

Barr's Hill School and Community College

Radford Road, Coventry, CV1 4BU

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. GCSE results are improving considerably year on year so that they are now average overall.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Students are interested and respond well in lessons that demand high standards of students' work and behaviour.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress because of good or better teaching. Hardly any student is without a place in education, employment or training when they leave.
- The speech and language unit is effective in promoting good progress.
- Students are positive about their school. They like learning and participating in the many opportunities given outside of lesson times.
- Students' behaviour is very good in lessons and around the site. Students say that they feel very well supported.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership, ably supported by the senior leadership team. Together with other staff, they are ensuring that teaching continues to improve.
- Lessons are observed regularly by leaders. Weaknesses in teaching are tackled robustly through training and sharing of best practice.
- A measure of the school's successful leadership, including that of the governing body, is seen in the students' good achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, teachers do not give students work that is exactly the right level for them, so progress slows.
- Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and students lose concentration because they are bored.
- A few subject leaders do not provide clear feedback to teachers about how to set work for students so that it meets their different needs very well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 37 lessons across all year groups, observing 35 teachers, and some other adults. Four lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- A visit was made to the speech and language unit and a number of briefer visits to other lessons looking particularly at students who need extra help.
- Inspectors held discussions with students, teachers, the headteacher and deputy, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents including the school development plan. They also examined the work in students' books.
- The views of 23 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The findings from the school's survey of parents were also considered.

Inspection team

Dilip Kadodwala, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
St. John Burkett	Additional Inspector
Michael Marks	Additional Inspector
Margaret Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average secondary.
- It is part of a federation of schools delivering sixth form education. Most of the courses are provided by the school. Only a very small number of students take courses in a few other schools within the federation.
- Just under half of the students are from White British backgrounds. Other students come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; the largest groups are of African and Indian backgrounds.
- Over a third of students speak English as an additional language and around 5% are at an early stage of learning English.
- Around 39% of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which gives the school additional funding for children in local authority care and students known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is high compared to the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action, and the proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs are well above average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs - a designated speech and language unit. This currently supports 10 students.
- The proportion of students who join or leave the school during the year is well above average.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious allegation of a child protection nature had been investigated by the appropriate authorities and is now closed. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements. The headteacher's and the school governors' response to the incident was swift and decisive.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use students' progress information to set work at the right level for students
 - speeding up the pace of learning by making sure that there is a balance between teachers talking and students participating actively in lessons
 - ensuring that all subject leaders give clear feedback to teachers about how to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with standards that are low. There has been a strong trend of improvement in GCSE results. Unvalidated results from the 2012 examinations show that the proportion of students who gain five good GCSE passes is continuing to be significantly above average.
- The proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, although just below average, is rising markedly.
- As a result of good or better teaching, students make or exceed the progress that they should in English and mathematics. There is an effective whole-school approach to reinforce literacy and communication skills. This helps to enable students to typically make good progress with their reading and writing, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Good support is given at the right time to those who need it most. For example to those students in the speech and language unit. Their good progress enables them to learn confidently in their lessons away from the unit.
- Adults effectively discuss the progress that pupils who need extra help make. Changes are made if the support is not working well. Students are also encouraged to work by themselves without over-relying on support. Consequently, these students are confident and make good progress in lessons.
- Careful use of pupil premium funding contributes well to students' achievement. Extra staff are employed to help students to catch up with reading in Key Stage 3 and to make sure that students in Year 11 attain at least a grade C in GCSE English and mathematics. Students known to be entitled to the funding make good progress.
- Students from minority ethnic groups do well. For example, students from African and Indian backgrounds who took GCSE examinations sustained their high achievement from previous years. Students who join the school at other than the usual times settle quickly and make good progress.
- Responses to the Parent View and the school's analysis of its own questionnaires indicate that most parents are pleased with their children's progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching captures most students' interest and pushes them to think hard. Teachers skilfully question students, often directing questions to those who have not put their hands up. This makes sure that students participate and successfully develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across different subjects.
- Teachers' questioning and explanations also help students to correct mistakes and move learning on at a good pace. This was so in a Year 7 mathematics lesson which students said was typical, commenting that lessons are 'practical and we learn lots'.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good or better. Teachers use their subject expertise to enthuse and inspire students. Good checks are made on students' learning to make sure that

their understanding is deepened.

