

Bemrose School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112951
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	338085
Inspection dates	23-24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Michelle Parker HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	881
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roland Furber
Headteacher	Ms Jo Ward
Date of previous school inspection	11-12 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at: the school's improvement plan, safeguarding policies and documentation, tracking of students' progress, individual action plans (IEPs) of a number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, minutes of governors' meetings, seven parental questionnaires and 100 student questionnaires.

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

- the progress of girls below Level 4 to ensure they make at least satisfactory progress in both key stages
- the progress of a small group of Year 8 boys who the school had identified as requiring special support to ensure they made at least satisfactory progress
- the progress of Pakistani students and those in the early stages of learning English across both key stages to ensure it is at least satisfactory
- the effectiveness of subject leadership and management of Key Stage 4 English and mathematics to ensure the school continues to improve GCSE results
- provision in the sixth form to ensure that all students make at least satisfactory progress.

Information about the school

Bemrose is a little smaller than most secondary schools, but numbers are increasing. Well above average numbers are entitled to free school meals. Most students are from minority ethnic groups. The school has recently opened its own small sixth form. More than half the students join the school other than at the normal times, many more than do so nationally. Some students came from abroad and others are from different parts of the city. Well above average numbers have special educational needs and/or disabilities, a statement of need, or are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school was subject to special measures in June 2003. Following two monitoring visits by HMI, it was re-inspected in October 2004, when its improvement led to the withdrawal of special measures because it had demonstrated clear capacity to improve. The school was a specialist Training School. It is a National Challenge school. It has an Enhanced Resource Facility which provides specialist support to 30 students with communication difficulties.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a caring school which is improving fast. Students are rightly proud of their school. It is very responsive to their individual needs. As a result, it is the first choice for increasing numbers of families because it seeks to provide all its students with carefully matched experiences that enhance their education. The driving force behind this is the vision of the headteacher together with her dynamic senior team.

National Challenge work has helped improve the work of staff and because of this students make good progress in lessons. Well matched support to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they make good progress, as do Pakistani students and those in the early stages of learning English. So, although standards are still low, they have improved. Results in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) at the end of Key Stage 4 have improved substantially. Students are now better placed for their next stage of education. The range of courses in ICT and adult literacy and numeracy (ALAN) tests enables students to be prepared for life beyond school. Teaching has improved. In all lessons seen, teachers took account of the broad needs of students, but inspectors agree with the school that work in classes could be still better matched to the needs of individual students and more effective questioning would help students understand their learning better. In addition, the school needs to ensure that it shares its good practice more effectively to further raise standards. In lessons observed where there was good learning, students were able to accurately mark each others' work.

The school has increased its capacity for improvement by restructuring its senior team and by recent appointments of staff. It has made good progress in tackling the key areas for improvement identified from the previous inspection. For example, it has improved the continuity of learning from Years 10 to 11 through better analysis of student tracking data. The physical education department has used the findings from a recent survey visit to enhance its practice so that students now make the progress they are capable of. Students work in a very supportive environment that encourages their participation in sport and helps them improve their fitness. Overall teaching throughout the school is now good. Behaviour is better managed and the range of strategies to engage potentially uninterested students has reduced exclusions. Provision for those students who require it effectively ensures their reintegration into classes.

The school has recently opened its own sixth form. It is inclusive and provides

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opportunities for students whose grades may not enable them to gain a place elsewhere or who are not very confident. All the lessons observed were good. Students spoke very highly of staff and most aspire to go into further education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in GCSE English and mathematics to 30% or above by summer 2010 by ensuring that assessment is used to improve:
 - learning objectives so that students can assess each other with increasing accuracy
 - questioning to enable students to understand their learning better
 - teachers' planning so that activities are well matched to individual learners' needs.
- Share good practice across the school so that it promotes good or better learning in every lesson.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In 2009 attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in English, mathematics and science improved as did the proportion of students gaining at least one GCSE qualification which rose to 99%. Ninety percent of students now gain a qualification in both English and mathematics. These improvements in results are part of a three year upward trend. Students enter school with results well below expectations for their age. In lessons observed, all groups of students made at least satisfactory progress. The school works hard to ensure that those students who arrive at other times during the school year integrate smoothly and are helped well to understand their class work. Where high levels of support would benefit students, they are taught in small groups. For example, teaching and support to students who are in the early stages of learning English is highly personalised, with one-to-one support at times, coupled with well thought out strategies that enable them to participate in whole class activities. Girls working below Level 4 made satisfactory progress in the lessons seen. The Year 8 group of boys, which the school had identified as requiring extra support, was benefiting from additional provision and teachers were ensuring that they made at least satisfactory progress in lessons. The school has also identified a group of higher attaining students, 'Team G', and is providing them with carefully targeted opportunities which enhance their education and promote their learning.

A high number of students have come to the school from abroad and it has developed effective systems for managing over 30 different home languages. The school minimises the disruption to the lives and schooling of recently arrived students to ensure they settle quickly. Notwithstanding this, some students said they did not

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feel safe. Students said when bullying or racism occurs they are confident it is dealt with swiftly and they had someone to talk to. They value the 'safe' place which is available for any who would rather not be out at break time. The school has high expectations of behaviour. In the majority of lessons observed students behaved well, but there were occasional instances when the school's high standards were not met, for example in the canteen queue there was some pushing. Gradually though students are beginning to manage their own behaviour well. In one lesson a student told another firmly not to mess about because it was stopping him learning.

Other key features of students' outcomes.

