

Barnsley Academy

Farm Road, Kendray, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 3DL

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Until recently leaders have been slow to deal with a downturn in achievement.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics is too low. In Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics too many pupils do not make the progress expected of them and too few make good progress.
- The achievement gap between disadvantaged students and others in the school is too wide because in Key Stage 4 this group of students does not always attend regularly enough and leaders and managers do not use the funding effectively enough.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Not all teaching is effective enough and students do not always make rapid progress. Questioning does not consistently challenge pupils to think deeply. The quality of marking and feedback to teachers is too variable.
- Behaviour is not good enough in too many lessons, especially in lower ability teaching sets. Students sometimes do not understand the standard of behaviour expected of them and teachers are inconsistent in how they deal with poor behaviour. Tutor and enrichment time is not used effectively enough to promote the importance of good behaviour.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that teachers make best use of information about students' progress and abilities to ensure that work is always hard enough.
- Although now much stronger, the governing body has not held the academy rigorously enough to account.
- The sixth form requires improvement because not all students make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement, the quality of teaching, behaviour and attendance are improving.
- Gaps in achievement are closing securely.
- Students feel safe in the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 34 part-lessons in the main academy and the sixth form taught by 31 teachers. Three of the observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors looked closely at samples of students’ written work across a range of subjects. Inspectors also observed activities during the tutor and enrichment time. They also watched students’ behaviour on corridors, on the playgrounds and in the dining hall.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, six groups of students, the Chair of the Local Governing Body, three representatives of the academy sponsor and the Head of Standards from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation and development plan summaries; data relating to students’ attainment and progress; analyses of attendance information; documents and records relating to behaviour and safeguarding; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning and performance management; and minutes of meetings of the local governing body.
- There were no responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). However, inspectors looked at summaries from returned questionnaires sent to parents by the academy.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Ramesh Kapadia	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Barnsley Academy is smaller than most secondary schools.
- The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of students are White British.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well-below average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of students who join the school at other than normal times is above the national average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards. These set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A very small number of students are educated off-site at Barnsley College on a part-time basis.
- The academy enters a group of students early for GCSE in English in Year 11.
- The academy is supported by specialist leaders for education (SLEs) from Learners First in English and mathematics.
- The academy has formed a close partnership with another academy, Winterhill School in Rotherham. Winterhill's headteacher, a National Leader for Education (NLE), and other senior staff work closely with Barnsley Academy to provide support.
- Following a review of the effectiveness of governance, the academy sponsor, United Learning, has replaced the local governing body with a newly constituted school improvement board.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form so that it is consistently good with more that is outstanding to raise achievement further by ensuring that:
 - information gathered on students' progress is used more effectively by teachers in their planning to set work for students that is appropriately challenging
 - in the main academy, and especially in Key Stage 4, the focus and the variety of learning activities always keep students fully involved and stimulates their interest
 - the questions that teachers ask of students always make them think deeply and encourage the students to give reasoned and extended answers
 - the quality of marking and feedback to students in the main academy is consistent in making clear to students what they need to do to improve their work and in insisting on neatness and pride in the presentation of their work
 - teaching in the sixth form gives students more opportunities to find things out for themselves and to develop the skills they will need in higher education.
- Further close the gap in achievement between disadvantaged students and other students in the academy, especially in Key Stage 4, by:

