

# Batley Girls' High School

## Inspection report

---

Unique Reference Number	107770
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324650
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela M Headon HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

---

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School (total)	1098
Sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Townend
Headteacher	Mrs J Eames
Date of previous school inspection	September 2005
School address	Windmill Lane Batley West Yorkshire WF17 0LD
Telephone number	01924 350080
Fax number	01924 326357
Email address	ppickles@batleygirls.co.uk

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 38 lessons, and held meetings with students, associate staff, senior and middle leaders and the chair and the vice-chair of governors. They observed the school's work and looked at documents provided by the school, including information on students' progress and attendance, the curriculum, the school's specialist status, and teaching and learning records. Inspectors also analysed the 201 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and the 739 completed by students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Students' attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics and science and for all ethnic groups.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Curricular provision, including the contribution of the specialist status.
- The impact of the school's work on student outcomes, including attendance and how well assessment is used to improve students' performance.

## Information about the school

The school's student community is represented by girls of Indian, Pakistani and White British heritage. The large majority speak English as an additional language, with around a quarter of students eligible for free school meals. The majority of students come from the Batley East and West wards. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national figure. The number of students in the main school and sixth form is similar to that at the previous inspection in 2005. The school was awarded specialist visual arts status in 2004. It holds a number of awards including Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools, Eco School Green Flag and Investors in People status.

## Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Batley Girls' High School is a good and inclusive school, with a number of outstanding features. The school's ethos ensures that everyone feels able to play their part and the school has been highly successful in promoting community cohesion both within the school and beyond. Excellent use of the visual arts specialism has further enhanced the school's work in this area, and the specialism makes a first-rate contribution to students' outcomes, development and enjoyment of school life. Students are provided with an impressive range of enrichment opportunities.

Staff demonstrate a high level of concern for, and commitment to, students' welfare; this is confirmed by students who, equally, show respect and care for each other. Students generally have very positive attitudes and learn well in lessons. This is particularly the case in those lessons where assessment information is used well to carefully plan activities which provide challenge for every student in the class. The school is aware of the need to ensure this practice is evident in all lessons.

By the time they complete their examinations in Year 11, students make good progress, given their starting points. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good and students value highly the personal and academic opportunities it provides. Leaders have a clear improvement agenda, which is wholly shared and embraced by all school personnel. The school fully recognises and is continuing to address the underperformance of some students in one identified group and of students' overall achievement in science. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved. The impact of the school's development work on leadership, teaching and the curriculum is evident in the rising trend of attainment, particularly at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards, overall, are rising and the school demonstrates good capacity to bring about further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further by:
  - narrowing the achievement gap between groups of students so that all students make at least good progress
  - improving and sustaining performance in science, particularly at Key Stage 4.

- Build on the best practice within the school to ensure assessment information is used consistently to plan and deliver lessons which accurately match the needs of all students.

## How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2
---

In the majority of lessons observed by inspectors, students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, made good progress and enjoyed their learning. This was particularly the case in those lessons where the work was well matched to students' ability levels and through skilful questioning they had opportunities to explain their thinking. Students' progress was well monitored in these lessons.

Last year's examination results reflected this current picture. Although standards presently remain slightly below average, the school continued to successfully increase the number of students who attained five or more A\* to C and A\* to G grades. Notably, in 2008, every student also gained at least one GCSE pass.

Performance in science, however, did not improve and declined overall from the previous year. The school has taken robust action to address this. Evidence from science lessons and the latest modular test results already indicate that GCSE attainment is improving. The school is also working hard to ensure that those students who presently make only satisfactory progress, achieve as well as other groups. Attendance is now in line with the national average, and the school has worked hard to significantly increase the attendance rates of students with records of persistent absence.

Students feel very safe in school. They are polite, confident and are generally keen to do well. Behaviour is good and, overall, their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. There are many excellent opportunities for students to initiate and take part in interesting and thought-provoking activities and experiences. These strengthen their understanding of diversity, whilst promoting shared values and positive relationships.

Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. They are able to take responsibility through, for example, the school council, buddy groups, student assemblies and representation and involvement in charity and community projects. Their award-winning work on horticultural and environmental projects is a direct result of the school's excellent enrichment provision which helps to promote community links.

Students' participation and achievement in an increasingly personalised curriculum provides a good foundation for their economic well-being. Across the school, informative and stimulating visual arts' work helps students to learn more about world issues and events. This work reflects the school's inclusive ethos and helps to support students' personal development as future global citizens.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

## The quality of the school's work

Approximately two thirds of the lessons observed were good or better. A number of lessons were outstanding and a very small proportion of inadequate teaching was seen. In the most successful lessons, teachers used students' prior attainment well to pitch accurately the level of challenge for all students in the class. Learning objectives were clearly understood and progress towards them monitored throughout the lesson. The use of skilful, targeted questioning to assess students' understanding was also a key feature. In these lessons, students took part enthusiastically and made quick gains in their learning. However, it was evident in some lessons that, although the school carefully tracks students' performance, this assessment information is not always used to plan activities which challenge all students and enable them to make at least good progress. Nonetheless, strengths in lessons included good relationships, secure subject knowledge and the effective work of associate staff supporting students in the classroom.

