community. Discrimination is not tolerated and this can be seen in the good relationships that exist between students in all key stages.
- Improvements to the curriculum have resulted in students' good academic achievement and greater enjoyment of learning. There are many and varied opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities and participation rates are high. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well across the whole curriculum. Many students experience visits to the theatre and a variety of cultural events, successfully developing their wider cultural awareness. Students learn about aspects of different cultures. For example, project work with a Holocaust survivor and the Amnesty Youth Group enable students to explore aspects of tolerance and cultural diversity in different societies. Students show a good understanding of British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Students are well equipped with the academic skills and knowledge needed to enable them to progress successfully to the next stage of their education. They are well informed about course options and received good quality information, advice and guidance so that they make informed choices about next steps in their education.
- Leaders carefully monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of students attending alternative provision. As a result of this collaboration, students are able to enjoy learning in a very different environment and achieve well.
- The local authority provides effective support and challenge through the work of a school improvement adviser.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors, led by a very experienced and committed Chair of the Governing Body, are clear about the vision and ethos of the school. They work hard to support improvement in all areas of the school's work.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. This is based upon accurate and detailed information provided by senior leaders. They know and understand school performance data and, as a result, are able to hold the co-headteachers successfully to account.
 - Governors ensure that performance management arrangements are fully in place and that appraisal is used effectively to tackle any underperformance in teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students demonstrate consistently high standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Students enjoy good relations with staff and staff manage student behaviour well. Positive relationships result in a very supportive and engaging learning environment. Students are happy and able to learn.
- Students arrive at lessons on time and are eager to learn. However, occasionally, the enthusiasm for learning of a few students is not always matched by the opportunities given to them by their teachers. A few students are not always excited by their tasks. When tasks lack challenge, a few students are not fully engaged in their learning.
- Students take pride in their appearance, are well dressed, prepared for lessons and with the necessary equipment. Students are very courteous and polite to each other and to adults. Students take pride in their school. The school environment is well cared for and looked after. There is little evidence of litter. Staff and students told inspectors that this was typical of the behaviour around the site.
- Attendance in Key Stages 3 and 4 has improved steadily and is now above average. The proportion of students who are regularly absent has reduced. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions is low and permanent exclusions are rare. Arrangements to promote better attendance and behaviour have contributed to this improved picture. Although attendance in the sixth form is improving, it remains below average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say they feel safe and this view is overwhelmingly supported by parents and staff. Procedures are fully in place to ensure students are kept safe in the school. Students are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe and this is impacting positively on their safety and well-being. They know how to use the internet safely and are aware of the importance of e-safety.
- Students know about different forms of bullying, such as homophobic bullying, and that it is not tolerated. Although bullying is rare, the school's arrangements to record any, and all types of, bullying are secure and enables the school to identify any patterns or trends of bullying that may emerge over time.
- Procedures to check and record the credentials of staff are thorough and well maintained. Visitors to the school undergo appropriate checks prior to entering the school.
- Potential risks to students' safety and well-being are thoroughly and accurately assessed. This includes where students attend alternative provision or extra-curricular activities.

The quality of teaching is good

- Weaknesses in teaching have been successfully addressed since the previous inspection and teaching is now good overall and leads to good progress for students in both Key Stages 3 and 4 over time. The standards reached in GCSE examinations, as a result, continue to rise.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on the progress of individual and groups of students, alongside the drive for higher grades. This is particularly evident for less able students who are successfully achieving pass grades at GCSE.
- Teachers know their subjects well. This expertise, as well as their enthusiasm inspires, motivates and engages students in lessons.

