

Brighouse High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136604
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	395335
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Sally Kenyon HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,384
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Jones
Headteacher	Elizabeth Cresswell
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
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Additional inspector
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This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 44 teachers in 45 lessons. They saw a broad range of lessons through eight learning walks. They held meetings with groups of students, school leaders, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the five responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, scrutinised books and looked at a range of documentation including records for behaviour and safeguarding, policies and school improvement planning. Inspectors took account of the views of students, staff and 502 parents and carers through the parental questionnaires.

Information about the school

Brighouse High School is a much larger than average, mixed 11 to 18 school in West Yorkshire. It holds specialisms in business, enterprise and applied learning. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is low. The percentage of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school hosts a base run by the local authority for nine visually impaired students. Since the previous inspection the school has been awarded the Matrix award for Careers Education, has been a Leading Edge and Gaining Ground partner school to support other schools. The school is now an academy under the academy converter programme.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Brighthouse High School is a truly comprehensive and good school. There is a core of good and outstanding teaching which enables students to make good progress across a range of subjects. However, some satisfactory teaching remains. The school is not yet outstanding because not all students make as much progress as they could in all subjects.
- Students enter the school with broadly average attainment and leave above average. Progress in mathematics dipped last year but the school has put effective measures in place for this year and consequently progress has accelerated. More-able students make good progress when teaching is skilfully designed to harness their intellect, however, there remains inconsistency in planning for their needs.
- The sixth form is good. The school has rightly focused its efforts on improving achievement at Key Stage 5 since the previous inspection to good effect. Students achieve well and are highly positive about their experiences. The large majority of Year 11 students now choose to stay on.
- The quality of teaching is good. The best teaching secures rapid progress through forensically planned activities to challenge and inspire all abilities. Students are able to assess their own progress in these lessons because assessment criteria are very clearly focused and explained.
- Behaviour around the school site is orderly and students are typically considerate and polite. In lessons inspectors saw some examples of outstanding behaviour when teaching permitted and otherwise mainly good. Some satisfactory behaviour was seen when lesson planning did not account for individual needs.
- Leaders and managers have continued to secure improvements since the previous inspection. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and now provides well-organised routes for different abilities. Systems for self-evaluation, monitoring and review are in place resulting in accurate identification of some areas for improvement. However, opportunities are missed to hold all leaders fully accountable through performance management.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, so that it is significantly above the national average by:
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently well planned to meet the needs of all students, particularly the more-able
 - further developing literacy across the curriculum
 - embedding good practice in assessment and marking.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring and evaluation at all levels by:
 - ensuring that all leaders and managers are held fully accountable for setting challenging targets and raising achievement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Most students are committed learners who enjoy working collaboratively to explore ideas. They are generally keen to learn and contribute willingly in most lessons. In the many lessons where teaching is good or outstanding, students thoroughly enjoy their learning, contribute maturely to discussions and make good progress. As one parent commented, 'I am extremely happy with how well my daughter is doing at the school, so much so that my youngest daughter will no longer be sitting the grammar school test – this school will be our first choice.'

Occasionally, however, students' interest wanes when teaching is less demanding or does not engage them fully; consequently, progress slows. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work although this deteriorates sometimes when teachers' expectations are too low or literacy needs are not supported as well as they might be.

From broadly average starting points, students make good progress. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 11 and is improving securely because of changes to the curriculum, refinements to examination entries, increasingly challenging targets and more rigorous tracking of students' progress. The school is effectively tackling performance in a few subjects such as English literature and information and communication technology. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics has risen steadily over the last three years, and is above the national average. Data presented by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence show that the rate of improvement is gathering pace securely and rapidly and the proportion of students leaving with five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, will most likely be significantly above the national average.

The school recognises that the proportion of students attaining A* or A grades at GCSE is an area for improvement. Higher targets and more rigorous tracking are tackling this effectively. Previous gaps in attainment between boys and girls and between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other students are closing at a fast and secure rate. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, including those in the visual impairment unit also achieve well because of the effective support they receive.

Achievement in the sixth form is good. Sixth form students are highly committed to their studies and work well independently. Students join the sixth form with GCSE levels that are generally below those normally expected because of the school's 'open-entry' policy and because some more-able students choose to continue their studies at a local sixth form college, although the number choosing this option is reducing. Students make good progress overall, especially in Year 13, where attainment at A level is average and improving.

Quality of teaching

The majority of teaching seen was good or better. Students show acute enjoyment and progress when teaching is cleverly designed to inspire them. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson about Nazi Germany students compared photographs of two boys and then probed their thinking further with questions such as 'what does it mean to be Jewish?' and 'what do you understand by racism?'. Students expanded their literacy skills through a range of key words such as anti-Semitism, challenged their own beliefs and values concerning prejudice and discrimination and were so entranced by the subject that they could do nothing but learn, exceptionally well. They learned independently, skilfully guided by the teacher's meticulous deconstruction of the topic into achievable steps with clear assessment criteria.

Students were observed making excellent progress in a Year 11 business studies revision lesson where they confidently articulated the effects of interest rates on businesses. They had a very good grasp of difficult concepts and through, highly tailored learning resources and strong classroom organisation. Groups circulated the room recalling the wealth of knowledge they had accrued over the past two years indicating highly effective teaching over time.

