

Boroughbridge High School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 121699 |
| Local authority | North Yorkshire |
| Inspection number | 380306 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 February 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Joan Hewitt HMI |

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

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|--|--|
| 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 | 693 |
| Of which number on roll in the sixth form | 105 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | J Charlton |
| Headteacher | E Dixon |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 January 2009 |
| School address | Wetherby Road Boroughbridge York YO51 9JX |
| Telephone number | 01423 323540 |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joan Hewitt
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Graeme Clarke

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teachers in 29 lessons. Inspectors also conducted a series of brief lesson visits. They observed small groups of students working with teaching assistants. Meetings were held with groups of staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body.

Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's development plan, students' work, data and analysis, policy documents, the school's monitoring records and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered the responses to questionnaires from 179 parents and carers, 125 students and 81 members of staff.

Information about the school

Boroughbridge High School is smaller than the average secondary school. Most students are of White British heritage although other ethnic groups are represented. Very few students speak English as an additional language and all speak English fluently. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is average. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is below average. A few pupils join the school at times other than the usual points of entry. In the main, these students have parents or carers who are serving members of the armed forces. The school has met the government's current floor standards. The school was designated as a specialist performing arts school in September 2003 and redesignated in 2007. The school holds the International Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Overall Effectiveness | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- Students feel extremely safe and well cared for in this good school. The school’s specialist arts and international status has had a marked impact on students’ good and often outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students’ achievement is good because of the mainly good teaching they receive. This is further supported by some tailored and effective interventions. Students who are in danger of underachieving are swiftly identified and their needs met. In a few subjects, for example science, progress does not match the high standards set by other subjects, such as English.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. It is improving and many students make good progress. All sixth form students make great strides in developing mature personal skills. Consequently, they all secure appropriate employment, training or pursue higher education courses. A few students opt to take courses that do not fully meet their needs and this hampers their achievement.
- Teaching is good and there are some examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know their students very well. Many teachers offer students a range of exciting and interesting activities but this is not consistent and there remains an element of teaching which is satisfactory. In these examples teachers do not tailor tasks to meet the needs of individuals and consequently the most able are not sufficiently challenged while the least able struggle.
- Behaviour around the school is often excellent and it is consistently good in lessons. Students have good attitudes to learning and respond well when they are offered opportunities to learn independently through self-directed research. However, these are not always routinely provided.
- A notable strength is the work the school does with its partners in ensuring smooth transitions from primary schools and improving the provision in the sixth form. Leaders are markedly successful in helping students develop tolerance and respect. As a result, students are thoughtful and very well prepared to take their place in society as global citizens.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of progress made by students in different subjects and in the sixth form by:
 - developing teachers' skills in using a range of strategies to meet the needs of all students but particularly the most and least able
 - improving the guidance to students in the sixth form to ensure courses meet their precise needs
 - extending the effective tracking of students' progress to include those in Key Stage 3.

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - developing teachers' questioning skills so that they develop an accurate picture of students' understanding.
 - ensuring teachers offer consistent opportunities for students to develop excellent independent and collaborative learning skills
 - improving students' independence in assessing their own work
 - building on existing excellent practice to ensure marking is of a consistently high quality.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Students' performance in most subjects is good and most groups of students make equally good progress. The individual approaches the school adopts for disabled students and those with special educational needs have supported them in making good progress. Occasionally the progress high attaining girls and middle ability boys make in Key Stage 4 lags behind the progress of others but the school's swift and effective intervention ensures they are supported in reaching their potential. Those students who transfer into the school outside the usual times benefit from close individual support and this ensures that they too make good progress.

Students arrive at the school with broadly average levels of attainment. Students in Years 7 and 8 have attainment levels below the national average. By the time students leave in Year 11 attainment is above the national average and the majority gain five A to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. In previous years this has been higher and the school's robust data demonstrate this is set to improve markedly again this year. Most students are on track to gain this important set of results.

Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress. There are examples of good progress but the variability between different subjects is more marked than it is in the main school. A few students take courses that do not fully match their academic needs. However, the school is effective in helping some low attaining students to develop mature learning and social skills so that they are successful in taking their next steps in education, employment and training.

One of the reasons for students' good achievement is their good attitudes to learning. They are diligent and have an admirable work ethos. They complete tasks to a high standard and develop strong, warm relationships with their teachers. They produce careful written work.

Parents and carers and students all agree they make good progress. Students have a clear idea of the progress they are making and they know their targets. This is supported, particularly in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, by the robust tracking data produced by the school. This is not as well developed in Key Stage 3.

Quality of teaching

Teachers' strong subject knowledge helps to motivate and enthuse students. Warm relationships foster students' good attitudes to learning and this supports students in making good progress. Students say teaching is mainly good and they particularly enjoy the many lessons that include practical activities. Parents and carers are also appreciative of the good teaching in the school. Most of the parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted survey said their child was taught well.

