

# Barnfield South Academy Luton

Rotheram Avenue, Luton, LU1 5PP

**Inspection dates** 8–9 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement is not consistently good in all year groups. In particular, students in Year 7 and Year 8 do not make as much progress as they should. This is because teaching is not always pitched at the right level for all students and is sometimes inadequate.
- Although improving, the most-able students' progress is too variable.
- Not all teachers mark work as regularly as they should.
- Information about students' progress is not consistently used as well as it should be. This sometimes means that students are given work which is too easy or too hard.
- Some teachers do not check that students have acted on the advice given through marking.
- Assessment in Years 7 and 8 is not always accurate.
- Leaders do not monitor the achievement of students in Year 7 and Year 8 as robustly as they do in the rest of the school. Governors have not adequately challenged this.
- The targets which leaders set for teachers to improve their teaching are not detailed enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Overall, in 2012, most students in Year 11 made good progress.
- Teaching is predominantly good and sometimes better in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- The sixth form is good because teaching enables the majority of students to make good progress.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. Relationships across the whole academy are good and students are well mannered, courteous and polite.
- The vision of the wider federation, of which the academy is a part, permeates all aspects of academy life.
- Leaders and managers have maintained high standards of behaviour and ensured rapid improvements in achievement in Year 11.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, of which eight were jointly observed with a senior leader. Members of the inspection team also made several short visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for subjects.
- Inspectors analysed 26 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection, as well as responses to questionnaires from 43 staff. They also analysed responses to the academy's own questionnaire for parents.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school improvement plan, data on students' progress and samples of students' work.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the Barnfield Education Partnership Trust.

## Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ronald Cohen

Additional Inspector

Jalil Shaikh

Additional Inspector

Heather Housden

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Around two thirds of students are from minority ethnic heritages, with around a third from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well-above average.
- Almost half of all students are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This is much higher than average.
- A small number of students in Years 7 to 11 receive additional support for their personal, emotional and social development by attending a number of alternative specialist resource centres. The providers which the academy uses are called 'Ameina', 'Eden', 'Burnell' and 'Active Sport'.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy is part of a group of schools and a further education college called the Barnfield Federation.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better, particularly in Year 7 and Year 8, by:
  - ensuring that students' work is marked regularly, in line with the academy's policy, and that the targets which are set for improvement are followed up by students and checked by teachers
  - using assessment information in lessons so that activities can be modified for individual students who find the work too easy or too hard
  - always assessing students' work accurately and using this information to ensure that all lessons are pitched at the right level for all students, particularly the most-able.
- Improve the achievement of the most-able students in the main school and the sixth form so that they make more rapid progress by ensuring that all teachers teach lessons which are appropriately challenging and which enable the most-able students to learn at a fast pace.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - making sure that targets which are set for teachers are more detailed and that they relate to specific aspects of teaching which need improvement
  - ensuring that students' achievement is monitored as robustly in Year 7 and Year 8 as it is in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form so that any underachievement is identified and addressed quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The reason why achievement requires improvement is because students in Year 7 and Year 8 do not consistently make good progress across many subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Although the achievement of the most-able students is improving, rapidly in some subjects and year groups, it remains inconsistent because teaching is not always pitched at the right level and work is sometimes not hard enough for these students.
- In Year 11 in 2012, the most-able students did not, on average, make enough progress and achieve the high GCSE grades that they should have achieved. The proportion of students in Year 8 who were attaining higher levels at the end of Year 7 declined at the mid point in Year 8 in several subjects.
- In 2012, the proportion of students who made the progress that is expected in GCSE English was significantly lower than average. However, the academy has successfully addressed this and current achievement looks set to be significantly better than 2012. In mathematics students made good progress in 2012.
- In 2012, the proportion of students who achieved five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, was below average. However, given that most students joined the school in Year 7 with significantly below average attainment, the 2012 GCSE results indicate that many students made good progress, overall. In addition, GCSE results have been improving much faster than they have nationally for the past 3 years.
- Students currently in Year 11 have already achieved some good results and these are set to improve further by the end of the year. The academy enters students for examinations in several subjects, including English and mathematics, earlier than at the end of Year 11. This is a very effective strategy as the academy ensures that students continue to study subjects if they do not achieve a grade which shows at least good progress.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and has improved since the sixth form opened in 2011. Most students are making good progress as a result of teaching which is frequently good and better.
- The academy spends some of its pupil premium funding on additional staff to provide one-to-one support as well as a wide and varied range of educational trips and activities. Students who are eligible for support are making good progress, overall, though this is better in Key Stage 4 than it is in Years 7 and 8. In 2012, these students achieved, on average, around half a grade lower than other students in GCSE English and almost a grade lower in mathematics.
- The school supports 38 students through the Year 7 catch-up funding, which is additional funding to support the attainment of students who join the school below the expected level in English and mathematics. The school uses this funding to provide one-to-one and small-group tuition in English and mathematics. Students who are eligible are making good progress in English and average progress in mathematics.
- Students who speak English as an additional language, those from ethnic minority heritages, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress, overall,

though this is more variable in Year 7 and Year 8.

