

Bedale High School

Fitzalan Road, Bedale, North Yorkshire, DL8 2EQ

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- The achievement of a minority of boys, and of some students with special educational needs, is inadequate, including in English and mathematics. Not enough students reach the highest grades yet.
- Despite an improving picture overall, the quality of teaching is still too variable. It does not promote consistently good progress and enjoyment for all groups or in all subjects.
- While many students demonstrate good attitudes to learning these are not consistently good, especially where teaching lacks pace and challenge.
- Members of the governing body do not robustly challenge heads of department to drive improvements to provision and students' achievement.
- The quality of subject leadership is inconsistent, leading to some inconsistencies in the provision made for students across the curriculum and to inconsistencies in expectations of what they can achieve.
- Several members of the senior leadership are new to post and are not yet fully trained in their new roles.

The school has the following strengths

- Results in GCSE examinations have risen since the previous inspection to above the national average in 2011. Results for 2012 have maintained a picture of improvement.
- The quality of teaching is improving; over half of lessons seen during the inspection were good or better.
- Students whose circumstances might make them vulnerable receive good support in the 'Bridge' and the 'Base'.
- The behaviour of students in many lessons and around the school is good. They feel safe in school and show a willingness to take on responsibility.
- The recently formed leadership team has a clear vision for improvement. Led by the acting headteacher, it has been responsible for improvements to students' achievement since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, taught by 36 different teachers.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors held discussions with two advisors from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at documentation including the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, monitoring records and analysis of students’ progress and performance, and some samples of students’ work.
- There were 72 responses on Parent View which were taken into account when planning the inspection. Responses to 45 staff questionnaires were also taken into account by inspectors.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Janice Gorch	Additional inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional inspector
Mark Simpson	Additional inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The number on roll has declined since the previous inspection.
- Most students are of White British heritage and very few students speak English as a foreign language.
- The percentage of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average, mainly as a result of a high proportion of students from service families.
- The percentage of students with special educational needs is below average for students assessed as school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school hosts a unit for students with autism, all of whom are integrated into mainstream classes.
- The school meets current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- At the end of the summer term 2012 the headteacher, a long-serving deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher left the school. The remaining deputy headteacher is currently acting headteacher and three middle leaders have been appointed to temporary senior leadership roles.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement and enjoyment of learning to be at least good by:
 - quickly eliminating all inadequate teaching
 - improving the quality of all teaching to at least good by summer 2013
 - sharing the good practice that exists in the school for the benefit of all students
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve by expecting all to work hard throughout lessons
 - improving teachers' use of assessment information so that they provide good challenge and involvement for all group of students, especially boys
 - ensure that students' work is marked regularly and they are provided with advice on how to improve, in all classes.
 - Raise students' achievement and attainment further, especially for boys, students on school action and the most able by:
 - setting work that is both achievable and challenging for all groups
 - insisting on good effort and output in all lessons by all groups of students
 - planning to meet the needs of individuals within a class, including when the class is set by ability.
 - Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills and expertise of senior leaders so that they can robustly and accurately monitor the school's effectiveness
 - ensuring the recently promoted heads of department have sufficient time out of the classroom to fully discharge their senior leader roles to provide clear direction and support for improvement
 - improving the consistency of middle leadership by making clear to all department heads their accountability for the quality of provision and performance in their departments
 - improving the consistency of middle leadership by providing training for middle
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leaders in the use of tracking and performance data, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and taking action on identified weaknesses

- improving governors' understanding of performance data and their expectations of the performance of middle leaders so that they are better able to challenge them over their provision and performance.
- Improve the attitudes to learning of some groups of students in lessons by:
 - checking on students' involvement and output in lessons by regularly inviting students' views of teaching and learning across their curriculum, and taking action where it is needed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Results in 2011 were above the national average for five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Boys' performance showed that many had made less than expected progress from their starting points when they joined the school. Provisional results for 2012 show that there has been no significant narrowing of the gap in the progress that some boys make compared with girls, indicating that the achievement of some boys in some subjects is still inadequate.
- There is a rising trend in attainment at GCSE. Progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of students making the expected three levels of progress was above the national average in 2011, though the proportion exceeding this rate was below average. Consequently, too few students reach the higher grades in these subjects. However, in science, results improved again this year, with students taking triple sciences exceeding the national average at A* to C grades and A* to A grades.
- Several subjects demonstrated improved performance again this year including science, English literature, geography and textiles.
- Support for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those eligible for pupil premium funding enables them to make similar progress to their peers. Students from service families are well supported to integrate with their peers and are accurately assigned to teaching groups. They are also given strong support to manage any concerns when parents are deployed away from the local garrison. The low numbers of students who are eligible for free school meals do not make as much progress as similar students nationally.
- Students who have special educational needs sometimes make less progress than their peers in the school and about the same as their peers nationally, according to published data.
- In lessons students' progress and achievement can vary widely depending on the subject or the group they are in. Across the school there is a small proportion of learning that is inadequate because teachers do not make sufficient provision for the range of ability within the class. They set the same tasks for all, so that the most able are not well challenged and those needing support do not always receive it. In contrast, in more than half of the lessons observed students' progress and achievement, including that of boys, were good and on occasion excellent.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Overall, teaching is too variable to ensure consistently good progress for all students. Observations and discussions with students confirm this.
- In too many lessons students sit for too long listening to teachers' lengthy explanations. Many become bored, so that when they are asked to complete tasks they are slow to start and do not make the progress of which they are capable. Work in students' books makes clear where these lessons occur because there is too little that is recorded.
- Teachers' use of assessment to support lesson planning and track what students need to learn next is not consistent enough. Too much planning fails to identify the specific groups in a class who require extra challenge or support. Where assessment is well used and teachers are ambitious for students to do well, the teacher has extension work prepared for some and a good range of support materials, such as writing frames, available for others. These inconsistencies are reflected in examination results which show that some staff have not identified where their students, and boys in particular, are underachieving.
- Marking and feedback to students are inconsistent in frequency and quality. In the best examples students get regular feedback on how to improve their work. In too many books there is little or no marking evident for long periods of time.
- Students' progress accelerates in good lessons as they are drawn deeply into challenging

