

Batley Grammar School

Carlinghow Hill, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 0AD

Inspection dates

28–29 January 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
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From average starting points, pupils make good progress and reach standards higher than those seen nationally in English and mathematics.
- The gaps in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers have closed significantly.
- Pupils benefit from good teaching, particularly in the primary phase, that is well tailored to the needs of different ability groups. Teaching is less well tailored in the secondary phase.
- The headteacher is relentless in her push for improvement throughout the school. She has a clear vision for the school and uses information from a variety of sources in order to provide the best for all pupils.
- High expectations secure pupils' good behaviour, safety and their positive attitudes to school. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and pupils move around sensibly and arrive to lessons punctually.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are strong. Senior leaders and governors are well trained in safeguarding procedures and ensure that any inappropriate language is dealt with effectively.
- Senior and faculty leaders, together with governors, have successfully implemented and embedded a number of changes in a short time. These are contributing to improved teaching and raising achievement in a number of subjects.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The effectiveness of the provision in the early years requires improvement.
- Children in the early years do not make as much progress as they should. Activities to promote their vocabulary and number understanding are underdeveloped and do not ensure they make sufficient progress in these important areas.
- The most able pupils, in the secondary phase particularly, do not always make rapid progress because some teaching is not tailored sufficiently to meet their needs.
- The effectiveness of the provision in the sixth form requires improvement.
- Students do not achieve well enough in the sixth form from their mixed starting points because previous systems to track their progress and to provide appropriate support have not been rigorous enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 34 parts of lessons, including some which were jointly observed with senior leaders. They observed the quality of teaching and learning, looked at pupils' books and talked with pupils informally about their learning, progress and involvement in school life. In addition, inspectors listened to a number of primary and secondary pupils read.
- Inspectors visited three assemblies and form time. They also observed pupils in the 'call out' room. Inspectors observed pupils around the school and during break and lunch times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also spoke with the Head of Sixth Form, the Director of Primary Phase and two directors of faculties. Inspectors also met with the Chair of the Governing Body, vice- chair and two other members of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the former School Improvement Adviser. Inspectors spoke formally to four different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's own records of pupils' learning, progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching, assessment information, safeguarding logbooks and improvement plans.
- There were 56 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Account was taken of these as well as the school's own information following parent evenings. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Marianne Young, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Batley Grammar School is smaller than the average sized school. The number of pupils on roll, although increased since the previous inspection, in the primary and secondary phases is smaller than for the equivalent school nationally. The sixth-form is very small and a public consultation regarding its future closed in December 2014. As a result, the sixth-form will close in 2016 with no further admissions accepted from September 2015.
- The school was judged to require improvement at the time of its last inspection. It received a visit from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in April 2013 and was judged to be taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement.
- Almost three-quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. This is very high compared with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for support through the pupil premium) is low compared to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is low compared to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6 and Year 11 in English and mathematics.
- At the time of the inspection, there are no pupils accessing alternative provision.
- No students in Year 11 were entered early for GCSE examinations in 2014.
- Full-time early years provision caters for reception-aged children only.
- Several staff have been appointed since the previous inspection to cater for the increase in pupil numbers. Other staff have left which means that the turnover for both teaching and support staff is high.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the quality of teaching, particularly in the sixth form and early years, so that the progress of the most able pupils in all phases accelerates by:
 - ensuring that lessons are planned appropriately to meet the different needs of pupils in the class
