



Bingley Grammar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107439
Local Authority Bradford
Inspection number 298435
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Josephine Nowacki HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Keighley Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Bingley
Age range of pupils	11–18		West Yorkshire BD16 2RS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01274 807700
Number on roll (school)	1558	Fax number	01274 510136
Number on roll (6th form)	371	Chair	Dr J Holdgate
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mr Chris Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	6–7 December 2006	298435

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Bingley Grammar school is much bigger than other comprehensive schools. The social and economic background of its students is above average. The vast majority of students are of White British origin and the percentage of students who do not speak English as their first language is low compared with the national average. The number of students identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much lower than in similar schools. Approximately 2% of students have statements of special educational needs which is about average. Attainment on entry to the school is high. Student turnover is low. The school has had specialist Business and Enterprise status since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bingley Grammar School is a satisfactory and improving school. In 2005, most students made satisfactory progress in mathematics and science in Key Stage 3. In English, students underachieved. Progress in Key Stage 4 in 2005 was average for most students. In 2006, standards fell across both key stages, except for an improvement in English for Year 9. Prompt action was taken to tackle underachievement and strategies, including a revised timetable to increase teaching time and closer monitoring of students' progress, were put in place. As a result, reliable school data indicate that students are on track to achieve their targets for 2007. Standards are above average and achievement is broadly satisfactory. Attendance is very good. Both in lessons and around the school students behave well. Any unacceptable behaviour is well-managed. In a few cases, staff are too punitive in dealing with minor behaviour issues.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of good and outstanding practice but too much teaching fails to engage all learners. Lessons are generally well planned, but there is insufficient emphasis on meeting the needs of all abilities within the group and developing good learning skills. Senior leaders and some middle managers are aware of the weaknesses in teaching and learning and are prepared to both celebrate good practice and take action where it is needed to improve.

Revised arrangements for tracking and monitoring students' progress are in place and many students know their targets. However, assessment practices are inconsistent and students do not always know what they need to do to improve. Students receive high quality pastoral care and say they feel safe and secure. A significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the way the school responds to their queries and concerns, particularly relating to their children's progress.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, but the headteacher, supported by his senior leaders, provides good leadership. The leadership team is new; many of them were appointed in September 2006 and the headteacher has been in post since April. However, they have quickly established themselves and the headteacher has set a clear direction for the school; there is renewed optimism and staff morale is improving. The school knows itself well but there are weaknesses in the skills of some subject leaders and not all play a full part in improving teaching, learning and assessment.

Systems have been introduced, linked to detailed action plans, to improve areas of weakness and to provide a secure basis for future improvement. Data is used well at senior level and there are robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluating actions taken; this provides a sound basis for further improvement. Governors carry out their duties effectively. The school rightly judges that its capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is well led and managed. It is cost effective. The number of students who continue into the sixth form from Year 11 is high and it attracts an increasing number of students from other secondary schools. The school has developed good relations with local colleges to offer a wide range of academic courses. Students enter the sixth form with average levels of attainment. They achieve well because they are set clear targets, which are monitored regularly, have good attitudes to their own learning and receive good care and guidance. Attendance is good. Almost all students complete their courses. A high proportion of students moves on to higher education or employment at the end of their course.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching in order to raise standards in the classroom and improve achievement.
- Ensure that good practice in student assessment is implemented rigorously across all departments.
- Strengthen the quality of middle management so that their work has a definite impact on standards in every classroom.
- Improve communication with parents and carers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are above average. Students make satisfactory progress overall but, at both key stages, the amount of progress varies between subjects.

When students enter the school in Year 7, their standards are above average. From 2003–05, in Key stage 3 they made satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. However, in English students made less progress than they should. In 2006 test results fell for Year 9 students in mathematics and science, but they improved in English.

At the end of Key Stage 4, the percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE was well above the national average in 2004 and 2005. However, the proportion of students gaining higher grades dropped in 2006, although it remained above national average. The overall progress that students make is satisfactory, although, as in Key Stage 3, there is variation between subjects. In music and religious studies students do well, but achievement in English, mathematics and science is only satisfactory.

The school recognises the urgent need to improve test and examination results, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and, as a result of thorough evaluation, has made a number of important changes. Longstanding difficulties with timetabling and student grouping have been resolved and a newly established system of assessment and tracking is beginning to have an impact. Teacher

assessments of standards in the current Year 9 indicate better progress towards targets in 2007. On the basis of coursework already completed and recent examinations in Year 11, the school is convincingly predicting GCSE results that will match demanding but realistic targets. In observed lessons, inspectors judged progress to be satisfactory overall.

Achievement and standards in the sixth form are good. Exam results are above average and many students make better than expected progress based on their GCSE scores.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The personal development and well-being of students is satisfactory with some good features. Students say that they feel safe and secure. Most students said that they think this is a good school in which they are treated with respect and where they make many new friends. Students' attendance and their behaviour are good and often very good. The school's new behaviour policy is usually applied sensibly and, as a result, the percentage of both internal and external student exclusions has significantly declined. However, for issues such as those to do with uniform, the discipline meted out by some staff is often out of proportion to the offence.

