

# Barnsley Academy

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

## Inspection dates

21–22 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not improved the school’s overall effectiveness since the previous inspection. High levels of staff turnover have had an impact on the pace of improvement.
- From their below-average starting points, pupils do not make good progress over time. Standards by the end of Year 11, while improving, are still broadly average. Current pupils’ progress varies between subjects and between groups of pupils.
- Teaching is also variable in quality between subjects. Teachers do not always use the information about what pupils already know and can do well to plan learning that meets their varying needs and abilities.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Work for the most able pupils, for example, lacks challenge.
- Additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not used to good effect. Poor attendance of these pupils also hampers their achievement.
- The role of middle leadership is still developing. Not all use information about pupils’ progress to actively check the progress of pupils in their subjects and departments.
- Expectations of good behaviour have been raised and are high. However, this has resulted in very high levels of exclusions. Behaviour, therefore, requires improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal has a clear and focused vision for the school. He has taken robust action to tackle weak teaching and is well supported by the trust. Teaching, as well as pupils’ outcomes, their attitudes, behaviour and attendance, are all improving.
- Arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep safe.
- Senior leadership and governance have strengthened. They have an accurate picture of what is needed to drive improvement forward. As a result, the pace of improvement is gathering momentum.
- The conduct of pupils around the school is orderly and calm. Behaviour has significantly improved.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that all middle leaders use pupil progress data to actively monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils in their departments
  - precisely targeting and carefully checking the spending of additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school so that pupils make good progress from their starting points, by ensuring that:
  - teachers consistently use assessment information to plan learning effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils
  - teachers in all subjects have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able pupils.
- Improve further the attendance, behaviour and welfare of pupils, particularly for the disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
  - rapidly reducing persistent absence
  - rapidly reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions and repeat fixed-term exclusions.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to further support the practice of this aspect of leadership and management.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

- Since the last inspection, there have been changes in leadership, including governance. The principal has a clear and focused vision for school improvement. He has accurately evaluated school strengths, pinpointed areas for development and revised priorities. He is relentless in his efforts to improve the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders' actions to eradicate weak teaching have led to high levels of staff turnover in some subject areas. This has had an impact on the pace of school improvement. While some improvements are clearly evident, leaders have yet to ensure that teaching and pupils' outcomes, including their personal development, behaviour and attendance, are good.
- The roles of middle leaders are developing. Some, such as in mathematics and science, are new to their posts. Leaders in English and modern foreign languages are using information about pupils' attainment and progress effectively to check not only how well pupils are doing but also the quality of teaching. These middle leaders identify areas for improvement and evaluate the impact of their actions. However, this is not the case for all middle leaders. Leaders recognise that there is still work to do to achieve a consistent approach to subject leadership across the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that the funds received to support disadvantaged pupils have had a good impact on pupils' achievement across the year groups. Most of the pupil premium last year, for example, was used to bring about improvements in outcomes for Year 11 pupils. While this has had a positive effect on raising achievement for these pupils, funding has not been used effectively to support pupils in Years 7 to 10.
- Similarly, additional funding to support pupils who are eligible for the catch-up premium is not used to good effect. Leaders have not ensured that teaching effectively meets their particular needs. Leadership of this provision requires improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Sensible revisions have been made to help improve pupils' outcomes. Teaching time given to English and mathematics, for example, has increased and the range of subjects pupils can study are now more appropriate, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The support from United Learning Trust is effective and valued by the principal and senior leaders. Focused support for the teaching of mathematics is helping to improve the quality of leadership and teaching of this subject. The trust's support, including from external checks on the assessments of English and mathematics, has helped to improve the accuracy of information. This, in turn, is enabling leaders to provide better-targeted support to pupils.

### Governance of the school

- In 2016, United Learning Trust identified the governance of the school as an area that needed urgent attention. As a result, the trust and the principal appointed an

experienced chair of governors to the recently formed local governing body. Consequently, more effective practices are now in place, with clearer structures for governance. Governors undertake their work with greater rigour.

- The new chair of the governing body has a proven track record and appropriate educational experience in similar schools. As a result, in a very short space of time he has set a clear and focused direction for the governing body. He has a realistic view of where the school is and what the absolute priorities are.
- There are now clear strengths in governance. Members of the governing body have an appropriate range of skills and experience. They are beginning to provide effective direction and an improving level of challenge to school leaders under the guidance of the new chair of the governing body. Governors welcome the recommendation for an external review of governance to support their current improving practice even further.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and pupils say that they feel safe.
- There is extensive supervision on entry to school in the mornings, at lunchtimes and between lessons. Consequently, the conduct of pupils around the school is orderly and pupils are punctual to lessons.
- School leaders ensure that all staff have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding training. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures, the signs to look for and how to report concerns.
- Leaders make timely referrals to the local authority social care services where necessary and keep an accurate record of conversations and actions. Senior leaders, including governors, check safeguarding records regularly and the school has comprehensive policies for safeguarding. As a result, the school takes timely, supportive and appropriate actions.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between subjects. This inconsistency leads to variation in the progress pupils, and groups of pupils, make over time. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement.
- In some subjects, expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. In particular, work for the most able pupils lacks challenge. The high expectations and challenging work seen of older pupils in modern foreign languages is resulting in their better progress.
- Teachers' use of assessment information is developing but not yet embedded across all subjects. In subjects such as English and modern foreign languages, typically, staff use assessment information effectively to plan learning so that it matches the varying needs and abilities of pupils. The needs of disadvantaged pupils are taken into good account. This is not the case in some other subjects, especially in mathematics and science. Achievement in these subjects is improving, but steadily rather than quickly as a result.

