

# Braidwood School for the Deaf

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103611
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355407
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Lewis

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 special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	55
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	3
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	June Newnham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Saywood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Bromford Road Birmingham B36 8AF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out two additional inspectors, accompanied by two British Sign Language interpreters. Inspectors observed 15 lessons involving 14 different teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of students and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at 18 parental questionnaires and 56 from staff and students, including a number of questionnaires completed through British Sign Language.

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

- Do all learners make similar progress whatever their starting point on entry to the school?
- How well do teachers plan and adapt their lessons to meet the needs of all the students so that their progress over time is accelerated?
- What is the school doing to raise attendance and how good is it currently?
- How good is the school's programme for its Year 12 students and how does it know this?

## Information about the school

Braidwood is a small special school which caters for students who are deaf and who can access the curriculum through the use of British Sign Language (BSL) and English. Most students have BSL as their first language, but a few are learning it for the first time on entering the school. All the students have statements of special educational need. The majority are drawn from all over the City of Birmingham but students from seven other local authorities also attend, some travelling many miles by taxi. About a third of the students has additional learning needs, including, behavioural, emotional and social needs, autism, physical needs and visual impairments. About a third of students are White British and a similar proportion is from Pakistani heritages. The remainder come from a range of different heritages. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is high.

The post-16 provision caters for a very small number of students, who because of additional needs, require further support before attending college full time. These students attend the school for 2 days a week and alternative provision at the Birmingham Institute for the Deaf 3 days per week. The school has a number of awards and is seeking Foundation and Trust status. It is also currently subject to reorganisation as part of the local authority review of provision.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school, which has improved significantly since its last inspection. Everyone, including the students and their families, is extremely proud to be part of the school and of the ways in which it fosters students' all-round development and unlocks their potential. Staff and the governing body are striving continuously to find ways of improving outcomes for students further. They know the school very well and have put in place very strong self-evaluation procedures. Excellent ways of checking on students' progress have been developed. These enable staff to check on how well every individual student is doing in every subject and to ask the question, 'Is this good enough?' Excellent attention is paid to staff development to make sure the school is responsive to teachers' and student's needs and to new initiatives and technologies, such as those in audiology. Staff roles, for example that of subject leaders, have developed well. All this, including the excellent leadership of the headteacher, and the strong and committed governing body, means that the school has an excellent capacity to improve even more.

Students' achievements and progress from their starting points on entry are outstanding overall, whatever their background or ability. This is because of the very high quality of teaching and learning and the excellent care, support and guidance, including the very strong mentor support programme. The new approach to monitoring progress has resulted in very careful groupings of students and very well-targeted support for those whose progress might be slowing. These have already made a difference, particularly in Key Stage 3, where students have had the benefit of these measures since entry. Almost all have made great strides in their learning, sometimes in a relatively short time. Older students' progress, including those in Year 12, has noticeably accelerated, with the school achieving its highest ever average points score in 2010.

Teaching and learning in lessons is excellent overall, with communication a particular strength. Highly effective use of both BSL and Sign Supported English supports students' understanding of ideas in lessons and their improved communication in English and BSL very well. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend students' basic skills and particularly their literacy knowledge by reinforcing the use of their personal targets and whole school literacy targets. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They grow hugely in confidence and awareness of their own abilities as they progress through the school and challenge themselves to achieve more. One said, 'They make you believe you can do it.' They say that because some of their teachers and teaching assistants are deaf, that helps them to realise what they can achieve in the future.

An excellent curriculum, enriched by very strong partnerships with other schools, colleges and the community really excites students to learn. It secures their very comprehensive understanding of both how to keep themselves safe and of the importance of healthy

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lifestyles. Behaviour is excellent and extremely well promoted within an atmosphere of mutual respect and high expectations.

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

- Raise attainment further by:
  - Improving students' literacy skills through more consistent use in lessons of students' personal as well as whole school literacy targets.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Almost always when students enter the school their attainment is very low compared with others of their age and, although it is significantly below average overall when they leave, the gap narrows considerably as students' progress through the school. In some subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT) it is similar to others of their age. All learners achieve well and many make outstanding progress, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who have learning or other needs in addition to their deafness. Post-16 students also achieve well. Careful groupings of students and personalised learning approaches means that any differences in the learning of groups identified in previous years have now been addressed. Challenging targets are set for students to keep everyone focused on aiming for the highest. For example, individual students are on target for higher grades in GCSE in science, English or mathematics. All students achieve Entry Level or GCSE awards in core subjects, as well as a range of other qualifications. Last year, 100% achieved a GCSE A\*-C equivalent in ICT and this year's students are on track for similar results. This is all possible because the school searches out students' talents and interests and uses its partnerships with schools to supplement its curriculum.

In lessons, progress is outstanding because students consolidate and build on previous learning and new ideas are introduced in highly motivating relevant ways. For example, a lesson on 'Motocross' for Year 7 capitalised on students' excellent level of interest which enabled everyone to develop reading strategies very successfully to carry out a simple research task. High quality focused support was seen in lessons that challenged students very well indeed to think for themselves, have high expectations of themselves and become more independent learners. One said, 'Until I came here I never thought I could do that.' Systematic support is improving literacy levels within the school and progress within English is good, though this is from extremely low starting points on entry.

Students are well prepared for their working lives through the different skills they acquire and the very strong work experience and work-related activities they undertake.