 - making sure that the progress made by all pupils is checked and evaluated regularly so that appropriate challenge is provided where necessary.
- Provide appropriate activities and resources in the early years classroom so that children's literacy and numeracy skills are better promoted by:
 - improving the indoor and outdoor environments to provide greater stimuli and excitement.
- Check regularly the progress made by students in the sixth form and ensure that appropriate support is provided if any are falling behind so that they fulfil their potential.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of the headteacher is characterised by ambition and a clear understanding of the needs of the school. Many aspects that had just been put in place at the time of the previous inspection are now embedded and contributing to driving improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. She is strongly supported by other senior leaders who have equal determination that the school should continue to move forward.
- Leadership and management overall are not outstanding, despite some aspects of senior leaders' work being of the highest quality. This is because the highest levels of achievement throughout the school, including in the early years and sixth form, are not reached. In addition, a small minority of teaching does not ensure good progress.
- Senior leaders and governors are keen for improvements to continue and have focused relentlessly on improving teaching and ensuring that their monitoring and tracking systems are appropriate. Leaders are aware that provision in the early years and the sixth form is not good enough. They have visited a number of providers and taken advice from different organisations before choosing what is best for the school. Teachers are observed regularly and the pupils' books are also scrutinised carefully when checking the progress of pupils. The performance management system is rigorous and ensures that only those teachers who meet their challenging targets achieve pay progression.
- Faculty leaders are very supportive of the headteacher and are committed to moving the school forward rapidly. They are involved in monitoring their subject areas and holding staff to account. Strong links are in place with heads of year to ensure that the principle focus is the achievement of all pupils so that all achieve as well as they can. As a result, equal opportunity is promoted well. However, the value added by the school to boys and the most able pupils, although above that seen nationally, is lower than that for other groups of pupils.
- The school ensures that the traditionally academic curriculum is broad and balanced with plans in place to introduce alternative courses for secondary pupils as their needs and abilities change. The library has been developed to increase the range of books for different age groups to promote pupils' interest in reading. The application of numeracy skills in all subjects is less well developed. Arrangements for pupils to move from the primary phase to the secondary phase are well developed. Pupils at risk of underachieving take part in intervention sessions, many of which take place after school.
- A range of extra-curricular activities and visits supplement work in the classroom with a good take-up especially for sporting activities and the Combined Cadet Force. These activities aptly enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Assemblies, personal, social and health education lessons and tutor groups are used well to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils socialise well together and learn about each other's faiths and cultures by talking with each other. Older pupils especially told inspectors that they would welcome the chance to debate current news items so that they have a wider knowledge of democracy in particular.
- The quality and availability of careers information is mixed. Some students felt they were insufficiently prepared for higher and further education.
- Parents are mostly supportive of the school, but some who replied to the Ofsted questionnaire and the school's own questionnaire were critical of staff changes and the progress being made by their children. Leaders and governors recognise that moving from an independent selective school to a free school with pupils who have a wide range of abilities is challenging for some teachers and parents. They recognise that keeping parents thoroughly informed is important and will be reviewing their current systems.
- Appropriate support is provided by the School Improvement Advisers who are provided by the local authority. They have confidence in the leadership of the school but continue to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement closely.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body share the headteacher's determination to remove any barriers to success and ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. Only a few pupils are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding but governors ensure that this money is used appropriately. As a result, gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are significantly reduced. A new system which includes parents deciding how the money should be spent for their child has recently been introduced. It is too early to see the impact of this.
 - Governors check regularly to ensure that sports and Year 7 'catch-up' funding are used appropriately. More pupils than at the time of the previous inspection are involved in sports activities and the Year 7 funding is used well to ensure that pupils who join the school in Year 7 make appropriate progress.

