

# Queensbury School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107391
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	319275
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Wilson

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	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jane Crampton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Worthington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Deanstones Lane Queensbury Bradford West Yorkshire BD13 2AS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 882214
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## Introduction

When Queensbury School was inspected in May 2007, it was given a Notice to Improve and asked to address issues related to students' standards and achievement, teaching and learning and to improve behaviour. It was subsequently visited in December 2007 and found, at that time, to be making satisfactory progress in improving these issues.

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Queensbury School serves the village of Queensbury on the edge of Bradford, an area of broadly average social and economic circumstances. It is larger than average and most students are of White British heritage. Very few do not have English as their first language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The number of students eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than in most schools. The school has had specialist mathematics and computing status since July 2004. Since September 2007 a deputy headteacher has taken the role of acting headteacher. In April 2008 he was appointed as the permanent headteacher. At the time of the inspection Year 11 and sixth form students were not in school as they were on examination study leave.

## 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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Too many students significantly underachieve. The below average standards they attain are too low when set against their broadly average starting points. This inadequate achievement is especially prevalent in Key Stage 3, where evidence indicates that, as in 2007, targets in 2008 are unlikely to be met. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they receive consistent, appropriate support.

The recently appointed headteacher has very quickly gained strong support from parents, students and staff. However, despite his clear lead to improve the school it is too early for the impact of his actions to be felt sufficiently. Parents recognise this, although many express their ongoing concerns over the poor behaviour in lessons and around the school. As parents put it, 'The headteacher is very visible around the school but he can't do everything'. Overall leadership and management, including governance, are inadequate. There has been too little impact on the low standards and slow progress students make; hence the school gives inadequate value for money. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Most of the weaknesses identified at that time remain and while some aspects have improved, others have got much worse. Leaders in their inadequate self-evaluation do not realise the depth of the problems that still exist in the school. Consequently, the capacity of leadership and management to improve outcomes for students is unsatisfactory. This is clearly demonstrated by the inadequate lead given to improving teaching and learning. There is not a clear enough direction by all leaders to promote high quality care and education. The specialist status has improved information and communications technology (ICT) resources in the school but has not yet developed sufficiently to act as a driver of whole school improvement.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Instability in teaching has hampered learning in recent years. Although it has improved, there is still too much discontinuity for students. As parents typically said, 'There are still too many supply teachers'. In too many lessons learning is unsatisfactory and these inadequate lessons are not just confined to those taught by temporary teachers. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is too variable and is not good enough to address the legacy of underachievement. Weak management of students' poor behaviour in lessons also contributes to their inadequate progress.

This poor behaviour ranges from low-level disruption to open defiance and unacceptable language. For example, in one lesson a book was thrown across desks at a teacher and as in some others, abusive language was rife. Some teachers have become too accepting of this behaviour, forgetting that this is not the norm. This inadequate behaviour of a significant minority is also seen around the school. All too often it is apparent in the lack of respect for teachers. Some students smoke openly on the school site, as witnessed by inspectors, and feel secure to do so because of inadequate staff supervision in that area. This is also seen in some students walking off site at break times and seeing no urgency to go to lessons. Attendance, however, is satisfactory, though punctuality is poor. A significant minority of students has not yet developed a tolerance of their fellow students. At worst, this was exhibited by a group of

pupils witnessed using inappropriate and offensive racist language towards each other. Overall the personal development and well-being of the students is inadequate and too many do not enjoy their education.

