

# Queensbury School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107391
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	301365
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jan Bennett 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>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1333
6th form	153
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Radcliffe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs D Shipton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Deanstones Lane Queensbury Bradford West Yorkshire BD13 2AS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 882214
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Queensbury is an 11 to 19 mixed comprehensive school catering for over 1300 students of whom 153 are in the sixth form. The school serves the village of Queensbury and its surrounding areas on the north western fringe of Bradford. Most students are White British and the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The school has had specialist mathematics and computing status since July 2004.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning and the behaviour of students.

Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but they make slow progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the standards attained are low. Standards have risen steadily over the last three years but they are still below average. In too many of the lessons observed, weak teaching and poor behaviour hindered learning. Staff absences, some over long periods of time, mean that their students have had a series of different teachers which has disrupted their learning.

Specialist school funding for mathematics and computing has supported good learning resources and a wider range of courses in these areas. The specialist information and communication technology (ICT) facilities enable the school to link well to local businesses and to offer ICT courses to the community.

Pastoral care and personal support for students are good but the quality of academic guidance is variable. The system for setting and monitoring individual learning targets for students is working better in some areas than others.

When the headteacher took up post in April 2004, she was the fifth headteacher in five years. She has introduced a number of much needed systems and strategies: some have worked well and others are taking longer. The behaviour management strategy has not been effective. The new team of middle managers, appointed in September 2006, is having a positive impact on the day-to-day organisation and running of the school. New teachers and managers are being recruited for next term to address current weaknesses in staffing. The capacity of the school to improve is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

Sixth form provision is satisfactory. Standards in examinations vary between subjects and are strongest in applied and vocational subjects. In relation to their starting points, students achieve standards that are in line with national averages. The monitoring of students' progress is used well to identify and address weaknesses and underachievement. Students receive appropriate guidance and advice as they choose their courses and receive help in moving on to higher education. Retention rates are good and a high proportion of students proceed into higher education. Effective collaboration with neighbouring institutions supports a good range of courses. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of school life. Students are generally positive about the provision but express concerns about inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and ensure that students achieve well.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Take robust and effective action to improve the standard of behaviour.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Achievement is inadequate and standards are low. Students joining the school have reached average standards in Key Stage 2 but they lose ground in Key Stages 3 and 4. In 2006 the overall standards attained at the end of Key Stage 3 improved but they were still low. Standards in mathematics and English improved but standards in science fell. In 2006, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at the higher grades continued to improve, but the proportion is still below average. Girls performed better than boys. Students' overall achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 is poor and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make significantly less progress than expected.

Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress given their standards on entry and they gain examination results that broadly match the national average.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Attendance is good, reflecting that students enjoy school, but a minority of students are not always punctual to their lessons. Behaviour in and out of lessons is unsatisfactory. Low level disruption is allowed to hinder progress in far too many lessons. The behaviour of a minority of students outside of lessons is also a concern. Incidents such as the frequent unplanned activation of the fire alarm have led to an unacceptably high number of exclusions.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school has the Healthy School Award and students have a good appreciation of the benefits of a healthy diet. There are plenty opportunities for exercise. Students feel safe: they say that bullying is reducing because incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school is making determined efforts to increase students' contribution to the local community. For example, ICT courses are offered to members of the community and students assist in lessons. Students are developing adequate work-related skills, but too many are leaving with poor literacy and numeracy skills.

Personal development and well-being is satisfactory in the sixth form and many sixth formers are actively involved in supporting younger students in their school work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. There is insufficient good or better teaching and the proportion of inadequate lessons is too high. Almost all lessons are well prepared and plans reflect the positive impact of a range of recent initiatives. Where teaching is strong, students are engaged in the development of learning and are driven hard. They enjoy their work and reflect the teacher's vitality and enthusiasm for the subject. In these lessons teachers use a variety of learning

activities, students are encouraged to think for themselves and they develop independent learning skills. In the inadequate lessons there is a lack of pace and challenge, particularly for the most able students. The major weakness, however, is the teacher's failure to manage unacceptable behaviour which results in little or no progress in learning. There is discontinuity in teaching, throughout the school, because of a high proportion of temporary teachers, which is having a negative impact on attitudes and learning. Teaching in sixth form lessons is satisfactory overall. Teachers show good subject expertise and students behave well.

