

Bradford Girls' Grammar School

Squire Lane, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD9 6RB

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Requires improvement		3
Sixth form provision	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal leads the school effectively with passion and determination. Staff are confident in her leadership.
- Leaders, governors and staff have achieved significant and successful developments over a two year period and demonstrate a commitment to further improvements.
- Leaders and governors ensure all staff know how to keep pupils safe. The curriculum helps pupils to understand potential risks to their safety and well-being beyond the school gates.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well, as a result of good teaching. Rapid developments in the quality of teaching means that all pupils benefit from the highly aspirational values of the school.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and grow in confidence as a result of the rich experiences the school offers.
- Sixth form students achieve high standards and go on to the universities and further education of their choice. They recognise the benefits of hard work and are well prepared for the next step in their lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The early years provision requires improvement because too few children make good progress.
- Leaders have not developed successful approaches to positively engage all parents.
- Teaching does not lead to outstanding progress for all pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 46 lessons in all key stages and across a range of subjects. Eight lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors met with four groups of pupils to talk about their experiences in school. They also spoke informally with pupils of all ages during break and lunchtimes and looked at their work.
- Inspectors considered 121 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), spoke with a number of parents at school and by telephone, and considered information provided by parents in letters and emails. Inspectors also considered the 77 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with teachers, middle and senior leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and the School Improvement Partner.
- A wide range of school documents were reviewed, including minutes of meetings and records of the checks leaders make on the quality of teaching and assessment.

Inspection team

Susan Hayter, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bernard Campbell

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Full report

Information about this school

- Bradford Girls' Grammar School was a selective independent school until it opened as a free school in September 2013. This is the first inspection of the school. The area of the school site known as Lady Royd, houses full time early years and primary provision for girls and boys. The secondary and sixth form provision is for girls only.
- The primary phase is bigger than an average primary school and the secondary phase is smaller than most secondary schools. The sixth form is small but numbers are increasing, as is the case in all phases since 2013.
- As the school expands the range of attainment on entry to the secondary phase is becoming wider.
- An overwhelming majority of pupils are from Asian or Asian British backgrounds. The proportion of the pupils for whom English is a second language is well above average.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for support through the pupil premium fund), and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are low, but rising over time.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4. In 2014, the school did not meet the floor standards for attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Bradford Central Pupil Referral Unit.
- Since the school opened some staff have left and more staff have joined as pupil numbers have risen.
- Governors buy in a range of professional support to work with leaders to continue to develop the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the early years provision by ensuring:
 - adult led activities are based on what children know and understand so they can make the next steps in their learning
 - adult led activities engage the children so they want to listen and learn
 - all adults teaching phonics model individual and blended sounds precisely, so that children can copy and learn to link sounds to letters and words.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that pupils' achievement improves further by ensuring teachers consistently use the agreed marking policy, including giving pupils time to respond to the advice given.
- Improve leadership and management in all phases of the school by:
 - strengthening relationships with parents to ensure more universal support for the school
 - developing the whole-school approach to the use of progress tracking and assessment information to ensure all pupils in all phases make consistently good gains in learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's leadership is securing the effective transformation of a selective independent school to a free school, while maintaining longstanding values to 'aspire, succeed and lead'. The transformation of the school over two years has been well led and managed.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because leaders at all levels do not secure the very best achievement for all pupils. Some feedback to individual teachers is not precise enough to enable them to, for example, strengthen their already effective practice further. A few middle leaders do not use assessment information as well as their colleagues to make changes that will raise achievement for a particular group of pupils or in a subject, as quickly as is the case elsewhere.
- Leaders and governors are ensuring high quality professional development is supporting teachers. Aspects of excellent practice in classrooms are shared and work with local schools and other school improvement services, is contributing to improving teaching and the achievement of an increasing number of pupils with a wide range of starting points.
- Almost every subject in the curriculum allows pupils opportunities to develop as well rounded, confident young people who are respectful and tolerant of others. Democratic processes are mirrored in school activities and equality for all is evident through all aspects of the school's work.
- Pupils speak highly of the careers advice and guidance they are given. They believe the aspirational targets they are set demonstrate teachers' faith in them, and this helps build their confidence. As a result of inspirational visitors and visits to universities older students are unashamedly ambitious.
- Leaders monitor all pupils' behaviour and attendance, responding swiftly and effectively to any decline in standards.
- Parents' views of the school are variable. There are differing views between parents whose children attended the independent school and those who joined the free school. Some are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work, although a significant number of parents expressed concerns over a range of issues. Leaders and governors are aware they need to develop better ways to engage with parents and this is an area of work which requires improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors share the Principal's determination to deliver an effective transformation of the school. They are acutely aware of the challenges they face by extending the range of pupils attending the school and meeting all of their differing needs.
 - Governors receive detailed information about all aspects of the school's work and have the skills and knowledge to ask challenging questions. Consequently, their intervention is helping to ensure the curriculum is appropriate to the needs and aspirations of all pupils, and is preparing them to make a contribution to life in the wider community.
 - Governors ensure that the additional funding for; helping Year 7 pupils catch-up, that is, those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics; for supporting the disadvantaged pupils through the use of the pupil premium and for improving primary physical education and sports, is used appropriately. They have planned further work to track the impact of this money more precisely.
 - Safeguarding requirements are checked by the designated governor who reports to all governors, so they are rightly confident they meet their responsibilities and arrangements to secure the safety of pupils, of all ages, are effective.
 - Governors are made aware of the support in place for teachers to improve their performance and check that progress is being made.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite to each other and adults. They show positive attitudes to learning and in response to effective teaching pupils show real enthusiasm for working at a challenging pace.
- In a small number of instances, where teaching is less engaging, some pupils do not demonstrate the

