

The Banovallum School

Boston Road, Horncastle, LN9 6DA

Inspection dates

2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too much teaching in mathematics requires improvement and is not yet consistently good enough to secure good achievement for all students.
- Progress in mathematics is not good for more-able students.
- The school's strategies to develop literacy and numeracy across all subjects are underdeveloped.
- A culture of reading is not effectively promoted through the school.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is improving and much is good or better, but there is still inconsistency. There is often insufficient challenge for all students, especially the more able.
- Often little time is given in lessons for students to think and make improvements to their work once it has been marked.
- Achievement in science over time has been significantly below average, although the leadership team has taken swift action to address this and improvements have been made.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership team, led strongly by the headteacher, has made a significant difference to the school in driving up standards and improving teaching.
- Progress and the grades students get at the end of their English GCSE course are excellent and significantly above the national average.
- The quality of teaching in English is consistently good or better.
- Students who are at risk of not doing as well as they should are supported and encouraged well at the school. Students say they feel safe.
- Behaviour in the school is good; students are polite, well-mannered and well prepared for their learning. The relationships between students are respectful and supportive. Students speak highly of their teachers; there is a strong sense of community in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 34 lessons, of which three were jointly observed with senior leaders. Four tutor sessions were also observed.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, performance data, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and they looked at samples of students' work. The school's central record of checks on staff was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account the responses of 35 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the views of staff, including those expressed in 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector
Michael Hiscox	Additional Inspector
Anne White	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Banovallum School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Nearly all students are of White British heritage. Very few students are from ethnic minorities and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is in line with national averages. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A small number of students attend off-site provision for part of their learning. This is organised through Acorn Behaviour Solutions.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that students of all abilities make rapid and sustained progress, especially the more able
 - reinforcing number and mental arithmetic skills in all lessons.
- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide learning activities which challenge students of all ability groups
 - increasing opportunities for students to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
 - improving the consistency of marking so that all students are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and providing opportunities for students to respond to the advice and guidance they are given by their teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students' standards when they join the school are broadly average. The standards they achieve when they leave school are above average.
- Attainment in mathematics is above average but progress is not yet secure for all ability groups, in particular more-able students; this was matched by less than good progress seen in lessons and student workbooks.
- Students' understanding and confidence in basic numeracy skills require improvement. This is because teachers do not systematically reinforce these skills in lessons. This restricts students' ability to apply them elsewhere in other subjects and hinders their learning.
- Over time, progress and attainment in science, although improving, has been a significant cause for concern. Progress however, seen in lessons and student workbooks suggests that rapid improvements are being made but it is too early to see the impact on examination results.
- The proportion of A*-A grades achieved across all subjects is inconsistent and this is because teaching does not always effectively allow more-able students to achieve their potential.
- A culture of reading is not sufficiently secured in the school yet. Students overwhelmingly support this view. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are not developed systematically across all subjects and still require improvement. The policies to promote literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are at an early stage of implementation and are not yet having the required impact in all subjects.
- Achievement in English over time has been a significant strength of the school; the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress in English has been well above the national average.
- In 2012, students known to be eligible for the pupil premium made less progress in English compared to other students. However in mathematics they made better progress. The gap in attainment was equivalent to approximately three quarters of a GCSE grade in both English and mathematics. These gaps are lower than seen nationally because the pupil premium funds are used wisely and effectively. The school's data suggest that the range of strategies and interventions is closing the gap in the performance of students in both mathematics and English.
- Students eligible for the catch-up premium in Year 7 have improved their reading ability and progress in English and mathematics at a faster rate than other students. A teaching assistant has been specifically employed to support these students which has been a successful strategy.
- Attainment and progress for disabled students and those who have special educational needs was broadly in line with national averages in 2012. This was achieved because of well-targeted support and guidance.
- Students supported at school action plus receive dedicated support from outside agencies in the form of on-site and off-site provision; this is monitored well for quality and has led to

improvements in students' engagement and progress.