Students speak proudly of the school's visual arts status and recognise the opportunities it offers through curriculum choice, enrichment activities and community involvement. Across the school, the curriculum, including the use of the specialism, is excellent and is continuing to successfully develop to keep pace with the changing needs of both the students and society. Students thoroughly appreciate the varied range of enrichment opportunities, including 'East meets West', extended learning days and the choice of trips and visits.

Vulnerable students, those at risk of disaffection or who face challenging circumstances benefit from a secure safety net of support and care. Pastoral staff work closely and coherently with a good number of support personnel and external agencies to ensure students are able to make the most of all the school provides. Support, guidance and care are outstanding in all respects.

---

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are fully committed to providing the best opportunities for each individual student to successfully develop both personally and academically. In this, they are wholly supported by all staff. The headteacher's leadership has been a force in ensuring that, through distributive leadership and the involvement of all school personnel, the school has been able to raise standards overall.

The work of the school is monitored and evaluated effectively and the school knows itself well. Arrangements for setting challenging targets and checking the academic progress of students throughout the year follow a clear rationale, as do systems to monitor and develop teaching and learning. There is much in place to encourage teachers to improve their practice further, and senior leaders have a secure view of the quality of lessons across the school.

Safeguarding procedures are effective; the school ensures students receive the very best support, guidance and care and this has been particularly reflected in their improved levels of attendance. The school has clear strategies in place to tackle the underperformance of disaffected girls in key groups, with some clear signs of success.

The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion; students' diversity is appreciated and valued, and relationships are harmonious. Highly effective use of the visual arts status enhances this work. Specialist status and partnership work are also at the heart of the school's extended community provision, giving adults extensive involvement in classes, projects and a range of learning opportunities.

Governors are well informed and use their expertise to both support and challenge the school. The school's good outcomes, skilful deployment of personnel and development of a rich and stimulating environment represents excellent value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so	2

that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	1
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

## Sixth form

Students enjoy their time in the sixth form and value highly the advice, support and guidance they receive. They speak positively about the learning ethos and regard the excellent relationships with staff and sense of community as key strengths.

Students are well taught in their lessons and overall make good progress given their attainment before they start their courses. Excellent performance in a number of visual arts subjects is evident, although standards overall at A level are broadly average.

The curriculum is outstanding, providing appropriate courses for students of all ability levels. Their active participation in, for example, the leadership team, council meetings, working with younger students and community work makes a significant contribution to their personal development. The range and take-up of the enrichment opportunities on offer are excellent.

Leadership of the sixth form is good and developing well, with roles distributed effectively. The school is presently focused on strategies to raise achievement further, including reviewing the monitoring of student's attainment.

Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from approximately 20% of parents and carers. From these, most were satisfied with the way the school keeps their child safe and prepares them for their next stage of education, training and employment. The questionnaires reflected parents' and carers' positive view of the school, with the majority highly satisfied with the quality of education and care the school provides. Few parents made negative comments, and of these, the main concern was that the school should take greater account of parents' and carers' views. Inspectors were satisfied that the school provided many opportunities for effective home/school communication.

## 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. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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.



6 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Batley Girls' High School, Batley, WF17 0LD

Following the inspection of your school, we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for speaking to us in lessons, on the corridors, in meetings and at social times about your experiences. As well as looking at your work, we read the questionnaires completed by yourselves and your parents and carers. These proved very helpful.

We think that your school is a good school with a number of outstanding features and we can see why you are proud of it. Many of you told us that you enjoy coming to school and we were impressed with your good attitudes to learning and how well you support, respect and care for each other. We think your contribution to the community is outstanding. This is a summary of our main findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She is well supported by all the school's personnel and has good plans in place to improve the school further.
- Overall teaching is good and continuing to improve and you make good progress with generally improving GCSE results.
- You receive outstanding support, guidance and care and the school is a safe place to work and learn.
- The curriculum is outstanding and well matched to your needs and interests and the contribution the visual arts status makes to the local and wider community is outstanding.

So that your school continues to improve, we have asked the school to:

- raise standards further by narrowing the achievement gap between groups of students and also improve performance in science, particularly at Key Stage 4
- ensure assessment information is used consistently to plan and deliver lessons which accurately match the needs of all the students.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at your school and wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon  
Her Majesty's Inspector  
On behalf of the team

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).