

Batley Grammar School

Carlinghow Hill, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 0AD

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Secondary pupils do not make good enough progress in English. Higher-ability pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics. In the sixth form, pupils' progress is inconsistent across different subjects. Induction does not provide sufficient guidance on how to learn independently.
- Teaching has not been consistently good enough in the secondary phase and the sixth form. Assessment has not been used effectively enough to plan learning. Marking does not consistently inform pupils how to improve. Unstable staffing limits the quality of English teaching.
- When the Free school opened, leaders and governors lacked data about pupils' performance. As a result, target-setting and checks on progress were not fit for purpose.
- Performance management and staff accountability lacked rigour. A sharper focus on improving pupils' progress is beginning to result in more focused action by staff.
- Opportunities for outdoor learning in the early years and music at Key Stage 3 are limited. The use of assembly and tutorial time does not promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development sufficiently well.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. She and the governors have acted effectively to bring about the significant changes involved in expanding the school and moving from the independent to the state sector.
- Pupils make good progress in early years and primary and attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is well above average.
- Teaching in primary is good. The precise use of learning objectives, positive relationships, and effective use of support staff encourage pupils to learn well and work hard.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution in most lessons.
- The use and analysis of data and target-setting have recently been improved and now provide a firm platform for more rigorous management of pupil and staff performance.
- Leadership and teaching in secondary are improving as a result of staff changes and improved professional development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, including six joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a number of primary pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. Discussions were held with groups of primary, secondary and sixth form pupils about the quality of their educational experience.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's records, assessment information and improvement plans.
- The inspection team also took account of 95 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 29 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Pankaj Gulab	Additional Inspector
Jane Alexander	Additional Inspector
Dave Blackburne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Batley Grammar School became a Free School in September 2011. The school is run by the Batley Academy Trust and the governing body is the board of trustees.
- The Free School was previously a fee-paying independent school. It no longer charges fees and its admissions arrangements follow the same code for pupil admissions as other schools.
- Many staff from the predecessor independent school were appointed to the Free School but others have left. The number of staff has increased. New leaders and teachers have been appointed from both the state and independent sector.
- It is an all-age school with a primary and secondary phase and a small sixth form. It is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The number of pupils increased rapidly when the Free School opened. A significant number of pupils in the primary and secondary phase entered at other than the normal ages of admission. At the points of transition from primary to secondary, and to the sixth form, some pupils join and others leave.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding) is well below average. No pupils taking GCSE or Key Stage 2 tests in 2012 were supported by the pupil premium.
- Approximately two thirds of students are from minority ethnic groups. This is high compared with the national average and reflects the local community.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is low.
- The Free School does not use any alternative provision.
- The Free School specialises in mathematics.
- In 2012, the first year results are available, the Free School met the government's floor standard for 2011, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - using assessment information more sharply to plan lesson activities that accelerate the progress of pupils of differing abilities
 - increasing the regularity and quality of marking so that pupils consistently receive praise that is specific and guidance that shows them how to improve
 - ensuring that clear explanations, good use of practical resources and effective questioning enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress in lessons.
- Increase the proportion of pupils who make good progress at GCSE, AS and A level, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - stable staffing results in consistently good teaching and learning in English
 - higher targets and more good teaching in mathematics result in faster progress by pupils, including those of higher ability
 - effective induction increases sixth formers' ability to study independently.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers at all levels by fully implementing and embedding the new procedures for:

