

Batley Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107767
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	287908
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Sara Morrissey HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School	566
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Alvy
Headteacher	Mr James Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Batley Field Hill Batley West Yorkshire WF17 0BJ
Telephone number	01924 326343
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Batley Business and Enterprise College is a small school for boys aged 11 to 16. It serves a district of Batley that includes areas of high social and economic disadvantage. A high number are eligible for free school meals. Pupils join the school from over 20 primary schools, with standards that are below average. A higher than average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Over two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school gained full service extended school status in 2004. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances that it reasonably might be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards and teaching and learning. The school provides inadequate value for money.

Standards attained by pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 are below average. Pupils' achievement has fallen over the last three years and is much lower than it should be given their relative starting points. Although there are examples of good teaching, assessment information is not used consistently by teachers to plan lessons that meet the needs of different learners. Furthermore, pupils' literacy skills are often weak and this slows their rate of progress over time. Individual education plans to support pupils with additional learning needs do not give clear and achievable targets for pupils so that they are unable to close gaps in their learning quickly enough and make the progress that they should.

The headteacher leads the school well and provides clear direction for all staff. He has clarified the roles of leaders and managers at all levels and raised their awareness of the strategies required to raise standards and achievement more effectively. Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses as a result of rigorous monitoring. However, evaluation is less well developed and so plans for school improvement are not precise enough. A range of strategies has been introduced to target underperformance but these measures are in the early stages of development and it is too soon to measure their impact on raising achievement and standards. Governors monitor the work of the school appropriately and play an increasing role in holding it to account.

The school is rightly proud of its inclusive ethos. The good care, guidance and support provided by a large team of staff enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their personal development and well-being. Pupils feel that their views are listened to and taken into account. The great majority feel safe in school and think that behaviour has improved so that their lessons are disrupted less. Attendance has improved as a result of effective work by staff in partnership with external agencies and is satisfactory overall. Specialist status in business and enterprise has increased links with the wider community and the full service extended school status has strengthened good partnerships with parents and other stakeholders. Staff are committed and share the headteacher's vision for the school. They work well together as a team. Secure foundations have been laid for the future and the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve literacy skills to help accelerate the pace of pupils' progress and raise achievement.
- Use assessment information more precisely to plan lessons that match the needs of different groups of learners.
- Ensure that all pupils with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities have clear, relevant and achievable targets for learning and/or behaviour.
- Improve the quality of evaluation by senior and middle leaders in order to build on strengths and prioritise areas for improvement more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards attained by pupils are below average at both Key Stage 3 and 4. Test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3 have fluctuated over the last three years, but no trend of improvement has been established. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades in GCSE examinations has risen and targets were exceeded in 2006. However, this masks wide variations in the performance between different subjects and groups of learners. For example, the number of boys who attained five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics fell in 2006 and was well below the national average.

Pupils do not make enough progress relative to their starting points when they join the school. A high proportion has weak literacy skills, which slows their progress across the curriculum. Furthermore, gifted and talented pupils are not all challenged sufficiently to enable them to extend their learning and achieve their full potential. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school has been unable to reverse a three-year decline in achievement by pupils leaving at the end of Year 11.

Since September 2006, the school has taken positive steps to tackle the wide variation in achievement of different groups of learners, but it is too early to measure the impact of these actions. For example, a more rigorous system for tracking progress has enabled pupils who are underachieving to be more swiftly identified, but strategies to tackle the concerns raised are in the early stages of development. Actions taken to improve literacy skills are beginning to have a positive impact on targeted groups of pupils, for example in improving reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour and attitudes in lessons are satisfactory and pupils are generally respectful towards staff and each other. However, in some lessons, pupils are too noisy and do not take sufficient notice of what the teacher is saying. This reduces the progress which they make. Pupils report that the amount of bullying has been reduced because of effective interventions by the headteacher. In particular, they value the focus by teachers, on rewarding good effort and attitudes. The number of exclusions has declined because of the good provision for disaffected students. This includes a well managed and effective seclusion room. Consequently, the school has been successful in re-engaging pupils who have experienced difficulties in other educational settings. Interventions such as the use of CCTV cameras and having a community police officer on site ensure that the great majority of pupils feel safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school has implemented a variety of strategies to improve attendance. However, attendance is still below average because a minority of pupils do not attend regularly and some pupils take family holidays during term time. Most pupils respond well to the school's emphasis on the importance of exercise and a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community. For example, they held a sponsored walk and a 'cake bake' to raise funds for the Kashmiri earthquake victims. Opportunities such as the business pilot course prepare pupils well for the world of work. However, pupils' weak literacy skills are detrimental to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the time they leave school. Weak literacy skills, of a high proportion of pupils, are not consistently tackled by teachers across the curriculum and act as a barrier to learning. Individual learning plans do not provide clear, relevant and achievable targets for pupils with additional learning needs. New arrangements for tracking progress have provided teachers with more accurate information about pupils in their teaching groups. However, teachers do not all use this information precisely enough to plan lessons that match the needs of different groups of learners.

