

Barlby High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121708
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	340006
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Bowles HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	686
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Gradwell
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Scott
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2006
School address	York Road Barlby Selby YO8 5JP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors held meetings with members of the interim executive board, the School Improvement Partner, staff, groups of students and, talked informally to some parents attending an evening event. They observed 33 lessons, and looked at behaviour, progress and attendance records, policies and minutes of meetings, letters to parents, as well as 113 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 100 student questionnaires and 18 staff questionnaires.

- the quality of learning and progress of students with different levels of prior attainment - at both key stages - to determine whether teaching and the curriculum are sufficiently challenging, engaging and effective to raise standards and improve achievement
- the participation of more potentially vulnerable students in lessons and the wider life of the school, and their achievement in academic and other respects, to determine the effectiveness of provision
- attendance, punctuality, behaviour, skills and attitudes demonstrated by students, to evaluate the effectiveness of care, guidance and support
- how far the drive for improvement has involved and influenced staff and students and been felt by parents and carers, to determine the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Information about the school

Barlby High School serves Barlby and seven neighbouring villages in a mainly rural area. Just under two thirds of students come to school each day by bus. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is a little above the national average and the school has a resource base for a small number of students with dyslexia. The school's population is largely White British. At present the school has eight looked after children and five from a Traveller background. Since September 2004, Barlby High School has been a specialist sports college. A new headteacher took up post in September 2009. Having issued the governing body with a warning notice in October 2009, the local authority established an interim executive board which began its work in January 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the students' standards of attainment.

Barlby High School is a small and supportive school, well liked by its students, parents and carers. Students speak warmly about learning they have enjoyed, the friendliness of school and the helpfulness of adults. In many respects, outcomes for the students are satisfactory, but standards of attainment have declined over the past two years. The school has recently acted on this. A new headteacher and senior team have identified weaknesses with bracing honesty and triggered significant changes to help raise attainment. They have worked with the staff to overhaul the curriculum and how it is taught. These changes are having a positive effect on students' attitudes to learning and their progress. However, the school is not providing an adequate education because improvements are not embedded. Students' progress is satisfactory, but not strong enough to raise standards above a broadly average level. Teachers do not always clearly guide students about how they can improve their work and reach their personal targets. The added challenge of a budget deficit limits the school's ability to fill vacancies with permanent staff, a problem which particularly affects mathematics. Although senior and middle leaders are doing much to ensure stable and effective teaching for all, the improvement in students' progress in mathematics is weaker than in other core subjects. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Its leaders have evaluated its work rigorously, in particular with regard to teaching, learning and the curriculum. These have improved as a result of the rigorous monitoring and effective action to tackle weaknesses, although a small proportion of teaching remains unsatisfactory. Staff share the leaders' clear ambition to raise standards of attainment. The actions taken have had an early and positive effect on students' attitudes and progress, although some weaknesses remain.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of attainment and accelerate progress, by ensuring all teachers use accurate day-to-day assessment of what students have learned in order to give them clear guidance on what they need to do next.
- Eliminate inadequate teaching and increase the proportion of teaching which is good, by ensuring that effective approaches to teaching and assessment are used

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consistently well by October 2010.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Standards of attainment have been too low for the past two years, because in the past the curriculum has not provided well for the needs of the full range of students and teaching has not promoted high expectations for all. Teachers' predictions for GCSE proved overoptimistic last year. Less than half of Year 11 had made the expected progress in mathematics and English by the time they left. Some students, mainly boys, achieved much less than might reasonably be expected. The percentage of A* to C grade passes was below average in many subjects. Students in Year 9 also did not make the progress that they should have from their starting points.

Currently, there are indications that students across the age range are making satisfactory progress, as a result of changes introduced since September 2009. This is true for those who started with lower or higher prior attainment and includes all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some improvement in learning and progress is reflected in the school's thorough and regular assessments and in the work sampled by inspectors. Learning in nearly all lessons observed was at least satisfactory, and in some it was good. However, the pace of improvement varies from one classroom to another. In some cases this is linked to lack of stability in teaching, as in the case of mathematics, where there are two vacancies and students' progress is weaker than in the other core subjects.