- checking the progress of pupils, identifying underachievement and taking action to accelerate their progress
 - managing the performance of staff and ensuring that subject leaders and teachers are held accountable for the progress made by their pupils.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
- extending the use of outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - improving the planning and use of tutorial and assembly time
 - providing opportunities to learn music at Key Stage 3.
- Ensure that governors continue to develop a sharper focus on the strengths and weaknesses of school performance and of the impact of action taken by leaders to bring about improved achievement.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage either in line with, or above, age-related expectations. They make good progress and almost all pupils reach a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In Year 1, almost all pupils met the expected standard in the national screening check of their knowledge of letters and sounds. Teacher assessment shows that in 2012 attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above average.
- Teacher assessment indicates that pupils continue to make good progress in Year 3 to Year 6, though it is not as fast in Years 4 and 5. In 2012, at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion that gained the higher Level 5 was significantly above average in writing and mathematics. Reading tests show that most pupils are in advance of their chronological age. The catch-up programmes in primary literacy support weaker readers effectively.
- Primary pupils make good progress because they understand what they need to do to improve. They have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to meet teachers' expectations. They enjoy talking about what they are learning and they are able to demonstrate their understanding well. Pupils of differing levels of ability, including disabled pupils and those needing extra help, make good progress because the teaching is well-matched to their individual needs. On occasion, more-able pupils could move on more quickly or do more work by themselves.
- At GCSE, attainment is above average but is not as high as it could be because progress is not good in English and mathematics. In 2012, the proportion making or exceeding the expected progress in English was below average due to weaknesses in teaching associated with instability in staffing. In mathematics, the progress of higher-ability pupils was lower than the national average. This was linked with targets that were too low. In 2012, the progress made by pupils in GCSE science and humanities was good. In secondary, disabled pupils and those needing extra help make at least sound progress because of the targeted support they receive.
- In the current Year 11, early evidence from controlled assessments in English and the results of GCSE modules in mathematics indicate that the progress of pupils has begun to improve. Closer checking by school leaders shows that the underachievement at GCSE by Indian pupils in 2012 is not being replicated in the current Year 11. Pupil premium funds have provided support for the small number of eligible pupils in the current Year 11 and teacher assessment shows a recent improvement in their progress in English and mathematics.
- As a result of more systematic checking of the progress of different groups of pupils, quicker action is being taken to ensure equal opportunities.
- The attainment of the pupils that enter the sixth form is a little below average. The progress made by pupils is broadly in line with national averages. Fewer than average gain the higher grades at A level. In 2012, AS-level pupils made good progress in biology but progress was below average in English, mathematics and psychology. Weaknesses in the checking and analysis of pupils' academic progress and the setting of targets contributed to inconsistency in progress. Leaders have begun to improve these systems and the school has early evidence from AS-level modular results that progress has begun to improve. Some pupils lack skills to study independently. The induction of students to the sixth form does not provide sufficient guidance on how to meet the increased demands of sixth form study.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough over time in the secondary phase and the sixth form, especially in English and mathematics. Too little teaching is outstanding. The quality of teaching is better in primary than secondary.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the Free School opened and inadequate teaching has been almost eradicated. The proportion of good teaching has increased as a result of the