Lesson observations during the inspection confirm that good practice exists in school. Where teaching is good, teachers show good subject knowledge, use questioning well to encourage pupils' thinking skills and involve them in discussion. Opportunities for independent and group work enable pupils to participate actively in their learning. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with statements for their special educational needs. In less effective lessons, teachers dominate too much and activities do not match the diverse range of needs of all pupils. Consequently, they are unable to close gaps in knowledge and skills quickly enough and do not make as much progress as they could.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good features. Access to information and communication technology, has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the provision of interactive whiteboards. Although there is no discrete provision in Key Stage 4 outside the option choice, opportunities for supporting pupils' learning are highlighted in subject schemes of work. Citizenship is well integrated into the personal, health, social and careers education scheme and highlighted across the curriculum. The school is taking appropriate steps to improve provision of core physical education in Key Stage 4. The school liaises well with other schools and colleges to provide vocational courses for those pupils whose needs lie outside a full GCSE pathway. A small group of more vulnerable Year 7 pupils follow an effective separate curriculum designed to ease their transition into a secondary school environment. The school's specialist status as a business and enterprise college has had a positive impact on technical resources and effective links have been established with business and industry, as well as with other similar specialist status schools. Subject departments have indicated how they can contribute to enterprise and work-related education, enabling over 90 different 'special events' to take place in and out of lessons over the year, in addition to scheduled enterprise days. Pupils speak highly of an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and enrichments, with high rates of participation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and a strength of the school. Appropriate checks are made on adults working in the school and risk assessments and safety checks are in place. Good provision in school and strong links with a variety of outside agencies ensure

that vulnerable pupils, such as those who are in public care, are well supported. Pupils with more complex needs are fully included in lessons because of the sensitive support that they are given by the educational teaching assistants. Parents speak positively about the care shown to their children who experience particular problems. However, targets in the individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are too broad and not sufficiently well matched to their particular needs. Pupils are given satisfactory academic guidance about what levels they are working at and how they might improve further. Good transition arrangements, including mentoring by older pupils, enable pupils to make a confident start in Year 7. Pupils are prepared well for the move to college or the world of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides effective leadership and is a visible presence around the school. He has communicated a clear direction centred upon the aim to 'improve opportunities for learners and raise standards of attainment'. He has been successful in improving the school's ethos and establishing a positive climate for learning. Pupils report that behaviour has improved as a result of more consistently followed procedures.

The headteacher has restructured and clarified the roles of senior leaders. They support him well and provide satisfactory leadership and management of their key areas of responsibility. The quality of middle leaders is variable. Most are clear about their responsibilities and have valued and benefited from targeted support from the local authority to improve their leadership skills. The school has accurately identified strengths and weaknesses through regular monitoring by senior and middle leaders. However, they do not all evaluate rigorously enough the impact of actions taken to inform strategic planning. Some outcomes of evaluation are too generous. As a result improvement plans are not all precise enough to accelerate the pace of change and raise achievement and standards quickly enough.

Governors provide suitable support and challenge. Links with external agencies are positive and have contributed well to the good care and support to vulnerable pupils, especially those who join at times other than at the start of the year. The manager of the specialist college provides satisfactory leadership and has extended links with the community and local businesses to improve the quality of provision.

The headteacher and senior team have united the staff and morale has improved. Teachers have appreciated the range of training opportunities made available to them and most understand what needs to be done to raise achievement. They are committed and determined to take the necessary steps to accelerate progress towards challenging targets. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Batley Business and Enterprise College, Batley, WF17 0BJ

Thank you for welcoming us during our recent inspection. We appreciated the time we were able to spend talking to you about your work and general life at your school. I have summarised our main findings below.

We found that Mr Ryan and all the staff have worked hard to ensure that you are well supported and guided throughout your time at school. Some of you told us that behaviour has improved because everyone understands better what is expected of them and a number of your parents told us how much they appreciate the care that is shown to you if you have problems. However, many of you still do not do as well as you should in exams and tests. Your teachers work hard to help you learn, but their plans do not enable all of you to make the progress over time that will help you to achieve your targets. Some of you told us that you enjoy lessons, especially when work is practical and where you can become actively involved in your learning, but this does not happen often enough. Also, a small number of you do not attend school regularly and this also affects your learning. Senior staff have put into place a number of activities to help improve your learning further, but it is too early to measure whether they are working effectively. We have identified the following areas for the school to focus on to raise achievement. These are to:

- teach you the skills, especially in reading and writing, that will help you to learn more quickly and make better progress;
- plan lessons, using assessment information, that match your different needs more accurately;
- ensure that targets set for students with particular learning needs will help them overcome problems with learning or behaviour.

We have also asked Mr Ryan to look carefully at what is working well in school and what might be improved further to help plan better for the future success of the school.

Inspectors will visit again during the next year to see how the school is getting on with its work. You have an important part to play by coming to school regularly, working hard and continuing to behave well so that you can all make good progress in your learning.