- The school has an early entry policy for mathematics. In the 2012 examinations, the proportion of those achieving higher grades was smaller than seen nationally. Senior leaders are aware of this and are committed to drive up achievement for the most able by only entering those students who are able and ready to sit their examinations.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because the majority of mathematics teaching and teaching in some other subject areas varies.
- In mathematics lessons there is a consistent lack of application of basic arithmetic skills. Teachers allow students to resort to the use of calculators for simple calculations, across year groups and abilities; this has contributed to a lack of challenge and reinforcement of mental mathematics skills.
- Teachers consider the different needs and abilities of students in planning their lessons but too often all have the same work to complete which causes the pace of learning to be too slow for some and too fast for others. This is because the range of teaching approaches to tailor learning effectively is underdeveloped.
- Teachers' questioning in these lessons lacks depth and challenge and students often get little opportunity to think about and talk about the learning to deepen their understanding and knowledge.
- In good or better lessons teachers have carefully considered the individual needs of students and target their questions accordingly to promote good understanding; learning tasks are provided which challenge students sufficiently.
- The quality of marking and feedback is very variable, but not always of very high quality. Sometimes it is infrequent. Work is marked regularly but on many occasions superficially, with brief comments like 'well done', "excellent", "learn to spell...". Only in a very few cases are books marked with clear areas for improvement and show evidence that students have made corrections or acted on the advice of their teachers.
- Teachers do not develop students' literacy skills in lessons, other than in English lessons, in any developed way, other than to reinforce subject-specific key words. Evidence of extended writing is limited across many subjects.
- Teaching support assistants provide a valuable contribution to students' learning in lessons. In one history lesson they monitored the understanding of more than one student by asking effective questions and giving helpful guidance.
- Lessons are characterised by positive and supportive relationships between staff and students. Teachers promote a calm and purposeful learning environment and students respond well to these expectations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students say they feel safe and well cared for. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They know how to report bullying, are confident that it will be dealt with swiftly by the adults in the school. Parents and staff overwhelmingly agree with this view.
- Student conduct in and around the school is harmonious and sociable. They are particularly welcoming to visitors to the school.
- Students have been taught well how to keep safe; the school creates a safe environment for them. One student described the school 'like a family' and this was overwhelmingly supported by others.
- Good learning behaviours were displayed in lessons. Inspectors observed supportive attitudes and respect for different opinions by many students. Where there was good teaching and engaging learning materials, students felt confident to ask deep questions about the subject matter. In one history lesson about civil rights, students asked searching questions, unprompted, about the attitudes at the time and tried to draw comparisons with the modern day.
- There were very few incidents of low level disruption in the classroom during the inspection and this was because teachers set behaviour expectations high and used praise and encouragement consistently well.
- Behaviour is managed well. Rates of exclusion are below average. This is because the leadership team use multiple resources, including outside agencies, to make sure that those students who find managing their behaviour difficult, are supported.
- Attendance is good and compares favourably with national averages. Persistent absences are few and rates are declining to be broadly in line with national averages. Attendance data is analysed but monitoring is at an early stage of development; this has meant that trends of attendance by group have not always been tackled swiftly.

The leadership and management are good

- In a short time, senior leaders, led strongly by the headteacher, and governors have successfully made noteworthy improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour, since the previous inspection. Although achievement and teaching is not yet good, current improvements suggest that the foundations are now firmly in place for students to make rapid improvements in their attainment and make good progress in the future.
- These improvements have been very well supported by officers from the local authority support services. Their rigorous monitoring and tailored support, including training courses for middle leaders, have led to improvements in practice in the classroom and outcomes for students.
- The school's plans for improvement are thorough and based on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Middle leaders shape their department plans to ensure that whole school improvements are made.
- Parents and staff are highly positive about the direction the school is taking; continuous support and professional development received by teachers is recognised and appreciated.

- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching frequently and are improving how this information is used to drive up standards further. Judgements about teaching made by senior leaders matched those of inspectors; monitoring information from the school also suggests that judgments of the quality of teaching over time, where observations were unannounced, were in line with judgements made during the inspection.
- Subject leaders are increasingly taking greater responsibility for the evaluation process. However, systematic checks are not always sufficiently rigorous and do not lead to consistent improved practice.
- The headteacher is strict about the criteria she uses to reward teachers with pay increases through the performance management process. When teachers do not reach required standards they are not automatically promoted to the next level of pay.
- There is a good range of courses leading to qualifications; these are mainly GCSEs, although there are a few work-related courses and other types of qualifications, which are well suited to students' aspirations and ability. Special-interest courses such as photography are attended well by students after school and at lunch times.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- The leadership of the school is making progress in strengthening students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through cross-curricular work, some of which is led by the drama department. Leaders of the school recognise that there is a need to develop further students' cultural awareness and exposure to the diverse communities and heritages, which make up the United Kingdom.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs progress in line with national averages and this is attributed to well-targeted support and intervention. Effective education is provided away from school for a small number of students; a link established for students who are at risk of not doing as well as they should.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors, although relatively new to their posts, are experienced and ask searching questions, so are well informed about the performance of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas requiring improvement.
 - Governors have regular training and this has strengthened their ability to carry out their duties effectively. They regularly visit the school and call leaders to account for the effectiveness of their work. This has given them a better understanding of what happens at the school. For example, governors are aware of the impact of pupil premium funding and the links between performance management and staff progression along the pay scale.
 - Governors have successfully managed the school's finances and deploy resources well to promote improvements and drive up standards.
 - They make independent checks to verify the information they are given about the school; they have made effective links with a local high performing school to share practice and improve governance activities.
 - The headteacher is supported and held to account for targets set in equal measure.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120650
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	413419

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Ireland
Headteacher	Nicki Shore
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
Telephone number	01507 522232
Fax number	01507 522752
Email address	admin@banovallumschool.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