In other respects, outcomes for students are all satisfactory. Students behaved well in lessons, although some show immaturity at other times. Students feel safe. A few younger ones have experienced unkindness by some older students, but said problems have generally been sorted out with the help of staff. In this specialist sports college about half the students take advantage of school meals, which offer a healthy selection. Students know how to obtain information and advice about health topics. Over half of the students participate in extra sports activities, which are designed in consultation with them. Even so, some unhealthy habits persist, and only half the pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages them to be healthy. The school places an increasing emphasis on work-related learning, but students' basic workplace skills, although satisfactory, are limited by their past underachievement. Students' attendance dipped last year, but has now been restored to an average level. Students understand and see the need for the changes being made in school, which staff discuss frankly with them. As they showed at the Celebration Evening during the inspection, the students respond positively to the increased opportunities to take on responsibility. The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is satisfactory. In their words and actions, most students show tolerance and consideration for others. They are interested in the wider world, and when lessons provide moments of excitement and reflection, their responses are sensitive.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Inspection evidence confirmed the school's evaluations of the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Care, guidance and support have good features, but the outcomes for students do not fully support the school's view that they have a good impact.

New courses and qualifications, better matched to students' interests and aptitudes, have done much this year to re-engage a substantial group which had underachieved in the past. This has rapidly improved learning and progress in Years 10 and 11 to a satisfactory level. Thorough monitoring of students' progress and of the quality of teaching, including the work of supply teachers, has led to higher expectations. Improvements in teaching have also lifted learning and progress, although teaching is not consistently good enough to make up for past underachievement. In the good lessons seen, relationships were strong and teachers made sure that students' different needs were met. Skilful questioning not only checked students' progress, but stretched them to reach higher levels. As a result, learning was enjoyed, including by some more potentially vulnerable students. These qualities were, however, not seen in all classrooms. Some lessons failed to challenge all students and this occasionally led to a lack of application to the task or even disruptive behaviour. Teachers' use of assessment is overall less well developed than their teaching: although examples of good marking and feedback to students were seen, these too often failed to explain to students the next steps they need to take.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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There are strengths in the school's generally satisfactory provision of care, guidance and support. Achievement leaders are well-focused on their roles to support progress and are in regular communication with parents or carers and other agencies to help students keep on track. The school carefully checks how well different groups of students attend and participate in the wider life of the school and adjusts provision to be more inclusive. Students feel well prepared for further education and employment, and the support for transition into the school is improving. The Children's Services Coordinator has had an outstanding impact on the confidence of some very vulnerable children. However, there is scope for the school to help its students achieve better outcomes. For example, the monitoring of the progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not always effective. The school is improving communication with parents and carers, yet a significant minority of those who offered their views did not feel that they were well supported by the school to help their children learn. Extra-curricular activities are better developed in sport than other areas.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher and senior leadership team have left students, staff and parents in no doubt about how standards are expected to rise. Their determined implementation of improvement plans has had an early and positive impact on the school this year, although weaknesses remain. Students say they like the warm but firm influence of senior leaders and the stronger emphasis on achieving personal targets. Middle leaders are much more accountable for performance and say they are well-supported to make improvements in their areas, although some have limited experience in this and their impact on the quality of subject teaching and assessment is mixed. Staff understand the higher professional expectations set and are striving to meet them, for example, by working in pairs to refine their teaching. They have good opportunities to contribute to new developments in teaching and in the curriculum. The headteacher is keeping parents and carers informed about policies and their children's progress. While some parents and carers are very pleased with recent developments, not all feel that communication meets their preferences, and some are understandably cautious about changes.

The school is making full use of support for improvement provided by the local authority, National Support School and the School Improvement Partner. The recently

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established interim executive board includes a suitable range of expertise and members meet regularly. The board is realistic about the challenges faced by the school and has put in place systems to support and question the school's leaders. The management of resources is carefully monitored. Board members fulfil their statutory duties.

