

# Inspection of Barnsley Academy

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

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Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Barnsley Academy provides a calm and productive environment in which pupils can learn. It has greatly improved over the years to become a place that pupils are happy to attend. Its reputation in the community has improved. For example, one parent said, 'The school does not get the recognition it deserves.'

Pupils now enjoy school much more. Most appreciate the efforts that leaders and staff have made to make the school a place where learning can happen without disruption. Pupils behave well and feel safe. Teachers and pupils work well together and show respect for each other. Everyone is able to accept people for who they are because of the strong support for pupils' development. Pupils thrive on the opportunities to support each other through the school's ambassador programmes.

Bullying is not tolerated and is dealt with quickly when it happens. High standards and expectations are important for everyone. In lessons, pupils are happy and confident. They are challenged in learning so that they can improve. The school tries to give every young person a chance to succeed. This is important in a school that accepts many children from other schools who sometimes find school life difficult.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The headteacher and senior leadership team have made big changes over recent years. These include developing the curriculum to make it better for pupils. They have also recruited more specialist teachers. High expectations for behaviour and learning are now established, and exclusions are reducing. This means that everyone can learn in a calm and purposeful environment. As a result, the progress pupils make by the time they leave the school is rising.

There is still some variation in the curriculum. Across most subjects, teachers plan lessons that ensure that pupils learn more. Teachers make regular assessments so that they can plan for pupils' next steps. Pupils usually learn new skills and remember facts with confidence. In English, pupils develop their vocabulary and remember increasingly complex words such as 'dystopia' and 'foreboding'. Yet, in some other subjects, pupils cannot remember some basic facts or skills. In art, for example, pupils are not always clear about why you shade in drawings. In technology, some do not remember how they should hold a hammer.

Leaders of most subjects have created a broad and interesting curriculum. This helps to excite and engage pupils in learning. Most planning builds knowledge sequentially over the five years of study at the school. Teachers help the school's aim for pupils to become more literate and aware of culture. Opportunities exist for pupils to make visits to places of interest, such as exhibitions at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. There are also support programmes to help build the confidence of pupils who struggle. This helps to ensure that everyone can achieve. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils do well.

Pupils choose subjects for study in key stage 4 that match their interests. More pupils are choosing academic courses than they did in the past. Almost half of pupils now choose subjects for GCSE that count towards the government's English Baccalaureate target. Pupils can also choose from a wide range of vocational courses, such as health and social care. The school's website provides good information about what pupils will learn in most subjects. However, some subjects need to give more information about the content of courses.

Leaders challenge poor attendance, and this has resulted in strong improvement. Attendance is now nearer to national averages. Governors hold leaders to account. They challenge them to work on issues, such as the quality of education and attendance. Fixed-term exclusions, although higher than average, continue to reduce. This is because pupils' behaviour has improved. Most pupils appreciate the school's approach to managing behaviour. Some parents and carers would like better communication from the school. They would like to know more about how their children are being supported.

The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Much of the school careers guidance programme is effective. However, some children are not fully aware of apprenticeship opportunities. Pupils are tolerant and accepting of the world outside of school. They relish the opportunities they get to help others, such as becoming cultural ambassadors. They understand the values of other cultures and beliefs. As a result, pupils are very accepting of others, regardless of faith, culture or sexuality.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that checks on adults are thoroughly carried out before allowing them to take on work in the school. Processes for safeguarding and child protection are robust and clear. Pupils and staff know who to speak to if they have a concern. Staff are aware of local and national issues so that they are clear about the signs to look out for. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that issues, such as bullying, will be dealt with quickly.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The quality of curriculum planning across subjects is variable. In some subjects, the curriculum is ambitious and content has been carefully sequenced. But in other subjects, curriculum planning is less coherent. This means pupils are less secure in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the quality of curriculum planning matches that of the best subjects in the school.
- Behaviour at the school has improved greatly. Most pupils, the vast majority of teachers, other staff and some parents support the school's drive to reduce disruption. The proportion of exclusions is above the national average. The need

to exclude pupils means their education is adversely disrupted. Leaders need to sustain their efforts to reduce the use of exclusion, ensuring that all steps are taken to help pupils at risk to manage their behaviour better.

- The school website contains useful information to support the work of the school. Much of it is detailed to allow parents to understand what children will learn. However, some subjects do not fully explain the content of what will be taught. Similarly, a few parents do not feel the school communicates as successfully as it could with them. Leaders should ensure that all avenues are explored to improve communication so that parents and pupils clearly know and understand the goals of the school's work.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131749
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121704
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	840
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nigel Robson
<b>Principal</b>	Stephen Dixon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.barnsley-academy.org">www.barnsley-academy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school received a monitoring inspection in September 2018.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The number of pupils on roll is rising.
- The school places a small number of pupils with two alternative education providers. The providers used by the school are Barnsley College and Action 2 Change.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with trustees, governors, senior leaders and middle leaders to discuss the school's work and its approach to the curriculum, pupil premium spending, behaviour and personal development.
- We checked the school's systems for vetting staff, and reviewed the single central record.

- We spoke to a range of staff, including support and administration staff, as well as recently and newly qualified teachers, who shared their views about the school. We also asked about their workload and what the school is doing to help members of staff cope with it.
- An inspector telephoned a parent to ascertain why they elected to educate their child at home instead of school.
- We reviewed minutes of governors' meetings and school policies.
- We reviewed Ofsted's own surveys for pupils, staff and parents to gauge opinions about the school and the support it gives young people.
- We undertook deep dives into the following subjects: English, mathematics, history and creative arts. This involved joint lesson visits with subject leaders, meeting with teachers and pupils, and discussions with leaders about curriculum planning and approaches to assessment. We also reviewed pupils' work.
- We carried out further lesson visits in addition to the deep dives to ascertain the school's approach to the curriculum as a whole.

### **Inspection team**

Colin Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Lawler	Ofsted Inspector
Jean Tarry	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Durand	Ofsted Inspector

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