- For the most part, relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. In some subjects, such as English, modern foreign languages, art and photography, pupils are given good opportunities to work independently and to develop their self-confidence by asking questions. This in turn effectively extends pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, in other subjects, such as mathematics and science, opportunities to extend learning in this way are overlooked and some pupils lack self-confidence as a result. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to bring about a consistent approach to this across the various subjects.
- The principal has taken robust action to eradicate weak teaching. This has resulted in high staff turnover in some subject areas. Nevertheless, teaching is improving, including in mathematics and science. A detailed and bespoke professional development programme is supporting staff to improve their practice. New middle leaders in mathematics and science are making sure that planned improvements in teaching in these subjects are underway.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Sometimes, pupils lack confidence to ask questions when they are unclear of what they are learning. In some subjects, pupils are uncertain about what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils do not consistently take pride in their work. Consequently, presentation is poor in some books.
- Pupils present themselves well, wear their uniform smartly and are proud of their school. Pupils conduct themselves well and show respect for each other and staff.
- Leaders work hard to promote pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils are aware of healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating, and how to keep safe. They are positive about what the school does for them.
- Pupils are extensively involved in local charitable projects, ranging from fundraising for a local children's hospital, local enterprise and animal charities and involvement in joint projects with the police. A group of 66 pupils won the regional 'Rock Challenge UK' competition with their performance focused on the plight of refugees.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive and developmental careers programme in place in all year groups. This is part of a wider-ranging personal, social and health education programme which also covers themes such as keeping safe, mental health, relationships and fundamental British values. Pupils can explain well their strong awareness of fundamental British values.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- Fixed-term exclusions and repeat fixed-term exclusions increased last year as a result of higher expectations and a stronger focus on good behaviour. Parents recognise that over the last six months, the school has 'raised the bar' in this respect.
- Behaviour has improved significantly. The number of recorded incidents of inappropriate behaviour last year dropped by 25% compared to the previous year.
- Pupils say that, in many lessons, behaviour is positive and they feel safe. They agree that behaviour has improved.
- The school's strong attendance policy, which incorporates a wide range of strategies to promote good attendance, together with the actions of leaders and staff, have led to an improvement in overall attendance last year. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has also reduced. However, attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains low. The number of these pupils who are regularly absent is too high.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Typically, pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are below average. By the end of Year 11, the standards attained remain below average. Pupils do not always make good progress from their starting points and as a result, outcomes require improvement.
- In 2016, achievement for Year 11 fell short of the government's minimum standards. Provisional results from Year 11 in 2017 show an improved picture of achievement. Even so, pupils' performance is variable between subjects. For example, while outcomes in English and science show improvement, in mathematics achievement fell and was low. Outcomes in some other subjects, including humanities, music, drama and information and communication technology, were also weak.
- School progress information and inspection evidence show further improvements in pupils' outcomes, both in the achievement of current Year 11 pupils and in other year groups. In many subjects, including English, standards are on the up. Some improvement in mathematics is also evident but is slower and pupils' progress remains patchy.
- Rates of progress currently across the school not only vary between subjects, they also vary between different groups of pupils. For example, in 2016, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils improved but their attainment and progress still lagged far behind that of others in the school and nationally. In 2017, these gaps continued to narrow, but were still wide. The continued poor attendance of some disadvantaged pupils impacts negatively on their achievement.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. Improvements to the ways in which pupils' achievements and needs are assessed are helping to ensure more targeted support is put in place for those who need extra help. However, as with other pupils, their progress varies between subjects.
- The achievement of the most able pupils requires improvement. Expectations of what the most able pupils are capable of achieving are too low. Work lacks enough challenge and so these pupils do not always reach their full potential.

## School details

Unique reference number	131749
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10036561

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	783
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nigel Robson
Principal	Stephen Dixon
Telephone number	01226 284606
Website	<a href="http://www.barnsley-academy.org">www.barnsley-academy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@barnsley-academy.org">admin@barnsley-academy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 September 2015

## Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is part of the United Learning Trust.
- A new principal and assistant vice principal were appointed to the academy in June 2016.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

- Barnsley Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost half of the pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small minority from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 55 lessons across most subject areas. Many of these visits took place with senior leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' workbooks and questioned pupils about their learning.
- Discussions took place with the principal, other senior leaders, most subject leaders and a number of teachers. Inspectors also held discussions with members of the wider body of staff.
- Discussions also took place with a representative of the trust and members of the local governing board, including the chair of the governing body, who is also a trustee.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils from all year groups about what it is like to be a young person at the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors took into account eight free-text responses from parents to the online survey, Parent View. They analysed 39 responses to the staff survey and 160 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documents, including school development plans, governing body minutes, external reviews, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.

## Inspection team

Dimitris Spiliotis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Belita Scott	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Rogers	Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Selkirk	Ofsted Inspector

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