

# Bradfields School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	119043
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	379712
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Robert Ellis 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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of students</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of students</b>	Mixed
Gender of students in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of students on the school roll</b>	220
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	55
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mick Beckwith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kim Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Churchill Avenue Chatham ME5 0LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 683990
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 683571
<b>Email address</b>	office@bradfields.medway.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	379712



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Ellis

Her Majesty's Inspector

Debby McCarthy

Additional inspector

Robert Miller

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 27 lessons taught by 26 different personnel, and held discussions with groups of students, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Telephone discussions were also held with the headteachers of two partner schools. 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: development plans; the school's tracking data showing students' progress; teachers' lesson plans; and students' work. In addition, inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses of 38 parents and carers, 37 staff and 98 students, and took their views into account.

## Information about the school

Bradfields is a comparatively large special school that provides education for students who primarily experience complex learning difficulties and disabilities that may include speech, language, emotional, sensory, physical or autistic spectrum secondary disabilities. All students have a statement of special educational needs and 45% have additional health and medical needs. The number of boys is almost twice the number of girls and more than one in four students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and few speak English as an additional language. Around 8% are looked after children who come from Medway and a variety of other local authorities.

The lower school and upper school are located on adjacent sites, which since September 2011 have formed a single campus. There are plans to develop provision for primary-aged students on the same campus.

Since the last inspection, the school has achieved: 'Get Set' Olympic & Paralympic Network status, Full International School Award, Bronze Award 'How Green is your School', Research School status and has become a Leadership Training School.

**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>2</b>
<b>Achievement of students</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of students</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This good school is determined to be outstanding. It is improving rapidly because of outstanding leadership. The school is not outstanding overall because, although the quality of teaching is improving, the proportion of consistently good and outstanding teaching is not yet high enough. Overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good.
- Students make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and abilities as a result of good teaching, an outstanding curriculum and excellent pastoral care and support. Attendance is good, and students have productive relationships with staff and say they feel safe. Achievement in the sixth form is good.
- Teaching is typically good and improving. The exemplary support often provided for students who have more complex needs is not consistent across all classes. Lessons and other activities provide students with memorable experiences impacting well on their personal development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically good and the school is a calm and orderly place. Students' behaviour is, in the main, managed skilfully, but there are exceptions and some learning time is lost. There are effective arrangements for ensuring students are safe. Students can recognise and respond appropriately to risks they are likely to encounter.
- The school is led and managed outstandingly well. An ambitious vision for the school is shared by all staff. Priorities for improvement are founded on accurate monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. Teaching and performance are managed very well and teachers are encouraged and enabled to develop best practice. The curriculum meets students' needs exceptionally well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. The school has very productive partnerships to support students' learning and development. Despite this, on a few occasions, some parents and carers have felt that the school has not communicated the outcomes of the actions it has taken to address their concerns effectively.

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

- Build on improvements to the quality of teaching to increase the proportion of teaching that is consistently good and outstanding by:
  - fostering greater student independence
  - sharing best practice so that students who have more complex needs are supported and challenged consistently well in all lessons and, as a result, develop greater resilience and independence.
  
- Improve communication with parents and carers to ensure that they are fully aware of actions that have been taken to address their concerns.

## Main report

### Achievement of students

Students' attainment when they join the school is low. However, students make outstanding progress in the main school and good progress in the sixth form. Boys' achievement has been outstanding over the last three years. The achievement of girls and that of looked after children were previously weaker. The school recognised this and concerted action was taken so that their progress has accelerated and the gaps have closed rapidly. In most lessons, students were seen to be highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Consequently, overall achievement is outstanding.

Students make rapid progress in developing their reading, writing and communications skills, and the development of literacy skills is a common feature of most lessons. Students make excellent progress in their personal development and they are prepared very well for the next steps in their education or training. Most students achieve success in the accredited courses that they take. One group of students was observed participating enthusiastically in an art lesson, following a visit to a gallery, which helped them explore their response to different forms of art and to appreciate the views of others. This and similar activities make a helpful contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their children made good progress.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching is typically good. The majority of teaching that was observed was good with examples of outstanding teaching and a very small proportion that was satisfactory. Discussion with students and scrutiny of their work indicate that this is typical of the quality of teaching and demonstrates improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have very high expectations of what students in their classes can achieve and know them well. Most teachers anticipate when behavioural

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incidents are likely to occur and skilfully intervene to manage any challenging behaviour so that in most lessons little learning time is lost.

In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers question skilfully to identify what students understand and whether they need more help. Other adults in the classroom provide good support and ensure that students work hard and stay focused. The curriculum is well planned and has a positive impact on day-to-day teaching. There is a strong focus in lessons on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills and enabling them to communicate effectively. There are excellent opportunities for students to use and apply their skills through practical activities across the curriculum. Lessons and other learning activities provide excellent opportunities for students to develop their personal and social skills and discuss issues that affect their learning and development. This makes a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a few lessons, teachers provide too much support, and do not allow the students to develop full independence and do as much for themselves as they are capable of doing.

Regular, accurate assessment ensures teachers can track students' progress and identify any underperformance and remedy it quickly. In most lessons, students are given opportunities to review their progress towards their individual targets and to develop greater independence.