- making sure that pupil premium funding is used with a much sharper focus on meeting disadvantaged students' needs
- ensuring that disadvantaged students attend as regularly as other students, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve behaviour in lessons, especially in less-able teaching groups, by:
 - making sure that all students are fully aware of what is unacceptable behaviour and that teachers are consistent in the way they manage poor behaviour
 - giving the importance of good behaviour, manners and respect a much higher profile across the academy
 - making more effective use of tutor and enrichment time to encourage good behaviour and to enhance students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Improve leadership and management including governance further by:
 - holding subject leaders more rigorously to account for improving teaching and standards in their subject areas
 - ensuring that the new school improvement board holds senior leaders and managers rigorously to account
 - an external review of governance and an external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the academy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because in recent years not enough students, especially in Key Stage 4, have made enough progress; consequently attainment has declined. There have been some recent improvements to achievement and standards are beginning to rise again but there is more to do to make sure that all groups of students including those who are supported using the pupil premium make at least expected progress.
- Most students join the academy with standards that are generally significantly below those typical for their age. In Key Stage 3 most students make the progress expected of them and the proportion doing better than this is growing.
- In recent years attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has declined. In 2013 the percentage of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics was below the current floor standard and not as high as it should have been.
- The proportion of students making the progress expected of them from their individual starting points and the proportion doing better than this also declined and was not high enough in English and mathematics. Both measures were below the national figures and floor standards in 2013.
- The decline is in part related to an influx of a significant number of students in recent years into Key Stage 4. Some of these new students joined the school with records of poor attendance and some brought records of poor behaviour and weak attitudes to learning with them. This had a negative impact on attainment and progress data. However, data for students who did not join the school late shows that not enough of them achieved as well as they should. Leadership is right, therefore, in judging that achievement by the end of Key Stage 4 has been inadequate.
- The proportion of students joining the school at other than normal times has now declined and their impact on attainment in Key Stage 4 is diminishing. As a result, the proportion of students making the progress expected of them is rising.
- The gap between the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium and others in the academy is too wide. In 2013 in English and mathematics, the attainment of students who were known to be eligible for free school meals was significantly below that of similar students nationally. In comparison to other students in the academy, this group of students attained, on average, one grade lower in GCSE English and more than a grade lower in mathematics.
- While students' achievement overall is inadequate, decisive action taken by school leaders to halt the decline and improve achievement is starting to bear fruit. Externally validated school data supported by inspection evidence from lesson observations, discussions with students and analyses of their work in Years 9, 10 and 11 show that students, especially those in Key Stage 4, are now making better progress and that standards are rising. The achievement gap for disadvantaged students is narrowing, although their irregular attendance is a barrier to closing the gap at a faster pace.
- The proportion of students who join Year 7 with the higher levels of attainment from their primary schools is generally much lower than that found in most secondary schools. In recent years by the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of these students making good progress has not been high enough. School data and inspection evidence show that the progress of these most able students is accelerating securely because teaching is starting to challenge them more appropriately.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are improving. Subject leadership in English and mathematics is becoming more effective. The work of SLEs has been highly effective in developing their skills and in improving teaching. As a result, students are now making better progress and standards of attainment in literacy, communication and numeracy are rising.
- The school uses the Year 7 catch-up funding (extra money to support students who join Year 7 with lower levels of attainment in reading and numeracy) effectively. School data show that the majority of students improve their reading ages significantly and their understanding and skills in

basic numeracy.

- Most students who are disabled or with special educational needs make steady progress and a significant number make good progress from their individual starting points because of the effective, targeted support that they receive.
- The very small numbers of students who are educated part-time at Barnsley College generally make good progress. Their attendance and safety are checked on regularly.
- The academy has discontinued its previous practice of entering large cohorts for early entry to GCSE examinations in recognition that it was having a negative impact on achievement. Currently it enters a targeted group of about 40 Year 11 students for early entry in English. Students say that this lets them know what level they are at and motivates them to want to do even better in the summer entry. There is no longer, therefore, any adverse impact on achievement caused by early entry.
- The academy has a strong commitment to providing for equality of opportunity. However, because the issues surrounding the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged students, have not been tackled, that commitment has yet to be fully achieved.
- In the sixth form the vast majority of students make the progress expected of them where achievement is rising. However, there is some variability in attainment in different subjects. This is as a result of some inconsistency in teaching quality which does not always enable students to develop their research skills and discover things for themselves.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is inadequate because in recent years it has not enabled students to achieve as well as they could or should, especially in Key Stage 4.
- When planning their lessons too many teachers do not use the information that they have on students' progress and abilities to make sure that activities are appropriately challenging; some students find the work too easy and others too hard. This acts as brake on accelerating the rate of progress in a significant number of lessons.
- Some teaching, especially in lower ability teaching sets, does not have the necessary focus and variety to keep students interested throughout the whole lesson. Sometimes the tasks are too dull. Students quickly become bored and the progress that they make slows accordingly. In some lessons, students' boredom expresses itself through poor behaviour.
- Where teachers ask probing questions, students respond with interest and are keen to give extended and reasoned answers. However, some teachers ask questions that require a simple yes or no answer and are, on occasion, too quick to provide answers for the students. This often denies students of valuable opportunities to develop their thinking skills and also reduces the impact of teaching on developing students' communication skills.
- Where learning is most successful, students are keen to give of their best and show real determination to succeed. For example, in a top set Year 10 English lesson that focused on analysing a challenging text on the principles of politeness, the teacher guided the students to understanding through the use of skilful questioning and asking students to explain their thinking to others in the group. They gave mature answers and made outstanding progress.
- However, in a few lessons observed by inspectors, students made only slow progress because the activities were either too difficult or too easy. This led to frustration and some poor behaviour. The quality of marking varies too much. Too much marking does not give students a sharp enough idea of what they need to do to make their work better. Written work in students' books is too often untidy and shows little pride in presentation. Too often this is accepted by teachers without comment or correction.
- Teaching assistants play an effective role in supporting students' learning in lessons, especially in supporting students who are disabled or with special educational needs and those of lower ability.
- Despite the variation in the quality of teaching that still exists, the picture of its overall quality is improving securely because leaders and managers are becoming more adept and rigorous at

