



Boroughbridge High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121699
LEA North Yorkshire
Inspection number 281082
Inspection dates 1 December 2005 to 2 December 2005
Reporting inspector Ms Honoree Gordon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Wetherby Road
School category	Community		Boroughbridge
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		York, North Yorkshire YO51 9JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01423 323 540
Number on roll	690	Fax number	01423 324 353
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs H Fairwood
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Ms E Dixon

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 1 December 2005 - 2 December 2005	Inspection number 281082
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Boroughbridge High School is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school with performing arts specialism, situated in a rural market town. It educates 690 pupils aged 11 to 18. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment levels and come from a large number of primary schools. There are fewer pupils entitled to free school meals than usually found nationally and virtually no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds nor pupils with a first language other than English. The proportion of pupils with additional learning needs is in line with national figures, but below this in the sixth form. Few pupils have educational statements for their needs. Pupils come from relatively favoured backgrounds. The school population is stable, but a number of pupils join the school in Years 10 and 11. Attendance is satisfactory. The last inspection report had specified that standards be improved.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

There has been good improvement since the last inspection, noticeably in boys' attainment and in attendance. Standards have improved overall; they are now above national average in most subjects and well above in science. In the sixth form, standards have risen and are broadly average; pupils make satisfactory progress. Inspectors agree with the school that it provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, with some good aspects: pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive. However, pupils gain much more than that from their education at Boroughbridge High: there is certainly a 'positive energy and buzz throughout the school'. Pupils are confident and display very positive attitudes to school, citing the opportunities for performing arts as a major factor in this. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils appreciate the close-knit school community. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and the school works well in partnership with others. The curriculum is satisfactory; it meets most pupils' needs, but is not as good as the school claims. Pupils are prepared well with the basic skills for the next stage in their education, but have too few opportunities in Years 10 and 11 to further develop their information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematical skills across subjects. Pupils make progress in line with national expectations, but progress could be faster, especially in Years 10 and 11. Inspectors saw several good and some outstanding lessons, but all lessons are not yet of that standard. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is well led by the headteacher, who knows its strengths and weaknesses. However, it is too soon to see the impact of the new management teams on what pupils can achieve. The school offers good value for money and has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form is growing and developing. Students reach standards in line with national averages and make satisfactory progress. The school has introduced new subjects such as dance, psychology, media studies and critical thinking in order to better meet the needs of its growing numbers. The school acknowledges that this process of change is not yet complete. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good practice. The best teaching goes at a lively pace and fosters independent learning. Students understand very clearly how they can improve their performance and grow in confidence. Systems for tracking students' progress are good, but not all teachers use these sufficiently well. Students enjoy their studies and feel they are well-supported academically and personally. They feel that the more rigorous checks on progress and attendance are fair and in their best interests. The personal development of students is a strength. Students enthusiastically participate in many of the opportunities to enrich their studies, such as helping younger students, sports leadership, voluntary work and expeditions.

The sixth form is well led. The head of sixth form has a clear vision for its future development, including a pre-foundation programme in conjunction with university.

She has clearly evaluated the strengths of the sixth form and is focusing on improving teaching, but also on getting all the staff to use the set procedures for support and guidance in a more consistent way.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum further to provide better opportunities for pupils to use and develop their ICT and mathematics skills across all subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching to become more consistently good by sharing good practice more so that lessons are sufficiently challenging and meet all pupils' needs well.
- Further develop the competence of managers at all levels in self- evaluation processes, for example to analyse how groups of pupils are doing and to make better use of data when planning schemes of work and lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including in the sixth form. The standards pupils reach in tests and public examinations are good. Results are often better than the school's own, challenging targets. The results in tests at the end of Year 9 and at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) are good overall and consistently above national averages, especially in science where high numbers of pupils obtain top grades. The school tends to be stronger in Years 7 to 9 in the core subjects of science and mathematics, than in English. The school is making good efforts to address this. Mathematics standards at the end of Year 9 are improving, since more stability has returned to the department. English results have dropped, though remain broadly satisfactory and in line with national figures. Pupils enter school with around average attainment, though there are few very able pupils and some pupils have low literacy skills. All pupils make satisfactory progress. Vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs make good progress. Boys' attainment is better than girls'. Results for boys show considerable improvement at all stages. This is because the school has focused effectively on this. However, the overall rate of progress for all pupils in Years 10 to 11 is below that of similar schools, except in science. The school's analysis shows that GCSE results in 2005 were disappointing; this is related to the underachievement of a small number of disaffected pupils. Pupils progress well in basic skills, though there are too few opportunities to use these skills, especially ICT and mathematics, across a range of subjects. Opportunities in performing arts develop pupils' social skills well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is a strength. Their confidence, self-esteem and inter-personal skills are positively enhanced through an excellent range of opportunities, particularly in performing arts. Pupils behave well. They respond well

to the friendly atmosphere and they describe how much they value the help and support they get from their teachers. Pupils say that bullying is virtually non-existent and that because the school is small they all get on well together. Pupils of all ages are able to offer ideas, through the school council and through surveys, about many aspects of school life. Pupils contribute well to their community. They know that their ideas will be taken seriously, for example a pupil survey on the vending services resulted in more pupils taking up healthy options. Pupils' attitudes are good; being at school is a very positive experience. They are keen to learn and work hard, taking pride in their work. It is clear from lessons and discussions with pupils that they enjoy opportunities to take on responsibility and learn independently. Attendance is satisfactory, having improved in recent years. Good attendance is recognised and rewarded. The school pays attention to pupils' spiritual development, and the provision for their moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn much about the world around them through an extensive programme of visits, expeditions and other contacts. A thorough personal and social programme teaches them how to avoid risk-taking behaviours. Healthy eating is actively promoted, enhanced by the Healthy Schools' programme.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school is working hard to raise the quality of teaching consistently higher.