The curriculum students receive is satisfactory. However the school is failing to equip students with the necessary understanding and preparation for life in the nearby multicultural community. The overall care and support for students provided by the school are satisfactory. Procedures for child protection across the school meet requirements. Guidance to students on how to improve their learning is a developing strength. Links with other schools are satisfactory and have widened curriculum opportunities for students. Additionally, a close partnership has very recently been established with a neighbouring school with the intention of supporting Queensbury in its quest for improvement. It is, however, too early for any impact to be seen.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students. The school works hard to include students with a wide range of prior attainment. Students generally make satisfactory progress given their starting points. Standards reached vary between courses but overall are below average. The curriculum is satisfactory and offers a broad range of courses including vocational, applied and subject based. Choice is enhanced through satisfactory partnerships with other education providers. The strategic direction for the sixth form is clear and students' achievement is tracked carefully in order to improve progress. Current assessment data indicate that the dip in standards at A-level last year is unlikely to be repeated. The slightly better performance in applied subjects looks set to continue. The school in its satisfactory self-evaluation of the sixth form has accurately identified the achievement of more able students as an area for improvement. The satisfactory leadership is focused on improvement and there is a sound capacity for improvement. During the inspection there was insufficient evidence to judge personal development and well-being, teaching and learning and care, guidance and support as Year 12 and 13 students were not in school.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and improve students' achievement particularly at Key Stage 3
- Eradicate the poor behaviour of the significant minority of students who display inappropriate behaviour both in lessons and around school
- Ensure students are fully prepared for life in a multicultural society
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that it is consistently good or better in order to remove the legacy of underachievement
- Ensure leadership and management, at all levels, have the necessary capacity to improve the outcomes for students more rapidly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Overall the standards students reach are not high enough and their achievement is inadequate, especially in Years 7 to 9. In 2007 standards by the end of Year 11 were below average. While they had risen in comparison with previous years, they still represented significant underachievement. For the third year in succession, standards by the end of Key Stage 3 in

2007 were significantly below average and students made inadequate progress. Instability in teaching and students' poor behaviour contributed significantly to this underachievement. Since September 2007 the school has put strategies in place to address these issues. However, the impact of these strategies has not been enough to tackle the years of weak learning.

As a result of regular, focused support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. In the first three years since gaining specialist status, targets for mathematics and ICT in Key Stage 4 have been missed. However, the target for ICT in 2008 has already been exceeded. The latest projections by the school suggest that the current Year 11 students will exceed their target for five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above. However, despite this optimism, in the 2008 Year 9 national tests the school anticipates that targets will be missed again in English, mathematics and science. As at the last inspection in too many lessons students are underachieving because of poor behaviour and inconsistent teaching. In the sixth form current assessment data indicate that standards are below average and that students' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their below average starting points.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 4**

### **Grade for sixth form: Insufficient Evidence**

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate. A significant minority of students are not prepared for their life in a multicultural society. Improved catering facilities have resulted in students opting for more healthy options at lunchtime. However, despite the school's endeavours, too many students do not adopt healthy lifestyles. Some students smoke openly in the school grounds, apparently feeling staff will not challenge them. A lack of time in the school day for physical education reduces students' engagement in physical activity. Students have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe. They feel that staff deal effectively with bullying and records confirm there are now fewer reports of bullying. However, whilst the number of fixed term exclusions has risen sharply in recent months, overall they have reduced in comparison with last year. Measures have been taken to reduce them but have not yet had time to impact. Behaviour in too many lessons and around the school is inadequate and reduces students' enjoyment and achievement. As one student put it, 'It really upsets me when a teacher can't control us'. A significant minority of students use bad language openly. Students are able to make positive contributions to the school, for example through their work in the school council. However, the impact of these contributions is eclipsed because a significant minority of students do not relate well to one another. They show a lack of respect when interacting with adults and do not show an understanding or tolerance of different cultural backgrounds. Underdeveloped numeracy and literacy skills means students are not as well prepared for their future economic well-being as they should be.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 4**

### **Grade for sixth form: Insufficient Evidence**

Teaching and learning are inadequate because, although there have been improvements over recent months, there are still too many lessons where students make inadequate progress and do not learn enough. In too many lessons teachers are not managing to deal with some very

poor behaviour. In some lessons teachers provide work which is too easy for the students. This often results in students being compliant rather than engaged and concentration lapses as they drift into personal conversations. The provision of homework is too inconsistent and means students' learning and study skills are underdeveloped. No lessons observed during the inspection were found to be outstanding. In the small number of good lessons, behaviour is well managed and students show good attitudes to their work. However, they lack independence and are too reliant on the teacher rather than working things out for themselves. In these better lessons robust planning ensures an interesting variety of activities which students enjoy. Questioning is sometimes used well in lessons to draw out understanding; however, it is not always targeted at individuals to ensure they are sufficiently challenged. The marking of students' work is inconsistent. The better marking is detailed, regular and guides students to improve; however, for too many classes this is not the case. The quality of teaching and learning has not improved sufficiently to ensure it is consistently good enough to compensate for students' previous underachievement.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum meets the needs of all year groups. For students at risk of becoming disaffected, the school provides some individualised programmes in collaboration with training providers and local colleges. However, these programmes have not developed sufficiently to ensure the students have appropriate opportunities to succeed in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The accounting course in the sixth form, as well as the mathematics and computing enrichment days, are helpful in extending the range of opportunities offered. However, beyond these, the school's specialism has yet to make sufficient impact on the curriculum offered. The school provides a good range of enterprise activities and a satisfactory range of extra-curricular events. Students' literacy and numeracy development across the curriculum does not go far enough to assist students' progress in these basic skills. In addition, the curriculum does not provide students with a sufficient understanding and preparation for life in a multicultural society.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