monitoring its quality and using the outcomes to provide closely targeted support and training.

- There is a similar picture of variability of teaching in the sixth form. Students say that teaching is improving. The gradually rising level of achievement is testimony to this. However, in too many lessons teachers do too much for the students. This engenders over-reliance by students on being told things rather than finding them out for themselves. The important sixth form skill of seeking out information for themselves is not always promoted effectively; this slows the progress and the quality of their learning and does not always prepare them well enough for the demands of higher education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. While the majority of students have positive attitudes to learning and behave responsibly, the poor behaviour of a significant minority disrupts teaching and learning in too many lessons, especially in the teaching sets that provide for less-able students.
- Some pupils say that there is poor behaviour in some lessons, especially in lower-ability teaching sets. During the inspection, inspectors observed frequent disruption in a few lessons, including swearing on more than one occasion.
- Most staff deal with poor behaviour effectively. Occasionally, however, some choose to turn a blind eye. This gives a mixed message to students about what is acceptable and what is not.
- In brief, there is little consistency in the quality of behaviour or its management across the academy. Leaders, managers and staff have in the past reacted to incidents rather than setting a tone for the academy where a clear message is given that poor behaviour is unacceptable and the consequences that poor behaviour brings with it.
- However, on the plus side, students say that the academy is becoming much firmer in dealing with poor behaviour and that it is improving. Evidence over time suggests that there are few parental concerns.
- Leaders and managers are starting to give a much clearer message about the importance of respect and good behaviour. However they recognise that there is much more to be done to make sure that the importance of good behaviour, manners and respect is given a high enough profile across the school
- Pupils say that there is a small amount of bullying. They say that bullying mostly takes the form of name calling, including homophobic name calling. However, students say that staff are quick to deal with it. Academy records of incidents of bullying confirm this. Records also confirm that the number of incidents is declining.
- Attendance is improving and is now close to the national average overall. However, this masks a wide gap in recent years between the attendance levels of disadvantaged students and others in the school, especially in Years 10 and 11. Current academy attendance data show that the gap is closing. However, too many of the disadvantaged students are absent too often and this has a negative impact on their achievement.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement because in recent years too many students have been absent too often from the safe school environment. Attendance in Key Stage 4 is now much better; this is allaying concerns about students' safety when they are not in school.
- The academy's procedures and policies for safeguarding students are fully in place and they are reviewed and updated regularly.
- Students say that they feel very safe in the academy and that the adults working with them are all approachable if they have a problem that they wish to discuss.
- Students talk knowledgeably about unsafe situations and how to avoid or deal with them, including the potential dangers of using social websites inappropriately.
- The academy misses a golden opportunity to promote the importance of good behaviour and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness more effectively by not making good use of the 40 minutes given over to tutor and enrichment activities before lunch. Students describe