same high standards of behaviour that are seen in the large majority of classrooms. The school's response is supportive and robust if pupils' behaviour affects the learning of others.

- Pupils say they are confident they can go to staff with any concerns and that these will be dealt with promptly.
- Attendance in all year groups is high and persistent absence is low. Leaders are working through a range of strategies to make sure the attendance of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is at least as good as all other pupils.
- A majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are happy and feel safe at school. However, approximately a quarter of parents who responded feel their children are not well looked after, and say behaviour is not good and the school does not deal effectively with bullying. Inspectors judge that behaviour is good; most pupils behave well and are sensitive to the needs of others. On rare occasions when this is not the case staff effectively support all pupils involved.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors confirmed they feel safe and knew who to talk to if they were worried or unhappy. Some pupils said that staff work with all pupils to make sure they quickly met the school's expectations of behaviour. Staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire for staff, did not express concerns about the behaviour of the pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff know pupils extremely well and are alert to any signs of harm or pupils developing risky behaviours. This is so because of the high level of training the staff receive around safeguarding and child protection issues.
- Thorough records are kept around concerns and follow-up of any incidents relating to pupils' safety and welfare. Work with other agencies is effective.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through a range of lessons and activities. Year 12 students clearly articulate the school's aim to teach self-confidence and resilience when they talk of being 'responsible for themselves' and in 'charge of their own actions'. Students are comfortable talking with staff about the risks of extremism and the damaging effect this has on individuals and communities. E-safety is taught well and age-appropriately across the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the primary and secondary phases, and the sixth form, is good because it leads to pupils making good progress. Pupils' work and the views they shared with inspectors confirm that effective teaching is typical.
- Teachers are skilled at checking pupils' understanding and correcting any misconceptions during lessons or when marking pupils' books. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher very quickly realised that the task was not clear to all the pupils because of the language used to present the problem. By explaining the task in a different way, pupils' understanding was quickly secured and a good pace of learning resumed.
- The well planned use of resources supports pupils' progress and makes learning activities interesting. For example, a dismantled computer was used to give pupils hands on experience of its parts and functions. Engaging displays of pupils' art work celebrate achievement and are inspiring others to rise to the school's high expectations.
- In the primary phase, teaching is improving rapidly due to high expectations and increasingly challenging work. Teachers are successfully developing their skills in adjusting work to meet the requirements of different pupils.
- Teachers frequently check what pupils know and understand. Information from their accurate assessments is used to make sure any pupil falling behind is given help to catch up and remain on track to reach the aspirational targets set for all pupils. However, the information is not used across the school well enough to ensure all groups of pupils make as much progress as they can.
- Pupils read regularly and widely and are developing a love of reading. They are taught to express their own opinions persuasively when speaking and in their writing. Literacy is taught across all subjects. Pupils say they are regularly reminded that accuracy in spelling and grammar is equally important in mathematics, for example, as it is in English lessons. Mathematical skills are less developed across all subjects.
- Most teachers provide helpful written and verbal feedback to pupils; however, pupils are not always given time to respond by making improvements, which means that feedback is not always as effective as it

could be.