### **Grade for sixth form: Insufficient Evidence**

The quality of care, guidance and support overall is satisfactory. A developing strength is the quality of academic guidance. The school provides parents and students with regular updates on progress. Students are generally aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve in each subject. The most able students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified prior to joining the school so they can receive the support they need to progress. The school works in partnership with a range of outside agencies to promote students' well-being. There are appropriate systems for helping students settle into the school in Year 7: for example, Year 9 students act as ambassadors and visit pupils in their primary schools. Careers advice, along with subject fairs, ensures students receive satisfactory advice on courses available in Key Stage 4. Supervision before, after school and during breaks does not always promote satisfactory behaviour effectively. Equality of opportunities policies meet statutory requirements but are weak in addressing behaviour and multi-cultural issues.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are inadequate. There has been insufficient progress in removing weaknesses identified in the last inspection and students are still not achieving well enough. The clear vision of the very recently appointed headteacher has promoted the start of some significant changes in recent months. However, this clear direction does not extend across all leaders. Whilst middle leaders are now tracking students' progress and using appropriately challenging targets, in too many lessons students make insufficient progress. Monitoring by senior leaders has not been sufficient to identify the full extent of this. Those responsible for ensuring improvements in teaching have failed to undertake their role effectively. Consequently, their impact on improving teaching and learning has been weak. Although students and teachers say behaviour has improved, there is still far too much inappropriate behaviour and too many lessons are deliberately disrupted by some students. A lack of supervision by staff in some areas of the school allows students the opportunity to behave inappropriately and leaves the more vulnerable students open to intimidation by their peers. Arrangements to record racist incidents are not given sufficient priority. The newly formed governing body has not yet had time or sufficient support to ensure improvement in the work of the school. Self-evaluation is flawed because leaders have not been fully aware of the extent of unacceptable behaviour and weaknesses in teaching. This, and the insufficient impact made on improving the provision and achievement for students, demonstrates why leadership and management lacks capacity for the further rapid improvement required. Leadership and management in the sixth form are satisfactory. Adequate steps have been taken by sixth form leaders to promote improvement since the last inspection.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	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	3	

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

<sup>2</sup> IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	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	4	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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

Inspection of Queensbury School, Bradford, BD13 2AS

Thank you for your assistance when we inspected your school recently. Your views were very helpful. I am writing to tell you what we found.

Your new headteacher is working hard to improve your school. We know how you and your parents very much appreciate this. However, there is still a lot of work to be done. In too many lessons you do not make enough progress and the standards you reach are not high enough. You told us how behaviour has improved recently, but we found the poor behaviour of too many students still spoils your learning and enjoyment. Some of this poor behaviour is aimed at students from minority ethnic backgrounds. We know the majority of you feel this is unacceptable, especially when you said you wanted to be better prepared by school for life in our multicultural society. It was very sad to hear some students openly swearing around school; they let themselves and your school down badly.

Some of you have not had a permanent teacher for some time, especially in English, and this has disrupted your learning. The quality of teaching you get is too variable and doesn't ensure your learning and behaviour are good enough. However, the school provides you with a satisfactory curriculum and satisfactory care, guidance and support. We have decided your school requires 'special measures' to help it improve. This means there will be extra support and inspectors will visit your school regularly to check that it is improving.

We have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to:

- Raise standards and improve achievement especially for those of you in Key Stage 3
- Considerably improve the behaviour of those students who misbehave
- Ensure you are fully prepared for life in a multicultural society
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so your work improves
- Make sure the leaders in school have the capacity to make things a lot better.

You can help by ensuring your behaviour is the best it can be so you can learn well.