Teachers plan interesting activities which spark students' curiosity about the world around them and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also routinely make effective use of their knowledge of individuals to meet their needs. Sometimes this is not done with sufficient rigour and on these occasions the most and least able students are not appropriately challenged. Teachers give students clear explanations and they are unstinting in the time they give to students outside lessons. Students are highly complimentary about the patience and skill teachers demonstrate if they struggle to understand. This was clearly demonstrated in a good art lesson where Year 8 students gained confidence in adding depth and texture to their self-portraits as a result of the teacher's encouragement and judicious use of praise.

In the very best lessons, teachers use questions very well to accelerate progress. For example in an outstanding physics lesson, Year 11 students were absorbed in designing a simple telescope. The teacher used questions skilfully to check their understanding and students gained an excellent understanding of calculating magnification. This excellent approach and level of questioning is not consistent.

Teachers have been effective in promoting good communication skills across different subject areas. Students learn to spell and use key vocabulary very well. They are also confident in discussing their ideas and respond very well when they are asked to research and solve problems independently. However, teachers do not routinely offer these opportunities and consequently when these are lacking students rely on their teachers to direct their learning rather than develop independent lines of enquiry.

Marking is regular and helpful. Students pay attention to the comments teachers make and use them to improve their work. There are some examples of exemplary marking in which teachers and students develop a learning dialogue. In these examples students' individual progress is rapid. Many teachers give students opportunities to assess their own work against success criteria and this helps students to reshape their work. However, this is not consistent and students are not always independent in recognising what they have done well and identifying the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All of the students who inspectors spoke to and most of those who responded to the Ofsted survey said they felt very safe at school. Parents and carers echo this view. Students have

an excellent understanding of different forms of bullying. They are articulate in explaining their responsibilities to challenge or seek help on the rare occasions they come across poor behaviour or bullying. Students are confident that adults will take effective action if they seek help. They are clear that differences and diversity are celebrated in the school. This caring approach comes as the result of detailed individual support particularly for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who transfer into the school outside the usual times. Behaviour around the school is good and often excellent. Behaviour in lessons is also consistently good but students do not routinely have opportunities to demonstrate high levels of self-discipline for extended periods of time.

Most parents and carers who responded to the survey agreed with students that behaviour is good. Very few parents and carers expressed concerns but those who did pointed to infrequent disruption in lessons. Occasionally, where teachers do not adopt appropriate teaching strategies, a few students become disruptive and learning slows.

Students with identified behaviour difficulties are supported well and respond to the school's strategies to help them modify their behaviour. Other students also support them. The school has some telling cases of students having been supported to adopt safe practices despite significant turbulence in their home life. Students' attendance is above the national average and the school has had significant success in reducing the number who struggle to attend school regularly.

Leadership and management

The determined headteacher leads senior and middle leaders in pursuing effective improvements in the school. The clearest examples of their success have been in ensuring all groups of students make equally good progress and particularly in meeting the needs of a number of families in which parents and carers are on active service with the armed forces. One of the reasons for this success lies in the rigorous systems for tracking students' progress in Key Stage 4. This has been extended to the sixth form but it is not as well developed in Key Stage 3.

Teachers feel well supported and morale is high. Teachers' professional development is organised well. There are clear examples of how individual support has helped teachers to improve their skills. They benefit from opportunities to share effective practice and middle leaders use their monitoring of the quality of lessons to develop effective classroom approaches.

The effective curriculum meets students' needs well. Leaders are responsive to the differing needs of different cohorts. There are good examples of individually tailored arrangements for disabled students and others with short term but acute difficulties.

The school's specialist and international status has had a marked impact on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning in music and art is of a high quality and provides students with rich opportunities to appreciate other cultures and find individual ways for reflection and expression. Strong partnerships, locally, nationally and internationally provide students with exciting experiences. For example, students have used information gleaned from an on-line conference with a partnership school in China to explore environmental issues in geography.

In the strenuous efforts to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination the school also does careful and detailed work with external agencies to support students in vulnerable circumstances and responds quickly to changes in the school community. For example the school, assisted by the effective governing body, has set up a focus group for students whose parents and carers are on active service with the armed forces, and their families, which enables them to offer each other mutual support. Arrangements to safeguard students are rigorously monitored and meet current requirements.

Leaders at all levels, including members of the governing body, effectively monitor the work of the school and they accurately identify the school's strengths and where improvements are required. Occasionally, their evaluations of the quality of the school's work are optimistic. Nevertheless, the notable improvements in students' attendance and achievement clearly demonstrate the school's capacity to sustain improvements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Boroughbridge High School, York, YO51 9JX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We appreciated the mature way you articulated your views. We also found it very helpful talking to you about your work and observing you learning. We appreciated all of your help and found it interesting to see what you had to say in the survey we asked some of you to complete.

I am delighted to report that Boroughbridge High School is a good school. We were particularly impressed with:

- your very good behaviour around the school and your strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural development
- your good achievement and how well the school provides for you regardless of your circumstances
- the use the school makes of the specialist and international status to improve your learning
- the good work the school does with partners.

You obviously enjoy school and make good progress in the majority of lessons. All the staff want this to be even better for you so we have asked them to:

- make sure you make good progress in the sixth form and in all your subjects
- make sure more of your lessons are as good as the very best by providing you with plenty of opportunities to develop independent learning skills.

You can also help by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector

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