It accurately judges that teaching and learning are satisfactory, though inspectors saw some good and outstanding lessons. New teachers to the school have brought strong, vibrant teaching skills which pupils appreciate and this is improving the lessons. However, the sharing of this good practice is not sufficiently developed, as pupils confirm the inspectors' view that teaching quality varies. In the most effective lessons, teachers pace their lessons well and engage the pupils' attention. This maintains very good relationships and good learning results. In the weaker lessons, pupils are not sufficiently challenged nor do they take responsibility for their learning and so their interest drops. Lessons are soundly planned, but do not always draw on available performance data to prepare for and meet pupils' needs. Learning objectives are stated clearly in planning and shared with pupils; however, schemes of work are not sufficiently developed to fully support teachers. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils generally have work marked with helpful comments on how well they are doing. However, guidance on how to improve is not consistent across all subjects and only present in the better lessons. Good systems are in place for the diagnosis of and provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, broad and balanced and meets regulations. The school considers the curriculum to be good. It is true there have been many improvements

associated with performing arts status, for example, the provision for drama, dance and music. These are immensely popular with both boys and girls. Vocational subjects, such as catering and construction, allow flexibility to meet pupils' needs and there is some good provision for disaffected pupils. Early entry GCSEs in French, Spanish and history provide good challenge for able pupils. The school provides well for basic skills but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematics or ICT skills in other subjects. Time for ICT is minimal and teaching quality in Years 10 and 11 is inconsistent. Personal development is strong throughout, though pupils say that these lessons depend too much on whether teachers are enthusiastic enough. There is an outstanding range of well supported extra-curricular activities from debating to dance, which develop talents, teamwork and enterprise skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for. Every individual is treated with respect and dignity; in this school every pupil matters. The school celebrates their achievements and actively promotes equality. Pupils say they are well prepared for joining the school in Year 7. Older students receive appropriate advice when choosing options and careers. Staff know pupils well and communicate regularly with home. The school monitors the progress of individuals well. Many pupils can explain how they assess their own work in relation to their targets. Support for vulnerable students and for those with additional learning difficulties is good. As a result, these pupils make good progress. Pupils are targeted for extra support in their reviews and teaching assistants provide this effectively. Pupils feel that the school provides a safe and supportive environment for learning. They have a trusted adult to turn to should they feel troubled. Procedures for safeguarding children are firmly established and links with other agencies effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is good. She has clear ideas for improvement and has put structures and teams in place to deliver this, though it is too soon to see the full impact. Inspectors and pupils could see some improvements already in lessons, subject results and behaviour. In English, for example, pupils make satisfactory progress, but do not do as well as in other subjects; the school has made good efforts to tackle this and, as a result, English results went up in 2005. Sixth form numbers and standards have improved. The range of subjects now meet pupils' needs better. ICT facilities have improved, but the school does not review how ICT is delivered. The headteacher has used the many staff changes as an opportunity for a re-shuffle; as a result, she has been able to promote keen, able staff and new teachers have brought fresh ideas into the classroom. Staffing stability is returning, so the school can consolidate initiatives and share good practice in teaching more widely. The school works well in partnership with others and parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Pupils and parents can contribute their views on school policy. Governors hold the school to account well, though the requirement for collective

worship is only partly met. Senior managers monitor lessons and track individual pupils' progress well, but do not analyse sufficiently how groups do. Some middle managers, though not all, have begun to adapt their subject planning to encourage faster pupil progress. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, notably in boys' attainment, but also in attendance, sixth form provision and appropriate teaching strategies. The school offers good value for money, and is well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your contribution to the recent inspection at your school. We enjoyed our visit and wish to share with you our main findings.

We agree with the headteacher that your school provides a satisfactory education with a number of strengths, particularly in how well it cares, guides and supports you. It provides well for your personal development and well-being, including your social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Performing arts status contributes much to these very positive outcomes. We know you rate this aspect highly. We found you to be confident and positive young people who make the most of all that the school offers. The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent.

Your results in tests and examinations have improved since the last report and are now above national averages. In the sixth form results have also improved and are in line with national figures. Well done! This represents a lot of hard work on the part of you and your teachers. Overall, we feel you make progress as we would expect to find, but we feel that the rate of progress in Years 10 and 11 could be faster.

The headteacher and sixth form head lead well, but there are a lot of new people in posts of responsibility who need to work together longer before we can judge what difference they are making. We can see some good signs already though.

You told us that the quality of your lessons still varies too much. We did see some really good ones while we were there, so we are confident the school will continue to work on this to share good ideas more widely. They know this is a priority. We have asked also that the school look at how it can increase the opportunities in other lessons for you to use and develop your ICT and mathematical skills. Otherwise, we feel that the curriculum is satisfactory: it prepares you well for the next stage in your education and there are an interesting number of new subjects.