appointment of new staff, more rigorous lesson observation and better targeted professional development.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage the teaching of letters and sounds is well directed and pupils enjoy learning to read and write. Good relationships with adults and engaging activities promote good learning. Pupils lack opportunities for outdoor learning due to the constraints of the building.
- In primary teaching, activities are well matched to the abilities of different groups. Learning objectives are well understood by pupils and they work with a clear purpose. Teaching assistants support learning well. Mathematical methods are clearly explained and pupils have good opportunities to discuss how to solve problems. Teachers check and question pupils learning carefully which helps them to maintain good progress. On occasion, more-able pupils are not given the opportunity to move on more quickly or to work by themselves.
- Secondary mathematics teaching requires improvement because the steps in learning are not always defined clearly enough and activities are not sufficiently practical. Pupils say that explanations are not sufficiently clear and teachers do not check their understanding often enough. Secondary English teaching requires improvement because the quality and consistency of teaching in many classes has been affected by staff changes. Temporary teachers lacked clear direction during the absence of the English leader who has now returned.
- Teaching in the secondary phase and the sixth form has been insufficiently informed by the analysis of pupils' progress. Teachers have not identified underachievement by an individual or group early enough, especially the more able. Learning activities have not been planned to meet their needs with sufficient promptness or accuracy. The Free School has only recently had access to national data about their pupils' attainment and progress in tests and exams. Teachers are beginning to use this information to inform their planning.
- Where teaching is good in the secondary phase and the sixth form it focuses on a specific learning objective and uses a well-planned sequence of activities, supported by good learning resources that enable pupils to get practically involved and to reflect on their learning.
- Marking does not always praise specific aspects of pupils' achievements or provide precise guidance on how to improve. In some subjects, such as humanities, marking and use of self- and peer-assessment are highly effective because they are sharply focused on subject skills, the development of literacy and on how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, particularly in the primary phase. Primary pupils are particularly caring and considerate towards each other. In all year groups, pupils are welcoming, polite and courteous. Good attitudes and cooperative behaviour contribute positively to the quality learning in lessons across the school. Pupils' social skills are well developed and they collaborate well in pair and group work. Where teaching requires improvement, pupils do not misbehave but are compliant.
- Pupils' behaviour during lesson changes and break and lunchtimes is good. They behave responsibly and are trusted by the school to use almost all areas of the school during lunchtime. Fixed-term exclusions from school, and exclusions from lessons within the school, are low. The incidence of physical bullying and bullying based on prejudice is low. The analysis of information about behaviour and attendance is not sufficiently diagnostic to enable staff to identify and tackle issues that might emerge.
- Attendance is high in all phases and persistent absence is low. Punctuality is good.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. They receive regular guidance through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons. Students say they feel safe and can turn to adults in the school with the confidence that something will be done. They know about how to stay safe on the internet. Most parents who responded through 'parent view' said their children are safe and behave well.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has a clear vision for maintaining the values of the independent school and for meeting the demands of external accountability of schools in the state sector. She has an honest and accurate evaluation of the Free School's strengths and weaknesses and has set clear priorities for improvement. The recently revised school improvement plan sets out well-focused actions by senior and subject leaders and it has begun to be implemented effectively. It is too early to judge the evidence of its impact.
- Leadership of the primary phase is strong. The leadership of secondary and the sixth form requires improvement because it has not been sufficiently effective in bringing about good teaching and achievement. Recent actions have improved teaching but the impact on achievement in English and mathematics is not yet evident.
- Expectations have been raised by the recent adoption of more ambitious targets. The acquisition of national data and benchmarks for checking and analysing pupils' progress has led to the introduction of more frequent and rigorous assessment of pupils' progress. Staff have begun to use this to identify underachievement more promptly and accurately and to take action to provide additional support. Early evidence shows that this more rigorous approach has recently begun to improve progress in the secondary phase and sixth form.
- Leaders are beginning to use more rigorous analysis of pupil progress data to increase the accountability of subject leaders and teachers. The system of performance management has recently been adapted to take account of the national teacher standards and higher expectations of pupil progress have been introduced into teachers' performance objectives.
- Recruitment of new staff has begun to improve the quality of leadership and management and of teaching. More frequent observation of teaching, with greater use of external views, has led to sharper identification of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Joint observation with inspectors confirmed the accuracy of senior leaders' judgements. Professional development has made more use of external views and has become more focused on tackling individual weaknesses. These developments have contributed to the improvement in teaching.
- Historically, the primary and secondary phases have operated separately. Although closer links between management of primary and secondary phases are being developed, staff do not make sufficient use of the information about what Year 6 pupils can do when planning the transition to Year 7.
- The leadership of the sixth form has focused on pastoral rather than academic matters and is beginning to take greater account of academic progress. Induction into the sixth form is underdeveloped.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced but requires some improvement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is constrained because outdoor learning is not provided in the early years, music is not available at Key Stage 3, and assemblies and tutor time are not planned well enough. Pupils have numerous opportunities to get involved in enrichment and extra-curricular activities and this adds positively to their personal development and well-being.
- Parents have supported the school during the change from an independent to a Free School. The parents' association is active. The school keeps parents well informed through parents' evenings and newsletters. From the responses on 'Parent view', most would recommend the school to another parent.
- The local authority has no formal responsibility for the Free School. However, it has provided a consultant headteacher who has given helpful support for self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leaders have made effective use of a range of consultants. They have used external feedback constructively to bring about more rapid change.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has responded well to the change from an independent to a Free School. It has extended the range of its expertise by appointing new governors, including a former

headteacher from the state sector. Parent governors have been appointed for the first time. The priorities of governors have extended from finance, staffing and premises. They now include an explicit focus on achievement and teaching. Training has helped governors to develop their understanding and skill in carrying out these responsibilities. They were involved in the discussion of school self-evaluation and the school improvement plan and are in a stronger position to question and review the progress of the school. Plans are about to be implemented to link governors with particular subjects in order to review progress. Governors are well informed about the more robust approach to performance management to be implemented in the current year. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

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	400307

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

Type of school	Free School
School category	Non-maintained
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	678
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Peel
Headteacher	Brigid Tullie
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01924 474980
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