In most lessons seen, students demonstrated positive attitudes but evidence of actual pupil enjoyment in the classroom was patchy because too much teaching failed to engage their interest.

The spiritual and cultural development of students is not as strong as that for moral and social development and overall, it is satisfactory. Some students speak with authority about the benefits of healthy eating, the good choices available in the restaurant and regular exercise although they do not always follow this practice. The school council meets regularly to address a range of issues but some students feel that the council is dominated too much by sixth form students and that their representations are not always heard.

Older students including the sixth form have a suitable range of opportunities to engage in work experience projects which support their future economic well-being. Personal development and well-being in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students are well supported but do not have sufficient opportunities to contribute to the life of the rest of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Through its monitoring programme the school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning, which are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form. There is some outstanding teaching, but too much of the satisfactory teaching fails to fully capture the interests of the students or provide sufficiently for students of different abilities. The school has identified issues in the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science, but has taken action that is beginning to improve standards in these subjects. The school has improved the way teachers are using assessment data. All students are set personal targets in each subject and some faculties, such as humanities, consistently mark assignments against clear criteria. In the best examples marking refers directly to levels of achievement and students are given guidance on how to improve. However, the use of targets is not consistent across the curriculum and students report that marking is not always helpful to them. The frequency of homework is also inconsistent with differences between teachers as to what is set. The school has a vibrant training programme to improve the quality of teaching through the establishment of its Bingley Learning Team. This programme is helping teachers focus on the quality of learning for students. A further innovative development is the training of students to act as learning monitors to provide feedback on the quality of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Recent changes have improved the quality of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. The introduction of four alternative pathways has widened the provision of courses to more accurately meet the needs of the students by providing vocational and work-related options. A student on a part-time placement at the local college to study building construction was enthusiastic about the work he was doing. However, the option blocks are too rigid at the moment meaning that some students find their choice of vocational courses restricted. The sixth form provides a good range of traditional advanced level courses, but too little for students who would benefit from vocational or lower level courses. The school is aware of the issues in the sixth form and main school. It is working to achieve more flexibility and links to its new pathways. The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for students to take part in clubs and study classes after school. Competitive sport clubs attract large numbers of students and help to develop healthy lifestyles. The school's new Business and Enterprise specialism is providing enhanced opportunities for students to gain experience of economic and work place skills. Plans are well defined, but are too new to have had a significant impact on students' understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The care, guidance and support to students are satisfactory with some good features. Pastoral support and welfare provision are of a high quality, particularly for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for those who are vulnerable. The school works well with an extensive range of external agencies and specialist visitors to further enhance their care for students. Provision for health and safety, child protection and staff training are all in place.

A significant number of parents feel that the school does not seek or listen to the views of their children often enough. Many parents are dissatisfied with the way the school responds to their concerns. The school is aware of this and recognises more needs to be done to improve overall communications with parents and carers.

Although students are aware of and work towards short-term targets, the use of assessment data to set targets and monitor students' progress is in its early stages of development. It is not yet fully embedded in all departments, but where it is, the impact is seen in rising standards. In the sixth form, guidance and support are good. Systems for target-setting and monitoring of students' progress are well established and rigorous. Sixth form students receive good information about progression into further and higher education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features. The good leadership of the headteacher has been successful in setting a clear direction for the school. Following a period of instability and high staff turnover, the culture of the school is changing, expectations have been raised and staff morale is high. Ably supported by his senior leaders, the headteacher has worked with all the staff to improve the performance of the school in a very short space of time. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are now much more rigorous and students are beginning to reach more challenging targets. The school has a clear programme for improvement and the performance of students, in mathematics and science in particular, is at the heart of the school's improvement planning.

Subject leaders say they feel energised because of their increasing involvement in the decision making at all levels. The quality of leadership and management at subject level is uneven but it has greatly improved, particularly in the use and analysis of data and other information to evaluate the work in their areas. The school is aware of this and understands its strengths and weaknesses as well as how to tackle them. The governing body is involved in the life of the school. They are aware of the issues to improve and are beginning to monitor standards and achievement in order to hold the

school to account. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and have been successful in driving up standards and achievement. This is because of leaders' clear focus and high expectations. Standards and achievement are good in most subjects and effective systems are beginning to improve the performance in less successful areas.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
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?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	2
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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school. We appreciated the time many of you gave to talk with us and to let us know your views. The purpose of our visit was to find out what your school does well and the areas that need to improve.

- Most of you make satisfactory progress, but we think you should do better than this. The school is already working hard to help you to do this.
- We were impressed with your behaviour and your attendance which are both good. However, many of you, and your parents, feel that some teachers are a bit too harsh when you do something like forget to get your planners signed or have something wrong with your uniform. We've asked the school to look into this.
- Some of your lessons are really good and keep you interested so that you learn well. In other lessons, we don't think you are given enough to do to help you to achieve well.
- The school cares very well for you and gives you good advice and guidance, but sometimes they don't always listen to your views. We've asked the school to provide more opportunities for you to express your views.
- Many of you know your targets, but not all of you know how to achieve them. We've asked the school to give you more information about how to improve your work so that you can reach your targets.