- Students are encouraged to take exercise and understand the importance of good food and a healthy diet as part of being healthy.
- Attendance has improved and the school now has good systems to follow up absences.
- Students make a good contribution to the wider community through a wide range of activities including working with elderly members of the community.
- The school works hard to develop students' good understanding of social and cultural issues. It is aware that it is weaker in its provision of spiritual aspects and has appropriate plans to address this.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
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?

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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Teaching is now good overall. There are good relationships between staff and students and this enables students to talk to adults in class when they have any difficulties in their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to better interest students in their work. They make good use of a range of information to plan work to broadly meet groups of students' needs. In the best lessons, teachers plan work which is tightly matched to individual student's needs. Where learning is good, students confidently discuss and mark each others' work in positive ways which value and respect each others' views, and teachers use questioning well to help students explain their thinking. However, these aspects are not consistent features of all lessons.

Improvements to the curriculum have provided a greater breadth of opportunities which encourage and enable students to continue their education post 16. The core curriculum has been widened to include ICT, this enables all to study for a qualification. Courses in 'Qualifications for Life' also enable students who are late arrivals into the school system, or those who cope less well with extended study, to gain a qualification. In addition, higher attaining students in Key Stage 4 are able to study double or triple award GCSE science.

The school has high expectations for the care and safety of all its students. It manages well the challenge of students coming into school at different times during the school year, so that they understand the school's values.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels are working effectively to improve teaching and learning and raise standards. The annual teaching and learning audit provides the school with robust information. This, together with a range of other monitoring evidence, is used strategically to drive school improvement. One result of this was 'the year of the middle leader' which successfully developed subject leaders' management skills. The programme improved the rigour of their monitoring and has ensured better consistency of teaching and learning throughout the school. The initiative also led to the development of the curriculum leaders' improvement plan. This ensures that the school's system for self-evaluation incorporates every area of learning and is understood by all.

The school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunities is reflected in a wide

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range of effective initiatives. Examples include the learning mentor working to sustain the engagement of students experiencing particular difficulties. A further example is the work with community partners to improve employment opportunities for some students through the Jobs, Education and Training project in nearby parts of the city from which come many of the school's Pakistani students. Finally, the development of the school's own sixth form to provide more opportunities for routes into further and higher education.

Safeguarding procedures are appropriate and regularly monitored. All staff understand these procedures and receive training to ensure they are up to date and confident in following them.

Governors provide good levels of challenge and support to the school. Detailed discussions about school improvement developments and regular engagement with teaching staff ensure they know the school well from a range of evidence and so are informed sufficiently to hold it to account.

Community cohesion is a well established aspect of the school as part of its commitment to improve the lives of local people and improve students' multicultural understanding. One example, of many initiatives, is the link with a mostly white school on the other side of the city, where a joint project has enabled students in both schools to consider the implications of a multicultural city in the design of a sports centre. There are also several international links, including a more recent one to develop students' understanding of the countries of Eastern Europe. This is in order to better support the increasing number of students coming to the school from those countries. However, the school is in the early stages of evaluating the impact of these initiatives.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Sixth form

It is too early to judge the impact of the new sixth form. The range of courses provided at the moment is small. They are mainly vocational and well matched to learners' needs. The school has appropriate plans to broaden provision. In their discussions with inspectors students stressed how much they valued the opportunity of remaining at school. They described how well the staff knew them and supported them. In the lessons observed teaching was good. Students have plenty of opportunities to work independently and are well motivated.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The small number of questionnaires received indicated that the large majority of parents evaluated the school's provision for their children positively. However, a small minority expressed concerns that: parents were not listened to sufficiently, the school did not meet all of their child's needs and so was not preparing them most effectively for their future, and that some instances of poor behaviour were not effectively managed. The inspection found that the school continually strives to improve its communication to parents and to ensure they feel listened to. The school seeks to provide every child with a highly personalised curriculum and is increasingly successful in meeting the needs of all students and ensuring they achieve their full potential. While there are pockets of inappropriate behaviour the school works swiftly to counter them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bemrose Community 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 seven completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 881 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	6	86	1	14	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	1	14	5	71	1	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	29	4	57	1	14	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	3	43	4	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	7	100	0	0	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)	2	29	3	43	2	29	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	1	14	4	57	2	29	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	14	4	57	2	29	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	4	57	3	43	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	14	5	71	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0

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 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 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

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 pupils' 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.



25 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Bemrose School, Derby, DE22 3HU

Thank you for the warm friendly welcome you gave the inspection team. We were very interested to hear your views of the school and have been able to use these in our evaluation. We were pleased to hear how proud you are of your school and how it helps you.

You go to an improving school, which is currently satisfactory. It is well led by your headteacher, very ably helped by her senior team and supported well by the school's governors. Teaching has improved and is now good. Results in English, mathematics, science and ICT have risen. The school's information about your progress is used well to help you meet your targets. Teachers are making better use of it to plan activities which meet your needs in the class. We were impressed by the good relationships you have with all staff and how well they help you to study and improve your learning. Your behaviour is improving, but some students at times are thoughtless. You all need to act responsibly at all times so that your behaviour doesn't get in the way of your own and others' learning. Your attendance has also improved and this is important because you need to take full advantage of the opportunities school offers you by attending every day.

To help you improve your learning further we have asked your teachers to:

- improve how they use information from assessments to match activities more closely to your individual needs
- improve their questioning to encourage you to better explain your thinking
- explain to you more clearly what you need to do to be successful in the lesson
- strengthen further the ways they work together to improve teaching overall.

We wish you continued success in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

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