

# The Bolsover School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	112963
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378621
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Nada Trikić HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	784
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joe Oakley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gordon Inglis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Mooracre Lane Bolsover Chesterfield S44 6XA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 822105
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Nada Trikić	Her Majesty's Inspector
Aune Turkson-Jones	Additional inspector
Bob Roberts	Additional inspector
Renee Robinson	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. Inspectors observed 33 teachers teaching 35 lessons, including 18 joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. They held meetings with five groups of students, representatives of the governing body, and school staff including senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including improvement plans, the analysis of students' progress, records of classroom observation, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors analysed and considered questionnaires returned by 155 parents and carers, 100 students and 18 staff.

## Information about the school

Bolsover is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The vast majority of the school population are from White British backgrounds with a very small number from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well above average. A very high proportion of these students are identified with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.

The school specialises in business and enterprise. It has gained a number of awards, including International Schools Award and Arts Mark.

Since the previous inspection there has been a high turnover of middle leaders and teachers almost entirely due to retirement. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2007. The school moved into new building in November 2010. The school's application to become an academy has been successful and is expected to be operational from April 2012. The school meets the current floor standard (the minimum standards expected by the government).

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Staff have been successful in managing the transition to the new school and creating a calm and attractive learning environment. The new buildings have provided excellent opportunities for staff and students to develop their skills and expertise in using new technologies to enrich lessons and learning.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Overall results have improved in recent years to close the gap with national standards. Performance in science is a particular strength. Standards in English and mathematics are low but improving securely. They have sometimes been lower than might be expected because students took their English and mathematics examinations in Year 10.
- The quality of teaching is mixed across subjects and satisfactory overall. This reflects leaders' own evaluation. Where teaching is strong, students are engaged in challenging tasks with good opportunities to discuss their learning. Sometimes teachers set the same tasks for the whole class that do not meet the range of students' needs or abilities. Students usually show positive attitudes to work. Feedback from questionnaires and discussions with students indicate that low level disruption is a barrier to learning in a few lessons.
- Most students behave well, are courteous and polite and attend regularly. Student discussions and questionnaire evidence indicate that attitudes to school vary. Whilst many get fully involved in enrichment activities including cultural visits other students feel less committed. The vast majority of students, parents and carers agree that Bolsover is a safe and orderly school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have a broadly accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. They use a range of helpful tools to monitor the school's work, though monitoring of teaching and of students' progress are not always sharp enough to ensure a rapid rate of improvement for all groups of learners.

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise students' attainment and increase levels of progress in English and mathematics through:
  - effective analysis and use of transfer information to strengthen students' reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills
  - rigorous progress tracking for individuals and groups of learners
  - better shared responsibility and accountability among staff for developing students' literacy and mathematical skills in all subjects
  - more regular checks on standards and progress against explicit milestones with reference to groups of students.
  
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by ensuring that teachers:
  - plan tasks and resources that take sharper account of students' prior attainment, progress information and individual learning needs
  - use teaching methods that provide more interest, variety and challenge for all abilities so that all students are fully engaged
  - provide regular opportunities for students to discuss their learning and work collaboratively
  - involve students in assessing their progress so they are clear about their next steps in learning
  - plan opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within lessons.
  
- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and accountability between senior and middle leaders through:
  - further training for senior and middle managers to secure consistency in lesson observation judgements and feedback
  - stronger links between the monitoring of teaching and learning and personalised professional development
  - improved monitoring and swift action to reduce incidences of low level classroom disruption
  - rigorous follow up to quality assurance activities to reduce variation between teachers and subjects.
  - identifying explicit indicators to measure progress in development plans.

## Main report

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## **Achievement of pupils**

Students' achievement has risen steadily in recent years although this is not consistent across all subjects, and groups of learners. Students' attainment in English and mathematics is significantly below average and this is compounded by a policy of entering students early for their examinations. The gap between girls and boys attainment in English and mathematics is much wider than the national gap. Leaders have acted swiftly to tackle this through refinements to tracking of students' progress, target setting, and changes to the curriculum. As a result standards are beginning to rise. Students identified with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties remain on the school's 'at risk' list to access specialist support as necessary. In the lessons observed students identified with behavioural difficulties cooperated well and made similar progress to their peers.