Teaching of students who are disabled or those who have special educational needs is largely good. Provision is strong for those with visual impairments and creative strategies are used to strengthen skills such as drumming lessons to improve coordination. Some highly effective individual and small group work supporting literacy needs was observed in the nurture room. However, while some good and outstanding support for literacy needs was seen, provision across the curriculum is varied.

Most parents and carers feel that their child is well taught and make good progress at school and on the whole, inspectors agreed. However, progress slows when little account has been taken of students' abilities and learning needs resulting in a lack of clearly stepped assessment criteria. Not all lessons provide basic literacy support in the form of writing frames and keywords which has a negative impact on progress for students of all abilities.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The very large majority of parents and carers feel that behaviour is good. However, a few parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire raised concerns that behaviour occasionally interrupts learning. Inspectors followed up these concerns with the school and students. The large majority of behaviour seen in lessons was good and is outstanding when students are able to make a strong contribution to their learning. However, when teaching is less engaging behaviour is passive and occasionally students are disengaged from their

learning. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that behaviour is on the whole good over time, too.

There is a programme in place to raise awareness of the different forms of bullying. Most parents and carers feel that bullying is dealt with effectively with some parents, carers and students praising the way the school had tackled incidents of bullying. Conversely, others expressed concern that it is not tackled rigorously or swiftly enough. The very large majority of students who responded to the questionnaire feel that behaviour is good and bullying dealt with effectively. Inspectors found policies and procedures in place to effectively manage behaviour and prevent bullying.

This is a very inclusive school. Year 11 prefects are attached to Year 7 forms to help them settle in and the school is currently building a new area to expand its support for students who are disabled or those with special educational needs. The overwhelming majority of students who responded to the survey report that they feel safe.

During a Year 7 registration session students listened to the teacher read 'pink slips' written by teachers praising them for good progress made in lessons. However, such purposeful use of this time is not adopted by all groups and opportunities are missed to enhance pastoral care during these periods.

The school is rightly proud that attendance remains well above average and work to reduce variation in the attendance of different groups has been concerted and effective. Students are generally punctual to lessons and understand the importance of good attendance. Students are well informed about their future career choices and many continue to the sixth form.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers show considerable passion for raising achievement and their well-targeted efforts have sustained improvements across various areas of school life. The very large majority of staff and parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school is well led and managed. Governors clearly understand the need to continue the improvements set in place since the previous inspection and regularly set targets for and challenge senior leaders. The headteacher can point to examples of performance management being used to raise achievement; however, such rigorous use of performance management varies across the school.

Leaders at all levels are involved in self-evaluation and while there are checks and balances around the quality of evaluation at middle leader level, it is not always rigorous enough and opportunities are missed to quality assure judgements. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. The school has put in place coaching programmes to share good practice and conduct regular lesson observations and learning walks. The school has taken effective action where teaching is less than satisfactory, however, a small body of satisfactory teaching remains. Leaders and managers have taken the opportunity through the use of external consultants to moderate their lesson judgements, however, observations of learning do not always focus sufficiently on the progress of all pupils.

The curriculum is now well focused and constantly reviewed in light of students' outcomes. Students reflect fondly on their visits to the battlefields in France, the Year 7 residential to the Lake District where they made lasting friendships and the history visit to Berlin.

Equal opportunities are promoted well and can be seen through the very diverse nature of the school's population. Where gaps in performance have existed, for example, between girls and boys or those who are eligible for free school meals, they have been identified and are reducing rapidly.

The impressive range and quality of artwork around the school contributes well to social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning. Students enjoy being creative through a range of opportunities including photography which can be studied up to A level. Rock climbing is a popular choice in the physical education department and an AS-level critical thinking qualification is well received by those Key Stage 4 students who really want a challenge.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Brighouse High School, Brighouse, HD6 2NY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We took careful note of what you said and your comments really helped us to reach judgements. Thank you also for the time you spent completing questionnaires and for talking to inspectors in meetings and around the school.

- We found that you go to a good school and make good progress. This year, the school predicts that the large majority of students will leave with five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and some outstanding. However, there is a minority of satisfactory teaching remaining which restricts some students from making better progress.
- Attendance is well above average and improving due to the concerted efforts of your school.
- You told us that while behaviour is generally good and sometimes outstanding, it does, on occasion interrupt your learning. We followed this up and found that when teachers do not plan in enough detail for everyone's learning needs behaviour can be satisfactory rather than good.
- Leaders and managers drive improvements well and while they have supported other schools in recent years, the focus is now firmly back on your school. They have made numerous improvements since the previous inspection, most notably to the sixth form.
- We have asked your school to ensure that predicted improvements to achievement for this year are sustained by checking that all learning is planned to meet your individual needs, consistently supporting your literacy needs and sharing the best practice in marking and assessment.
- We have also asked them to ensure that behaviour is consistently good and better in lessons by eradicating satisfactory teaching and raising the profile of anti-bullying work.
- Finally, we have asked that leaders and managers monitor, evaluate and review the school's work more rigorously.
- You can help your school continue to improve by trying to achieve your targets, behaving well and showing respect for others.

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector

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