Governors' awareness of financial matters is thorough so that any requests for resources are linked to pupils' achievement.

- Governors are robust in managing the performance of the headteacher. They contribute to setting challenging objectives. They sample the evidence provided by leaders to check whether teachers should receive increased salaries.
- Governors receive good quality reports from different sources about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Most governors visit the school regularly to check this information for themselves by talking to staff and pupils. Since the previous inspection, their ability to challenge senior leaders and understand their answers has significantly improved.
- Governors are well informed about the curriculum and contribute ideas and suggestions. They ensure that British values are actively promoted and that pupils develop a good awareness of others.
- Safeguarding requirements are checked regularly by the designated governor, are effective, and at the time of the inspection they met current requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority of pupils are polite to visitors, adults and each other. They move around the school sensibly and the good behaviour by pupils at social times seen during the inspection was said by pupils to be typical. Pupils report lunchtime arrangements are monitored regularly by staff, who often eat their lunch with groups of pupils. Inspectors saw little litter around the site and pupils wear their uniform with pride; very rarely are they reminded to 'tuck their shirts in'.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, even on the occasions when teaching lacks challenge and excitement. They arrive to lessons promptly and are ready to learn. They report that there has been a step change in behaviour in lessons since the behaviour for learning policy was introduced. Some pupils feel that teachers are inconsistent when applying the rules; however, leaders monitor this carefully and no discernible patterns are emerging currently. There are few lessons when misbehaviour hinders learning. Mostly this is when activities are pitched at the incorrect levels for pupils' abilities or teachers fail to interest and engage them.
- The parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and those conducted by the school, together with a quarter of staff who responded had concerns about the way behaviour and bullying is managed within the school. Inspectors investigated this thoroughly. Discussions with pupils and observation of school records shows that behaviour and bullying issues are dealt with rigorously.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils, of all ages, told inspectors they are taught how to deal with potential risks to their safety, including what to do when using the internet and social media sites.
- All types of bullying, including racist or homophobic bullying, are regular features in assemblies and tutor times. Pupils' use of inappropriate language is strongly discouraged as was observed by inspectors. School records show that any incidents are recorded and followed up appropriately.
- Appropriate checks are made when appointing new staff. All staff receive training regularly so that they are aware of any potential issues, for example how to recognise signs that pupils might be vulnerable or at risk of harm.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall and is stronger in the primary phase than in the secondary phase. It is not outstanding because, over time, teaching has not promoted better than good progress. However, it does lead to above average results at the end of Year 2, Year 6 and Year 11.
- Teachers use data and information about pupils' progress to plan lessons in which activities are matched to pupils' abilities. In some lessons, in the primary and secondary phase, these are not sufficiently challenging and the most able do not achieve as well as they can.
- Where teaching is strong, pupils' interests are captured and the pace of learning is rapid. Most teachers know their pupils well. Due to some staffing changes particularly in English, science and modern foreign languages, progress for a few pupils has suffered.
- Pupils' positive attitude to learning and wanting to do well is evident in many classes. They respond well to teachers' questions and, in many cases, to the marking and feedback provided in their books. However,

this response is not fully embedded and in some lessons, the quality of marking is limited, particularly in the secondary phase.

- The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Leaders have implemented a new programme to develop reading throughout the school in the primary and secondary phases. This is proving successful and ensuring that pupils read with understanding in a variety of subjects.
- Assessment is regular and pupils are identified early if they need additional support. The time for this support is checked frequently to see if it is making a difference to individual pupils. School records and inspection evidence indicate that support for individuals is making a difference.
- Leaders provide and organise regular training for teachers so that they can develop their skills and subject knowledge where necessary. The monitoring of weaker teaching has been successfully tackled by leaders.
- Support in the classrooms for disabled pupils or who have special educational needs is effective, especially in the primary phase. Teachers and support staff know when to intervene and when to allow pupils to work independently. This understanding enables these pupils to make similar progress to their peers.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress, from their average starting points, as they move through the school because the vast majority of teaching is good. In the primary phase, progress in 2014 was strong in writing and mathematics. Pupils reached standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 that were above average compared to national figures. This was not the case in reading where progress across Key Stage 2 dipped and standards fell. Leaders reviewed the situation immediately and put in measures to improve the progress of the current pupils. Inspection evidence and school data suggests that progress in reading in Key Stage 2 is showing signs of improvement.
- The proportion of pupils achieving five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, remained above the national picture, in 2014, for all groups. Work in books, lesson observations and leaders tracking information confirm that all groups of pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 make good progress from their varied starting points.
- A small number of pupils reach the high levels of attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. The standards they reach are above that seen nationally for high attaining pupils. Not all these pupils continue into the secondary phase and other pupils join the school in Year 7. By the end of Year 11, the standards reached and the progress made by the most able pupils is not as strong as the progress made by their peers. This situation is evident in a range of subjects.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 1 did exceptionally well in the phonics screening check (letters and the sounds they make). Similarly, pupils at the end of Year 6 did significantly better than pupils nationally at the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Test. In both tests boys, girls, disadvantaged, disabled or those pupils with special educational needs pupils did equally well.
- Pupils throughout the school do well in English and mathematics, despite a dip in reading in 2014 by pupils in Year 6. Some staffing issues in these subjects have slightly hampered the progress made by a few pupils. School data suggests that this situation has now been rectified. Within the primary phase pupils write well at length, producing successfully structured and interesting pieces of work displaying good use of language.
- In 2014, there were very few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and Year 11. They made good progress as they moved through the school because teachers took account of their needs when planning lessons. Consequently, there are minimal gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in both primary and secondary phases.
- Similarly, there were very few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in Year 6 and Year 11 in 2014. They made good progress in line with their peers.