Evidence from students' work during the inspection indicates that the majority of classes are making at least satisfactory progress. Students enjoy friendly and respectful relationships with staff and each other. They particularly enjoy practical, varied and relevant tasks and opportunities to work collaboratively as observed in a Year 9 science lesson. Groups of students assumed the role of a hospital ethical committee to decide whether a young alcohol was suitable for a liver transplant. Students were challenged to justify their decisions and consider moral and ethical factors. They respond positively to an extended writing task to explain how the NHS should manage organ transplants. This level of engagement and focus on students' literacy skills is not consistent. Sometimes students listen for too long or complete the same task irrespective of their level of ability or needs. This means disabled students and those who have special educational needs are dependent on support, and the most able are not encouraged to progress at a faster rate. Teaching assistants support students well but do not consistently focus on developing students' knowledge and understanding. Most parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children are making. Evidence gathered by inspectors indicates that not enough students are making good progress in their lessons.

Attainment on entry to the school indicates that for a significant number of students' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are weak. The recent introduction of a reading scheme is beginning to provide a stronger focus for younger students. Students do not yet consistently apply their reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills across the curriculum. Transfer information is not used effectively by all teachers to boost students' skills.

## **Quality of teaching**

A good feature of teaching is the use of up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT) facilities especially when used to engage students. In one lesson the teacher made outstanding use of ICT to acquaint students with their progress and the examination mark scheme. The teacher also arranged for an on-line 'chat-room' facility at a planned point after school when he would be online to support

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students with their homework. Although there are examples of good teaching there are a number of weaker features that mean the teaching overall is satisfactory.

Teachers include clear learning objectives in their lesson plans, which are linked to different levels of attainment. However, these plans are not routinely translated into a variety of challenging tasks. Lessons tend to be over-directed by the teacher and all students engaged on the same task. Students are frequently set to work individually, often in silence for long periods with few opportunities for constructive paired or group work. Students know their target levels and grades. They are less clear about the specific steps they need to take to reach their targets. Time to follow up teachers' written feedback is not routinely provided to reinforce and consolidate learning. This was not the case in a physical education lesson where skilful teaching utilised a range of strategies and resources to fully involve students in their learning. Confident use of peer and self-assessment meant that students were able to evaluate their progress.

The development of literacy skills is largely left to the English department with teachers across the curriculum creating few opportunities to support skills within subjects. However, the scrutiny of students' work identified good attention to literacy in Year 10 science. Students were required to write a draft letter to the headteacher drawing attention to the school uniform colour and their learning about heat radiation. Opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are not integral to teachers' lesson planning. These aspects receive more attention through house activities such as social, sporting and charity events.

Parents and carers comment that teaching is too variable and affects their children's experiences and progress. This concern is also expressed by students. Inspection evidence would support this view.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Most students behave well in lessons and around the school. Since the last inspection attendance levels have improved to national averages. Students say they feel safe and comfortable in school and appreciate good levels of support. Students would welcome a greater range of responsibilities and more involvement in school developments. Behaviour observed in lessons and around the school during the inspection was generally positive.

School data indicate that levels of exclusion and removal from lessons have declined as a result of revised arrangements for managing behaviour, and assistance from specialist services. Despite this, concerns are raised by some parents, carers and students about standards of behaviour and low levels of disruption. For repeated incidences of disruption the 'buddy' system supports the removal of students from lessons to enable learning to proceed. A record of low-level disruption that does not result in removal is not currently collated. In lessons that fail to engage students or meet their needs low-level disruption occasionally impedes learning. This is not

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currently picked up by the school's procedures for monitoring behaviour.

Incidences of bullying are infrequent and students are confident that they can raise concerns with staff. A recent focus on cyber bullying follows concerns about inappropriate use of social networking sites outside the school. This has reinforced school's view of the necessity for parents and carers and staff to work together to keep students safe. Work to promote an understanding of bullying and the effects on mental health have not extended to homophobic bullying. Some students' say that homophobic language is used and that some name calling is not always taken seriously. Students have a sound knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with drugs, alcohol and smoking, and how to keep themselves safe.