work and are expected to work independently or in collaboration with another. For example, Year 11 students made excellent progress in their geography lesson because their independent learning was fully supported by good resources, clear expectations of what they would achieve in the lesson and the constant prompting and challenge from the teacher to move to the next step.

- Teachers' expectations in the best lessons are very high. Year 10 students in a French lesson admitted that 'you have to work hard in here' but said they loved the lesson because it was always interesting and you 'learn loads'. There are not enough lessons of this high quality to ensure that all students enjoy their learning and make good or better progress.
- Students who have physical disabilities are fully integrated into all classes and make the same progress as their peers in lessons because they are well supported to overcome any barriers to their learning. Students with special educational needs are sometimes well supported by teaching assistants, who understand their needs well because some teachers assess their needs accurately; elsewhere their progress can be slower.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Students' attitudes towards learning require improvement in some lessons where teaching is not good. In lessons where good teaching promotes enjoyment of learning, and good progress for all students, behaviour and attitudes are also good. Discussions with students confirm that there is some off-task behaviour in lessons where learning is not enjoyable or the teacher talks for too long.
- Students believe, and inspectors agree, that behaviour out of lessons during social times is good. They remarked on the friendly relationships and relaxed atmosphere around the school as one of its strengths. Inspectors noted this at break and lunchtimes.
- Student surveys show that they feel safe at school. The majority of parents responding to Parent View agree. Clear behaviour management systems and the presence of house captains and prefects create a sense of security for all students. Systems for monitoring behaviour are sound and the few students who exhibit challenging behaviour are well managed through the good provision in the 'Bridge'.
- Students show a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying. While they acknowledge that it does occur from time to time, they are convinced that staff resolve such problems quickly.
- Attendance is above average overall; however, the attendance of the small proportion of students on school action plus is below average. New senior leaders are aware of the need to monitor more closely the attendance of these students. Fixed-term exclusions rose slightly in the last year as a result of some challenging behaviour from a small number of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The recently appointed acting headteacher has an accurate overview of where the school needs to improve. Her work in developing leadership expertise in the English and mathematics departments has been effective in improving performance in both subjects since the previous inspection. The recently formed senior leadership team has a sound knowledge of the school, especially in their own departments. However, they currently lack experience and training in whole-school monitoring and evaluation systems and in setting key priorities, such as tracking the progress, behaviour and attendance of different groups, especially boys. For example, the school does not check on students' views of learning regularly enough to gain an up-to-date picture of where lessons do not fire students with enthusiasm for learning. Those heads of department who have recently been promoted to senior leadership roles currently have a heavy teaching commitment which constrains the time available for leading whole-school improvement.
- Subject leadership is improving, but there is still too much inconsistency in expectations of

teachers and students in some departments. Heads of department have had too little training in the use of data to improve performance in their departments. Nor are they sufficiently challenged either by senior leaders or governors to robustly monitor the performance of their department to establish where precisely any underachievement lies.

- The curriculum has been revised since the previous inspection to introduce a range of pathways for students in Key Stage 4. Several of the new initiatives, such as providing flexible provision for the most vulnerable students, are successfully raising their achievement. However, the school has yet to evaluate the appropriateness and impact of running one-year GCSE courses in a wide range of subjects. Improvements to literacy are being introduced by promoting better awareness of how this can be developed in all departments. New reading schemes have been introduced for students in Key Stage 3 which are proving popular with boys.
 - The management of teachers' performance has been reviewed by the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher. They rightly acknowledge that they need to develop a more robust system for developing consistently strong practice across the school. They recognise that senior and middle leaders do not have enough insight into the progress of all student groups and have planned training and interventions to overcome these weaknesses in the year ahead. The local authority has provided much useful expertise to raise the quality of teaching and the skills of some middle leaders since the previous inspection. They continue to offer support to the school to ensure that it maintains the momentum of improvement achieved since then.
 - Good links are made between the school and the managers of the local authority unit for autistic students. This ensures that they are well integrated with other students and their learning is well monitored so that they make similar progress to other groups in the school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have brought the school's budget under control by successfully managing staff reduction since the previous inspection. They display an astute understanding of how to manage the school's finances in the face of falling rolls to ensure that resources and staffing meet students' needs. Overall, the school effectively allocates pupil premium funds, especially for students from service families.
 - While members of the governing body are active in the life of the school and dedicated to supporting its work, they do not provide sufficient challenge to departments over the performance of teachers and students. They currently have too little first-hand knowledge of the performance of departments to hold middle leaders fully to account.
 - The school takes a rigorous approach to safeguarding students. Records are thorough and comply with requirements.
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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	121670
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	406043

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	740
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Mollard
Headteacher - Acting	Anne Lewin
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2010
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