- Some parents expressed a concern about the quality of teaching and identified changes in teachers having a negative impact on their children's progress. A large number of new staff have joined the school as the number of pupils have increased and some staff have left since it became a free school. However, during this school year the situation has stabilised. Evidence in pupils' books does not reveal a significant concern about the impact of unavoidable changes in staff.
- In some lessons the quality of support provided by teaching assistants is of the highest standard, but this is not consistent in all lessons. Teaching in small intervention groups for those pupils identified as falling behind is effective for most pupils, because the work is precisely matched to the pupils' needs.
- Teaching in the early years requires improvement because it does not lead to good progress. When adults do not use information about what children already know, the activities do not guide the children easily through to their next step in learning because they are not pitched correctly.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils across the primary and secondary phases make good progress from their different starting points as a result of good teaching. Progress in the sixth form is also good. The achievement of children in the early years requires improvement because not enough of them make good gains in their learning.
- In 2014, nearly all Year 11 pupils gained five A* to C grades at GCSE level, including in English and mathematics, with a notably high proportion gaining A* and A grades in English literature. Significant improvements this year in the achievement of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are raising the overall attainment made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics to at least in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 2. The improving quality of pupils' work over time is clear in their work books.
- The very small number of disadvantaged pupils in 2014 at Key Stage 4 performed as well as other pupils in the school and achieved better than non-disadvantaged 16-year-olds nationally. Typically, they achieved one grade higher in English and one and a half grades higher in mathematics at GCSE. In contrast, at the end of Key Stage 2, the very small number of disadvantaged pupils performed two terms behind their non-disadvantaged peers in school, and a year behind national expectations for 11-year-olds in English and mathematics.
- The growing number of disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated gains and their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is now broadly in line with their class mates.
- The achievement of the very small number of disabled students and those with special educational needs varies across key stages and year groups. Some students achieve exceptionally well because of the effective support for their individual learning needs. However, in Key Stage 2 this group of pupils is not making the same good gains in reading, writing and mathematics as other pupils.
- The carefully considered use of early entry at GCSE level or alternative provision for a very small number of pupils has benefitted their individual achievements over time.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children enter the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. At the end of Reception not enough of them make rapid gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding because aspects of the teaching in this provision require improvement.
- Children's skills in reading and writing are lower at the start of the year than in other areas of learning and the quality of teaching they receive is not strong enough to help children catch-up quickly in these areas. Adults do not check children's understanding carefully enough before moving them on to structured activities. This means children can sometimes struggle to complete tasks and this slows their learning.
- Teachers make sure the indoor and outside spaces provide interesting activities that cover all areas of learning. The activities engage children, so they are eager to learn and concentrate well. Adults use questions and comments with children during play which contribute to the children's progress.
- Teaching about letters and sounds they make requires improvement because the way adults sound out individual and combinations of sounds is not precise. The lack of precision means that children do not make good progress in linking sounds and letters and blending sounds to form words.
- Leaders have ensured that children are safe. Children's confidence in the classroom and with adults indicates they feel safe. Children behave well, especially when they play and socialise together. In some adult led activities, where teaching and classroom management require improvement some children become disinterested and fidget.

- Leadership of the early years has ensured all statutory requirements are met. Systems for planning and assessing children's work are clear and generally used well. Advice from the local authority is helping to ensure that planning for children's learning is based on accurate assessment information. Planning is more effective in free play sessions than in adult lead activities.
- Children leave the Reception class ready to start in Year 1 as the vast majority, while not making rapid gains in their learning, do reach the expected level of development

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form has grown considerably. The academic emphasis of the curriculum is reflected in the high expectations on entry. The many students joining the sixth form from other schools are given a thorough induction and quickly integrate into their new surroundings and understand the high expectations of them.
- Achievement is good. In 2014 just over half the students achieved A*, A, or B grades in their A level subjects. Inspectors observed good progress in many lessons and in the students' work as a result of strong teaching.
- Teachers use their sound subject knowledge to engage students in robust intellectual discussions and well-planned research. As a result, students are confident in grappling with new concepts and explaining ideas. Students value feedback on essays in a range of subjects, and opportunities for practical work in science.
- The sixth form prepares students well for the next stage in their lives. Most students go on to their university of choice. Retention of students on their chosen courses between Years 12 and 13 is high, with almost all Year 12 students continuing to study their chosen A levels in Year 13.
- Students speak positively about the opportunities to volunteer in a variety of work places and in the wider community. This programme develops students as young citizens, and is helping to shape their ideas about future careers. Students are also positive about the advice and support they receive for applying and preparing for university or college.
- The personal social and health education programme provides opportunities for sharing opinions on current social and political issues. In addition to developing their understanding of topical issues, students are able to reflect on the impact of their own choices and decisions, helping to keep them safe from risky behaviours.
- The information gathered about how different groups of students are progressing is not analysed well enough by sixth form leaders so is not used to best effect to ensure all students achieve to the very best of their abilities across the subjects they study.

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	140204
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	450208

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

Type of school	All through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	5–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	877
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Shaw
Principal	Kathryn Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01274 545395
Fax number	01274 482595
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