- Teaching of vocational subjects, such as sports studies, public services and beauty therapy, is good and leads to positive success rates. This is also the case for a small number of students who access some of their learning at Horsforth School.
- At times, teachers do not always demand the most of their students or set work that challenges individuals equally well, particularly the most able students. This occasionally slows their learning and they do not reach the highest grades in GCSE examinations of which they are capable.
- Questioning is used effectively to challenge students' thinking and this enables them to extend their learning. In Year 10 in art, students were asked to create a piece of work using different artistic styles. Students formulated questions about what features they would need to include in order to produce a very different piece of art but based upon a particular style. The ensuing discussion showed students' insight and analysis of different features and presentational styles.
- There are many opportunities for students to work together and share their learning. In Year 8 in history, students worked successfully together studying historical sources about Saltaire village. They presented their work and provided feedback to each other, offering suggestions to help their peers to improve.
- Many teachers apply the school's agreed approaches to marking and assessment of students' work. Clear strategies are identified to help students to improve their learning. This is having a positive impact on students' understanding of how to improve and the rate of improvement. However, some teachers do not always use this policy to best effect, giving only cursory feedback or general comments to students.
- The teaching of literacy is good overall and reflects teachers' secure subject knowledge. However, there are some remaining inconsistencies. Errors in students' work, particularly in their spelling, grammar and punctuation are not always pointed out and so students do not learn from their mistakes. Opportunities to promote students' literacy skills, including to support reading and understanding of technical vocabulary, in other curriculum subjects, are sometimes overlooked.
- Mathematics is taught well. Staff promote numeracy skills well across the curriculum so that students learn how to use and apply their knowledge to good effect.
- Other adults in the classroom are well deployed. They ensure students' needs are met, both pastorally and academically.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement because expectations of what students can achieve are not always high enough to ensure that they achieve well in all academic subjects.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 has improved since the last inspection. All groups of students now achieve well by the end of Year 11.
- Students typically enter the school with standards that are above average. Students make good progress in a range of subjects and now leave at the end of Year 11 with standards that are at least above and sometimes well above average. The proportion of students attaining five good passes at GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, has risen and has been significantly above average for the past two years.
- Students' rate of progress has also increased in the last three years. In Year 11 in 2014, an above average proportion of students made the expected rate of progress in English and mathematics. Similarly, an above average proportion of students made more than the expected rate of progress in these subjects, particularly in English. School data and inspection evidence shows that current students are making good progress in a range of subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4 as a result of good teaching.
- Students make good progress in developing their literacy skills. The Year 7 catch-up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics) is used effectively to develop students' reading and writing skills and to support students who need extra help to access learning across the curriculum. However, students are still sometimes unsure of how to use specialised vocabulary or lack confidence to read and use technical language. Opportunities to promote literacy skills as part of work across the subjects are also sometimes overlooked.
- Students undertaking physical education, German, Spanish and humanities attain particularly well and make good progress. Equally, students undertaking vocational courses, for example, public services and beauty therapy make good progress and achieve well.
- In 2014, by the end of Key Stage 4, in English, disadvantaged students were just over one GCSE grade behind non-disadvantaged students in school and almost one grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. In mathematics, they were one and a half grades behind non-disadvantaged students in school and just over one grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. In this year group, the proportion of disadvantaged students making expected progress or doing better lagged behind that of other students

in the school. However, school data and inspection evidence shows that gaps in attainment and progress are closing quickly across the school. Disadvantaged students are benefiting well from the additional support they receive and are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. Students are now making faster progress than similar students nationally.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs also make good progress overall. They benefit from additional support either individually or in a group.
- Overall, the most able students achieve well. Some of the most able students, however, do not always reach the highest grades in examinations. This is because, at times, tasks set for the most able students are not hard enough.
- Students who attend off-site alternative provision make good progress in extending their basic skills. They are well prepared for moving on to the next stage of education, apprenticeships or employment.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form requires improvement. In some academic subjects, students do not make consistently good progress. Expectations of what students can achieve are sometimes too low.

Sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The sixth form requires improvement because students' performance varies too much between subjects. Although students achieve well in vocational subjects and in some academic subjects, students' attainment and progress in some academic subjects is not consistently good.
- Students enter the sixth form with levels of attainment that are usually above average. Most enter having achieved grade C or above in GCSE in English and mathematics. Appropriate provision is made for those students who have not achieved this qualification. From their starting points, students make at least expected progress. The outcomes reached by students, however, vary between subjects but are typically at least in line with or above national averages.
- Most students complete their sixth form courses. Students are appropriately prepared for the next stage in work or education. The large majority go on to train or study at higher education institutions.
- Teachers have appropriate qualifications and secure subject knowledge. However, teaching is not consistently good because expectations of what students can achieve are not always high enough to enable students to reach the highest standards.
- Students' work is assessed accurately. Teaching usually ensures that students know how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. However, this varies between the subjects.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good. They take great pride in their work and in the school. They arrive at lessons ready to learn and behave well. They take up the many opportunities, including a wide variety of extra-curricular activities available, with great enthusiasm.
- Students make appropriate use of study time; often working collaboratively to help each other assess and improve their work. They contribute well to the school community by mentoring younger students and are involved in a variety of community-based activities beyond school. They are proud of their school and seek to promote partnerships and collaboration with a range of external agencies, such as the Amnesty Youth Group.
- Leadership requires improvement. The school's senior leaders are taking appropriate action to ensure sixth form leadership is more effective in order to improve provision. Strategic plans for improvement are now in place but are in the early stages of development under a new sixth form leader. Students' progress and attendance is being tracked more robustly and expectations of students' achievement are rising. Although arrangements to check the consistency of the quality of sixth form teaching are in place, leaders' efforts have not yet impacted on ensuring that teaching is consistently good.
- Leaders ensure that students are kept safe.

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	453620

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	1,356
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Oakley
Headteacher	Delia Martin, Steve Dixon (Co-Headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2013
Telephone number	0113 250 2330
Fax number	0113 250 9177
Email address	secretary@bentonpark.net

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