Students' social responsibility is developed particularly well through the house system. The commitment of students to charity fund raising events demonstrates a keen interest and support for helping others.

### **Leadership and management**

A high turnover in staff has affected continuity in teaching and leadership in recent years. The headteacher has responded to this challenge by providing leadership opportunities to develop and retain staff, including secondments to the senior team, and training for new middle leaders to strengthen capacity. Leaders have raised the expectations of students and staff through greater challenge in the school's targets.. School data and module results confirm an improving picture of standards and progress. These improvements illustrate that the school has the capacity to improve. School and department improvement plans set out broad priorities but success criteria are not always measurable to ensure that progress is rigorously checked.

A well-established and thorough system of departmental reviews that includes lesson observation, a review of performance, work scrutiny and student views is designed to drive improvement in the quality of teaching. However, recent training has not taken place to fully secure accurate, consistent and robust judgements and feedback on teaching quality. Eighteen joint lesson observations were undertaken between inspectors and five senior leaders during the inspection. The discussion of findings revealed that the school's judgements were occasionally generous. Professional development activities linked to lesson observation feedback are not always personalised and followed up to check that new skills are embedded in teachers' practice.

Leaders monitor students' progress on a regular basis but this has not routinely included an analysis of different sub-groups of students such as by gender or those known to be eligible for free school meals. Leaders are tackling this aspect of the school's work in promoting equality of opportunity. The governing body takes a keen interest in results and hold regular meetings with subject leaders to discuss performance. An absence of in-depth attainment information has limited the ability of the governing body to provide effective support and challenge. In other respects steps are taken to remove barriers for students such as assistance with funding to

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participate in visits and residential experiences. Provision is not securely in place to tackle discrimination linked to homophobic language.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Stronger features are linked to the specialism and the use of flexibility to promote enterprise skills, and links with local business. This enables older students to follow the process of applying for work experience by submitting letters of application and attending interviews. A wide range of trips and residential visits locally, nationally and globally extend curriculum opportunities. 'Flexible Friday' arrangements offer good opportunities for students to focus on specific subjects, projects or activities. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, though development is limited within lessons. The house system promotes international links and charity work well. Cultural links and visits to Gambia and China enrich experiences for some students. Students develop business and enterprise skills by working on house allotments to grow vegetables for profit. Displays around the school promote different cultures to encourage respect and an appreciation of alternative lifestyles. A high priority is set on arrangements for safeguarding and child protection training. Procedures for vetting adults that work with students are securely in place.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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](http://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.
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.**

20 January 2012

Dear Students



### **Inspection of The Bolsover School, Chesterfield, S44 6XA**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited recently. We enjoyed discussing aspects of the school's work and reading the questionnaires. You all agreed that the new school provides great facilities and an attractive and safe learning environment. We decided that Bolsover is a satisfactory school. In recent years standards have improved overall. Less progress has been made in English and mathematics. In part this is because examinations in English and mathematics are taken in Year 10. Leaders have already made changes to tackle this problem. Students are particularly successful in science as there are more opportunities for you to be active learners.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is stronger when you have a range of challenging tasks and the opportunity discuss your learning. When teachers set the same tasks for the whole class you make slower progress. You are not always clear about the progress you are making and how to improve. Feedback from questionnaires and discussions show that at times low-level disruption is a barrier to learning.

Most of you behave well, are courteous, polite and attend regularly but attitudes to school are mixed. Whilst many of you get fully involved in enrichment activities including cultural visits others feel less committed. Leaders have been informed that some of you would welcome a greater range of responsibilities and more say in school developments.

The headteacher, senior leaders and staff are working hard to make improvements. At the end of the inspection we identified some points to support the next step. These are to:

- raise attainment and increase levels of progress in English and mathematics
- increase the proportion of good teaching through more varied and interesting work that meets your needs
- reduce low-level disruption in lessons
- improve the way checks are made on how well the school is doing.

You can help the school to improve by working hard to meet your learning targets and making the most of the opportunities the school provides.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikić  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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