Arrangements for safeguarding students meet current requirements, including training staff on child protection. Inspection evidence indicated that the school takes reasonable steps to manage risks, such as those associated with the school's open site.

With the introduction of new tracking systems and clearer lines of accountability, monitoring the effect of strategies on different groups of students is becoming a strength. The specialism in sports is having a positive effect across the school, for example, by enriching revision opportunities and by enabling twenty students to contribute to the local community as Junior Sports Leaders. The school's partnerships with Selby College, the local education business partnership, other children's services and schools have had an increasingly positive impact. From a low base, the leaders have begun to promote community cohesion, by making links with schools in contrasting communities. In this respect, as in others, it is too early to see solid and significant impact, but a promising start has been made.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers are pleased with their child's experience at school. Some wrote to say how impressed they are with the recent changes, while others are not yet convinced about improvements. Some parents and carers are

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concerned about the way in which the school keeps them informed, responds to their concerns and helps them to support their child's progress. Others have noticed an improvement in the way the school communicates with them. Inspectors think this may be to do with new systems settling in. They found that new systems are helping students to understand their targets and progress, although there is room to improve communication with students about what they need to do next to reach their personal targets, and this may be done in ways which enables parents and carers to help more. A small proportion of parents and carers are concerned about how effectively the school tackles unacceptable behaviour, including disruption in lessons and bullying. Most students say that they feel safe, that incidents are dealt with and that discipline is working better than in the past. The behaviour seen during the inspection was generally satisfactory. Inspectors found that any issues are handled effectively, for example, by removing students from lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barlby High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 686 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	22	122	67	20	11	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	15	132	73	12	7	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	13	123	68	25	14	9	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	20	116	64	21	12	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	16	9	124	68	25	14	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	9	94	52	54	30	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	5	135	74	30	16	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	8	127	70	21	12	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	14	116	64	29	16	5	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	12	101	55	29	16	11	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	6	107	59	38	21	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	20	11	116	64	15	8	6	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	16	114	63	28	15	5	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Barlby High School, Selby, YO8 5JP

Thank you for being so welcoming when we inspected your school. It was a pleasure to meet you, join your lessons and hear your views. We understand why so many of you and your parents and carers like your school. There is much that it does that has a positive effect on you, and on many of the measures we apply – for example, your attendance – your school compares satisfactorily with other schools. However, attainment in national tests and examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 has been too low for the past two years. For this reason the school has been given a 'notice to improve'. This means inspectors will come back to check whether the school has advanced and whether you are achieving as well as you should.

It is clear that the school is going through a period of change under a new headteacher. You told us plainly that you like most of the changes. This year, the curriculum offers a range of subject choices that more of you enjoy. Because discipline is firm and lessons are better at helping all of you to make progress, you enjoy learning more. Because you have a better understanding of your personal targets and know how far you have got towards reaching them, you are keener to succeed. As a result of all this, you are making satisfactory progress, but there is room for further improvement if standards are really going to rise. At the moment, progress is weaker in some subjects than others; it is, for example, weaker in mathematics than English or science. This is because, though some lessons go really well, others do not. Marking and feedback do not always help you to do better.

Most parents who contacted us are pleased with the school. Some wrote to say how impressed they are with the recent changes, while others are not yet convinced. Some would like the school to keep them better informed, respond to their concerns and help them support your progress. We think more could be done to help you understand what you need to do next to reach your personal targets, and this may assist your parents to help you, too. A few parents are concerned about how effectively the school tackles unacceptable behaviour, including disruption in lessons and bullying. The behaviour seen during the inspection was generally satisfactory. Any issues are handled effectively, for example, by removing misbehaving students from lessons. You told us that incidents

are dealt with and that discipline is working better than in the past, and we agree.

We have made two recommendations.

- Raise standards of attainment and accelerate progress, by ensuring all teachers carefully check what you have learned and clearly explain what you need to do next.
- Eliminate the inadequate teaching and increase the proportion of teaching which is good.

You all have a big part to play in this. Good teaching needs good learners: and good marking only works if students do something about what is said to them.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Bowles

Her Majesty's Inspector

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