Attendance is satisfactory but improving because the school is working well with families to achieve this. Parents, too, are involved well in their child's learning through homework, the work of the home/school worker and extended school classes. The students' voice is heard loudly within the school, strongly influencing its development and ensuring it is a harmonious community that celebrates and shares its Deaf culture and its broader heritages, locally and regionally.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

New technologies, such as interactive whiteboards and visualisers, are used highly effectively to enhance teaching and learning. Planning and marking are also used well to help students understand what they now need to do or to consolidate ideas. The strong communication skills of all staff enable students to concentrate on their learning. They also contribute to the excellent relationships, learning attitudes and behaviour observed in classrooms and around the school. Highly effective teamwork between teaching assistants and teachers mean that everyone is alert to students' learning and this works very well in the main part of the lessons to keep them thinking and actively engaged. However, once in a while there is no clear role for the teaching assistants in whole class sessions. Occasionally, students' personal literacy targets are not used effectively.

The curriculum's strength lies not simply in its breadth and balance, but in its relevance and flexibility to accommodate different talents and interests at all key stages, through careful tailoring of programmes. Students at post-16, for example, are following a BTEC parenting course this year, as well as their core key and life skills curriculum. Other students may take courses at a local school, such as leisure and tourism or business studies according to their strengths and needs. Extensive enrichment activities are available both within school and outside. The school draws on the local and Deaf communities very well to support these.

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Excellent transition arrangements support student's transfer to college. Outstanding working with other agencies ensures that the emotional health and well-being of students is protected at all times, including the support for those who are particularly vulnerable. Students' health, safety and welfare are paramount and reflected in a very strong ethos of mutual care and concern. The mentor system and the strength of relationships between staff, students and families mean that students feel hugely valued and supported personally and academically.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The ambition of everyone within this school for students is palpable. Leadership and management at every level is constantly challenging itself to do better and, because of its improved assessment data, is doing this in rigorous and highly relevant ways. Monitoring of teaching and learning is well established although not all leaders, including subject leaders, have been trained to do this and monitoring of teaching and learning experiences delivered by alternative providers is informal. The governing body is highly supportive and its members bring many relevant skills to bear on its work. It ensures that safeguarding has a high priority within the school and is effectively-focused on ensuring students themselves understand how to keep themselves safe. Governance is an effective critical friend, particularly as regards the financial implications of developments. The school meticulously researches best value in terms of purchasing resources and tracks carefully how well interventions provided for individual students are working. Value for money is excellent.

An excellent commitment to removing barriers to learning for all students means that everyone has access to everything that they should and similarly excellent opportunities to succeed. Community cohesion is good because students are encouraged to celebrate their similarities and differences and to explore these with others, contributing to Deaf awareness programmes locally and making a strong contribution to both hearing and Deaf worlds. The school has extensive regional and national links and is currently working out the best ways in which it can evaluate the outcomes of these.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Sixth form

The school makes good provision for those students who stay on into Year 12. These students make good progress towards the intended outcomes for their placement and are being well prepared for taking up places in further education. They make particularly strong progress in their confidence and life skills. Although their literacy and numeracy skills are low, their courses enable them to develop these further and to apply them in meaningful real-life situations. Teaching and learning and the quality of the curriculum are good overall. The school works well with an alternative provider, to ensure the total programme is highly relevant and flexible and meets differing students' needs. The leadership and management of this provision is good. There are excellent relationships and strong communication systems in place with providers that allow students to be challenged to be more independent learners and keep themselves safe. However, not everyone teaches with the challenge of student targets in mind.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2



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## **Views of parents and carers**

About a third of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of these indicated that they were happy with all aspects of the school's work saying, for example, that the school was welcoming, their children were making good progress and they themselves were very comfortable with raising any concerns. No negative comments were received. Parents and carers were unanimous in their assertion that their children were safe and happy in school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Braidwood School for the Deaf 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 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	67	6	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	78	3	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	44	9	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	50	9	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	67	6	3	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	56	8	44	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)	10	56	7	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	44	8	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	44	8	44	1	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	50	7	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	61	5	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	67	5	28	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



10 November 2010

Dear Students,

**Inspection of Braidwood School for the Deaf, Birmingham, B36 8AF**

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school when we visited it recently. We came to see how well you are doing in your lessons and whether we could suggest anything to make things even better for you. You told us that you really liked your school and felt it was really helping you to make progress. You also said how much you liked the teachers and the very interesting things that you learn about. Thank you to all of you we spoke to personally either at the school council or in other meetings and break and lunchtimes. We agree with you that your school is outstanding and that it is helping you to progress really well. These are some of the reasons why.

The school checks up on how you are doing extremely well and makes sure you get extra help if you need it.

The teaching is excellent and teachers work hard to make their lessons interesting and just at the right level to help you move on.

The school works really hard with other schools and colleges to make sure you have lots of different courses you can take, so that when you do leave and go to college, you have lots of choices.

You behave outstandingly well and watch and listen extremely effectively in lessons.

Everyone gets on really well in school and communicates very successfully.

Your school is outstandingly led by the headteacher and her team and they have good plans to make things even better.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following important things.

Make sure that everyone uses your personal literacy targets effectively to allow all of you to work at higher levels of skill.

You can help to by making sure you attend school every day.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis

Lead inspector

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