Assessment procedures are sound and most students are aware of their targets and how well they are doing. There are good examples of teachers involving students in measuring progress and deciding what they need to do to improve. However, the use of assessment to promote learning varies in quality and frequency.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum has been thoughtfully reviewed and successfully meets the needs of the range of students' needs and abilities. Additions to the Year 7 curriculum have been made in response to the changing needs of students. Study skills have been introduced and an amended curriculum, focusing on developing literacy and numeracy skills, is available for those who need it. Improved timetabling means that fewer classes are split between different teachers. Much thought has been given to options at Key Stage 4. Students now have clear pathways matched to their academic ability and the direction they want to take. The growing range of vocational courses offers more relevant curricular opportunity to students.

Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory. The good range of sporting opportunities is supplemented by trips relating to work in history, geography, French and drama.

The sixth form curriculum has been consistently and effectively expanded. More students are staying on because the school is using links with other schools and industry to offer vocational courses alongside the more traditional ones.

The range of ICT and mathematics courses available has been extended and includes an advanced level accountancy course, GCSE statistics and a range of ICT opportunities. The school's specialist status has helped to improve students' motivation and confidence in mathematics and the use of ICT. Students appreciate the focus on ICT skills and the way in which most departments encourage its use.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support for students is satisfactory overall. The school's procedures for child protection are secure. The school is conscientious in addressing risks both at school and when students are out on activities. The system for setting and monitoring targets to guide academic progress is rigorous but it is not yet fully established. Individual education and behaviour plans are strong. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school and not all students know exactly what they need to do to improve. Vulnerable students appreciate the support and access they have to the system of learning mentors. Parents are broadly satisfied with the information they receive from school but they are less satisfied with

the actions taken when concerns are expressed about an individual student's progress. Students are well supported during their induction to the school and when they move into the sixth form or into other post-16 education or training. Pastoral care is good.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

When the headteacher took up her post in April 2004, the school had a substantial financial deficit and there were few formal systems for monitoring performance and assuring quality. Much needed strategies and systems were introduced. Some have been successful and others are taking longer to bring about the necessary improvements.

Managers and teachers have focused on raising achievement and standards across the school and there has been steady year-on-year improvement but the pace is slow. Poor attendance was a barrier to progress but successful strategies were introduced and attendance is now good. However, poor behaviour and low level disruption still have an adverse effect on learning and this has not been tackled successfully. This is a major concern for many parents.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning was a priority and a thorough lesson observation system was introduced supported by a comprehensive programme of professional development training. Staffing changes, long term sickness and the difficulty in attracting good applicants to some posts have meant that improvements to teaching and learning have been slow. Staffing issues in science have taken a long time to resolve and achievement and standards in science have deteriorated. The new middle leadership team has already begun to have a positive impact on aspects of teaching and learning, including better lesson planning and more effective assessment for learning. They are also increasing the support for new and temporary teachers but it is too early to see the full impact of this.

Governors and managers are aware of the key issues facing the school and they have been identified in the school's self-evaluation report. Governors support the school and ask questions of it. They are in the process of forming closer links with areas that are under review which will enable them to monitor improvements more closely.

The financial problems facing the school are being addressed but the school is not providing value for money as teaching and learning and students' achievement and standards are inadequate. Governors' increasing involvement in monitoring improvements, the emerging strengths in the new middle management team and the new appointments which will reinforce the teaching team mean that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	4	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for contributing to our recent inspection of the school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you. We have decided that the school needs to improve. There are three reasons for this and they are closely linked.

- A number of students are behaving badly in lessons disrupting their own learning and that of others in their classes.
- The quality of teaching needs to be improved.
- The results that many of you are getting in your SATs tests and GCSEs are not as good as they should be because you are not making sufficient progress in your lessons.

We have seen a number of good things at the school such as the quality of the personal support that is available, the wide range of courses that are on offer in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and the high attendance rates throughout the school.

Inspectors will visit again during next year to see how the school is getting on with its work. All of you have an important part to play by behaving well so that you can make good progress in your learning. We have asked Mrs Shipton and her team to do everything that they can to improve the quality of teaching.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school.