- Students who attend the off-site specialist resource centres for part of the academic year are being supported effectively in aspects of their personal, emotional and social development.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The reason why teaching requires improvement is because it is not consistently good in all year groups and subjects. In particular, teaching in Years 7 and 8 is much weaker than it is in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and sometimes it is inadequate. The weaker teaching in Years 7 and 8 typically does not always ensure that the most-able students receive work which is hard enough, and teachers' assessments are not consistently accurate.
- Teachers do not regularly ensure that the pace of learning for the most-able students is fast enough to enable them to make more rapid progress. However, this is improving in Key Stage 4, and higher proportions of the most-able students are making more rapid progress than before in many subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Marking is not as frequent as it should be in some subjects and year groups. This means that students do not consistently know what to do to further improve their work. The majority of teachers set targets for improvement through their marking but they do not always check that students have acted on the advice given. Consequently, marking and target setting do not have as much impact on achievement as they should.
- Learning time is sometimes lost because some teachers do not always use assessment information to adapt and modify activities if students are finding the work too hard or too easy.
- Teaching in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is typically good. Teachers have good subject and examination-specific knowledge which enables students to focus well on examination success criteria, for example. Teachers use assessment information better in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form than they do in Years 7 and 8. This means that they are better able to teach lessons which are well matched to the needs of students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students predominantly have good attitudes to learning and they are keen to do well and succeed. This is partly as a result of the impressive work that the academy does in enabling students to develop high aspirations for themselves.
- Students are polite, well mannered and courteous. They work well together, and relationships are a real strength of the academy. Mutual respect and tolerance are central to ensuring that the academy is a purposeful learning environment.
- Students behave well in lessons and at break times. They told inspectors that behaviour has improved considerably in recent years. The significant fall in exclusions, which are now below average, supports this view.
- Students have a good understanding of issues relating to bullying and they are knowledgeable about the various different forms in which bullying can occur. They are clear that bullying rarely takes place in the academy, whose records confirm that this is the case.

- The academy's 'house' system promotes positive relationships across age groups, and students told inspectors that they value opportunities to socialise and work with students of different ages.
- Older students, in particular, are extremely grateful to staff for the many additional learning opportunities that are provided after school, at weekends and in the holidays. They value the fact that their teachers are always prepared to go the 'extra mile' to support them. These sessions are very well attended by students.
- Students have a good understanding of safety issues and they are well equipped with the skills to manage unsafe situations should they arise. Students feel safe at the academy.
- Attendance has improved significantly this year and students attend regularly. The vast majority arrive to school and to their lessons on time.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The Principal, ably supported by a strong team of senior leaders, leads by example and has successfully gained the respect and support of the overwhelming majority of staff and students. She is determined to ensure that the academy enables students to develop to the full, both personally and academically.
- The leadership of those who are responsible for subjects is good. They monitor the work of their departments closely and put in place effective strategies to further improve teaching and achievement.
- Regular departmental audits ensure that there is a high and appropriate level of accountability for all staff and that teaching and achievement continue to improve. These audits enable leaders to monitor students' achievement in Key Stage 4 robustly and rigorously and this is why achievement at the end of Year 11 is improving rapidly.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Since the sixth form opened in 2011, achievement has improved considerably and it is now good.
- The subjects that students learn are made more interesting and exciting by a wide range of activities, many involving partners such as local churches and community groups. These activities enable students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding to a good level.
- The targets which are set for teachers to support them in improving their work are appropriately linked to students' achievement. However, these targets do not explicitly and specifically relate to aspects of teaching which require improvement in order to achieve these targets. Targets predominantly relate to Key Stage 4 or sixth form achievement, but there is little reference to teaching and achievement in Years 7 and 8.
- Leaders and managers have not given enough attention to achievement in Years 7 and 8 and this is why younger students are not, overall, making good progress.
- The Barnfield Education Partnership Trust provides a good level of support and challenge for the academy. It ensures high and appropriate levels of accountability and has good structures which support the rigorous monitoring of standards in the academy.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors share the vision and values of the Principal and the Federation. They are extremely knowledgeable about the academy's strengths and areas for development though they have not adequately challenged standards of teaching and achievement in Year 7 and Year 8. The governing body knows how the pupil premium is spent and is aware of the good impact that this has on the achievement of eligible students, particularly in Key Stage 4. The governing body is aware of how targets are set for teachers and monitors how these targets are linked to pay increases. It makes sure that the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135338
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	412790

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1080
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	76
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jacqueline Webb
<b>Principal</b>	Catherine Barr
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 722333
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