this as 'largely a waste of time' and this view was confirmed by inspectors during the inspection.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- In the past leaders and managers were too slow to react decisively enough to the downturn in achievement. However, senior leaders, working very effectively with staff from the partner academy, are now making a concerted and effective effort which is bringing about necessary improvements. That said, not all subject leaders are having sufficient impact on achievement and the quality of teaching in their subject area and the school improvement board is in an early stage of development.
- An improving picture of achievement, improved teaching, better attendance and narrowing gaps between groups of students all testify to the capacity of leaders and managers to make the academy more effective.
- Increasing numbers of sixth form students are moving on to higher education, including at 'top-flight' universities. This adds further support to the evidence of an improving picture.
- Senior leaders have an accurate overview of the overall effectiveness of the school and where it should be doing better. They are using the outcomes to take decisive and successful action to reverse the downturn in achievement at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Leadership does not shirk the responsibility of making difficult decisions. Staff who are not doing as well as they should, including members of the senior leadership team, have been dealt with. New appointments to the senior leadership team and to subject leadership are adding extra dynamism and skills that are bringing about renewed vitality to the academy.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching with much greater rigour and regularity. They hold subject leaders much more closely to account for improving standards in their subject areas. Subject leaders have responded positively to the extra demands made of them and welcome their greater involvement in improving the academy. Nevertheless, the quality of subject leadership remains somewhat variable because some leaders have yet to grow fully into the new demands that are being made of them and become fully effective in their roles.
- Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are now more demanding with a much sharper focus on linking the progress that students make to how effectively staff are performing and to progression up the salary scale.
- Leaders and managers are also bringing about an upturn in attendance, including that of disadvantaged students. Consequently, the gap with other students is closing. Overall, however, leaders and managers agree that they need to give a much sharper focus to the use and impact of the pupil premium funding to bring about greater parity in both achievement and attendance between the students who are supported by the funding and those who are not.
- Information about the progress that individual and groups of students are making in each year group has been made more useful and 'user friendly'. However, leaders are aware that more is to be done to use the information in teaching to make sure that students are challenged sufficiently in line with their abilities.
- Leaders and managers are bringing about improvements in behaviour. However, inconsistencies in how consistently well staff deal with poor behaviour remain.
- The range of subjects in the curriculum meets the needs of most students. It provides a wide range of option choices for students in the main academy and the sixth form. The range of extra-curricular activities, especially in the arts such as in music, is somewhat limited, as is the impact on students' personal development and broadening their horizons.
- Summaries of questionnaires sent out by the academy and its increasing popularity of as a first choice for parents show that parents are generally supportive of the academy and that it enjoys the confidence of the local community.
- In recognition of the downturn in achievement, the academy sponsor is providing increasing levels of effective support to improve the school. This is bringing about secure improvement to students' achievement, especially in English and mathematics in Key Stage 4.

■ The governance of the school:

- In recent years the local governing body has not held the academy rigorously to account. Attendance at meetings of the governing body has been poor. Too few members have attended necessary training to enable them to evaluate with any degree of accuracy how well the academy is doing in comparison to other similar schools both locally and nationally. While they were generally supportive, governors did not have detailed enough knowledge of: the quality of teaching; achievement; behaviour; the processes of performance management; and the allocation of pupil premium funding to enable them to ask the necessary questions.
- In recognition of these inadequacies, the academy sponsor carried out a recent review of governance and took the decision to abandon current arrangements and replace the governing body with a school improvement board. While the membership has been decided, a Chair of the Board has yet to be appointed and the first meeting of the new school improvement board is about to take place. Discussion with the academy sponsor gives clear and unequivocal confirmation that the membership of the new school improvement board has been carefully and deliberately planned to make sure that future governance provides the necessary foundations for rigour in holding the academy to account and to make sure that the improvements taking place are maintained and accelerated at a faster pace.

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	131749
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	440884

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy Sponsor Led
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	882
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Owen Gleadall
Headteacher	Dave Berry
Date of previous school inspection	29 February 2012
Telephone number	01226 284606
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