- Lessons encourage students to speak and listen to one another and give extended answers. This works especially well for those who are at an early stage of learning English and the less-able students who gain confidence quickly.
- Students' learning usually moves on at a sharp pace. This was seen in several lessons and was at its best in a Year 7 English lesson where students' learning was outstanding because of very well-timed tasks that inspired students.
- Other examples of good and outstanding learning are evident where teachers: increase the demands made on students as the lesson progresses; give tasks that spark off students' imagination; pitch work at the right level; insist on accurate use of language in speaking and writing; involve students in checking their own and their classmates work; and mark students' work with helpful comments and rechecking.
- In less successful learning the same tasks are set for all students. Teachers do not use information they have about what students already know and can do to refine the work to the right level for different abilities.
- Occasionally, teachers talk for too long when introducing or ending lessons. This prevents students from taking charge of their learning and being actively involved in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They arrive on time to school and lessons. They treat others with respect. Students know what to do to stay safe and who to turn to if they need help. Students know right from wrong and are confident to share any worries they may have with their teachers.
- The school staff listen carefully to concerns raised by students. The headteacher and the school governors' make timely and decisive responses. They involve parents and other agencies if needed and make sure that matters are brought to a swift conclusion.
- Students' behaviour is very good. . They settle down quickly in lessons so that learning starts promptly. They cooperate with each other in pairs and small groups and enjoy sharing their work and ideas. They develop good social skills and show respect by listening to each other's views.
- Students' understanding about bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, is promoted well through lessons, tutor periods and assemblies. The teaching of personal, social and health education makes a strong contribution to students' sense of well-being. Citizenship lessons give students a good understanding about human rights and the importance of acting responsibly.
- Instances of bullying are carefully recorded. These are few in number and students say that they feel confident to report them because these will be dealt with fairly. The school is successful in creating a climate of trust where students thrive without feeling discriminated against because of their backgrounds or beliefs.
- Students attend regularly. The school makes great efforts to encourage parents and students to send their children to school every day.

- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because in a very few lessons some students lose interest because teachers do not provide enough different activities to maintain students' concentration. Safeguarding meets minimum statutory requirements.

The leadership and management are good

- This is a well-led school. Since his appointment three years ago, the headteacher has galvanised staff to raise standards and sustain a strong trend of improvement in students' achievement.
- Leaders make high demands of teachers' performance, linking it to students' achievement. Lesson observations carried out by senior leaders are focused sharply on how well the teaching contributes to students' learning and progress.
- Occasionally teachers do not set the work at the right level for different students. A few subject leaders do not consistently provide feedback to these teachers to help them to improve this aspect of their teaching.
- Training for teachers is well considered because their needs are identified carefully by senior leaders. The effectiveness of training is followed up with teachers and students are asked about how teaching is helping them to learn better.
- The school is in a good position to continue its track record of improvement. Subject and other middle leaders' skills are developed well so that most carry out their work with determination. Their ambitions are raised through the school's programme for 'Raising the Barr'.
- Students at risk of not performing well are supported carefully so that they have every chance to succeed. The speech and language unit is managed well.
- The school improvement plan priorities are based on robust monitoring and evaluation. The priorities are also informed by the views of parents, students and staff.
- Good relationships are built with parents through personal meetings to discuss students' progress. Good links with external agencies make sure that action is taken without hesitation to protect vulnerable students. This was confirmed to be the case in the incident reviewed by inspectors during the inspection.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Partnerships with other providers enable students to take a wide range of courses, making sure that students' first choices are met. The great majority of students complete their courses and progress well. This includes the few students who study within federated schools. Half-termly meetings between managers ensure that students' progress and welfare are regularly checked.
- There are many enrichment opportunities which supplement learning in lessons and promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Examples include visits to different places of worship, art galleries and museums. Extra funds available to the school are used to make sure that participation rates are high.
- The local authority support is effective because it is negotiated with the school leaders and aimed at where it is needed most. This has resulted, for example, in students making better progress in English this year. Action taken to support the governing body in dealing with a serious incident was rapid and led to an early resolution.

■ The safeguarding of students complies with statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is effective in holding senior leaders and staff to account, using a first-hand view of how well the school is performing
- is quick to respond to concerns raised by parents and students
- is rigorous in the performance management of the headteacher and in the management of staff
- is carefully managing the pupil premium additional financial resources available to the school to target further improvement.

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	103727
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	400649

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	781
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Hutchings
Headteacher	Selwyn Calvin
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2010
Telephone number	02476 234600
Fax number	02476 234609
Email address	schooladmin@barrshill.coventry.sch.uk

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