The early years provision requires improvement

- Children start school with skills broadly typical for their age but with weaknesses in their personal and social development, reading and writing. While the vast majority of children are ready for Year 1 when they leave the Reception Year, too few exceed what is expected given their starting points. Children made typical rather than good progress.
- Teaching requires improvement. Staff do not always identify quickly when children need to move to different activities and challenge themselves. As a result, although children behave sensibly, they can lose interest and start to daydream. Some activities, such as for number and literacy, do not offer experiences

that are interesting and challenging. For example, there are no labels around the classroom or outside area to support children's vocabulary development or number skills. The skills of some adults to model these important areas are underdeveloped.

- The outside environment lacks stimuli and excitement for children and the range of resources is very limited.
- Children settle quickly into school routines and form strong relationships with staff and their peers. This is demonstrated by their willingness to take turns and share resources with each other. In line with the rest of the school, safety has a high priority within the early years. Learning journeys provide a good record to show what children have done in different areas. There is limited parental contribution to these documents.
- Leadership of the early years requires improvement. The Director of Primary Phase is well aware that there are shortcomings in the Reception class. Since her appointment a more rigorous, accurate assessment and tracking system has been introduced which helps teachers plan more effectively for the needs of different children. Appropriate support is being provided for staff but the full impact of this, so that all children can make faster progress, has not been seen.

The sixth form provision requires improvement

- Students do not achieve as highly as they should, given their starting points. In 2014, the proportion of students who passed A Level courses was high. However, the proportion of students in Year 12 who passed AS courses was much lower than expected. Data provided by leaders show that more students than previously in Year 12 are on track to reach their potential.
- Students who study art and design, business studies, classics, geography and information technology do better, overall, than those who study other subjects. As there are very small numbers of students who study different subjects, comparisons with the national picture is not possible.
- The sixth form is due to close in 2016 but leaders remain resolute that those students currently in the sixth form will receive appropriate teaching and additional help where needed. Rigorous tracking of students' progress is in place and in some subjects, students are logging their attendance at intervention sessions.
- The quality of teaching is mixed. Weaker teaching is linked to inaccurate assessment of the progress made by individual students so that appropriate challenge can be provided. In some subjects, teaching is good and students are challenged in class or through good marking to improve their answers and thus achieve higher grades.
- Leadership requires improvement because several new initiatives are not fully embedded and not having sufficient impact on the progress made by all students.
- Students have a positive attitude to their work and welcome opportunities to mentor younger pupils. In line with other pupils in the rest of the school, they have a broad understanding of British values but would welcome the opportunity to debate current topical and political issues.

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	137487
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	442317

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	689
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Hartley
Headteacher	Brigid Tullie
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2013
Telephone number	01924 474980
Fax number	01924 471960
Email address	info@batleygrammar.co.uk

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