All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their children are taught well, and the inspection team agree.

### **Behaviour and safety of students**

Most students attend school regularly and are punctual. The school can provide examples of significant improvement in attendance for particular students. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is mostly good and students generally require little more than gentle prompting from staff in order for them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Most students who have behaviour difficulties respond quickly to the school's individualised strategies to improve their behaviour and lessons are seldom disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Students say that behaviour is generally good and that most students get on well together. However, inspectors observed that in a few lessons teachers are less skilful in managing behaviour and there are sometimes delays in re-engaging students with their learning, which can lead to minor disruption to the lesson.

Students report that bullying is rare. Most are aware of different forms of bullying and they are confident that if there is any it will be dealt with effectively. However, a very small minority of students do not have such a well-developed understanding of exactly what action they should take if they observe or are subjected to bullying. Excellent care, combined with strong relationships and mutual respect, ensures that students feel safe in school, and the school has surveyed students to find out if there are particular areas of the school where they might feel less safe, and staff are working closely with students to address their concerns. Most students demonstrate

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an understanding of how to avoid the typical risks that they might face. For example, students know about potential hazards that might be encountered when cooking. The school has 'behaviour detectives', a group of students who monitor behaviour and encourage other students to act more responsibly. Students are also actively involved in decision-making through the school and curriculum councils.

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed the view that their children are looked after well, feel safe in school and that behaviour is not an obstacle to their children's learning. A small minority were concerned that bullying is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that the school takes appropriate action but parents and carers are not always informed about the school's response to their concerns.

### **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior leaders have a very ambitious and transformational vision for the school, and they have successfully developed a very cohesive and mutually supportive staff team who share their vision. Rigorous and systematic monitoring of the school's performance ensures that self-evaluation is accurate and used very effectively to identify key priorities for improvement. Rigorous systems have been implemented to track students' progress and attainment, and students' personal development is monitored very closely.

Leaders and managers are not complacent and show a strong determination to challenge and support teachers to improve their practice. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of good quality professional development and to share best practice. This is ensuring that teaching has even greater impact on students' learning and development which demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that the school made appropriate provision for their professional development and felt that leaders and managers are doing all they can to improve the quality of teaching. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly to monitor progress for themselves, and consequently they are well informed and able to challenge and support the school to improve. An external consultant has been used to validate the school's judgements on the progress of different groups.

The school has developed an outstanding curriculum that is very flexible and extremely responsive to students' needs and interests. It is a key factor in students' outstanding achievement. There is a broad range of courses leading to accreditation, and the curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest and opportunities to travel to experience other cultures in Spain and China. In addition, the school has productive links with schools in a variety of other countries.

Exemplary pastoral care, which includes skilful therapy and counselling, and high quality academic guidance make a significant contribution to students' outstanding achievement and ensures that they are prepared extremely well for their futures. The school has excellent partnerships with a range of organisations and health, care and

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education professionals that are used well to support more vulnerable students. The school is actively involved in research to improve understanding of students and their complex needs with a view to being able to improve their life chances and make them more resilient and independent.

The school's safeguarding arrangements exceed statutory requirements and ensure students feel safe. This is an inclusive school where all students are valued regardless of their abilities or background. Discrimination is not tolerated and equality of opportunity is central to the school's core purpose. Consequently, all aspects of students' personal development are promoted extremely well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents and carers speak very highly of the school. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their children made good progress and were safe and cared for well. A typical comment from one of the questionnaires was 'The school is fantastic. I have been impressed with the staff and how they deal with any issues that arise. My child has made such progress and I couldn't ask for a better school.' A small minority felt that the school could do more to help them to support their children's learning, and the school already has plans to develop further this aspect of its work.



## 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 students' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its students well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its students.
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 students. 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
Student 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 student in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the students' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of students at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well students behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Students' 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 students 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 students are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the students' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe students are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Students' 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.**



16 March 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Bradfields School, Chatham ME5 0LB**

Thank you for being so helpful when we visited Bradfields. My particular thanks go to all of you who took time to fill out the inspection questionnaire or to talk to us about what you do at your school. The inspection judged that yours is a good school. You work hard in lessons and we saw that you get on well together and enjoy learning. You told us that you feel safe and that adults will help you if you have a problem. The school is particularly good at making sure you are well cared for. We were interested to hear about all the different activities you are involved in and how much you enjoy the trips and visits, particularly the visits to Spain and China. The school provides you with an excellent range of subjects to study and you have good opportunities to gain qualifications and experience that will serve you well as adults. Your teachers and the other adults who help you know you very well and they work very hard to make your lessons interesting and enjoyable. Some teachers are very good at making sure you are learning as well as you can and challenge you to do things for yourselves. In most lessons, adults are very skilled at making sure you are participating fully so that no time is lost. Your parents and carers said lots of good things about the school but they do not always seem to be told about how incidents in school are sorted out.

I have asked the adults who are in charge to do some things to help make the school even better.

- We would like teachers to work together to make all lessons as good as the best.
- We would like the school to make sure your parents and carers get as much information about how problems in school are resolved.

I am sure that you will all want to help make Bradfields an even better place for learning.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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