

Bridgnorth Endowed School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123586
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	359472
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Barbour HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	965
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Bamford
Headteacher	Philip Loveday
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
School address	Northgate Bridgnorth WV16 4ER
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Thirty-six lessons were observed taught by 35 different teachers. There were also some additional brief visits to lessons. Meetings were held with students, staff and the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, 204 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective has the drive been to raise the quality of teaching and learning?
- Is the new management structure providing the required increase in accountability, especially among middle managers?
- Are the new sixth form partnership arrangements increasing the effectiveness of the sixth form?
- How much have English and mathematics improved in attainment, progress and teaching quality since the last inspection?

Information about the school

Bridgnorth Endowed School is an oversubscribed and average-sized secondary school with specialist technology status. Students attend from the town and the surrounding rural areas. Sixth form provision is delivered in a formal partnership with a nearby secondary school. The very large majority of students are from White British backgrounds with few of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is just above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school has National Healthy Schools status, the Eco-Schools Award at bronze level and International School intermediate status. It is also a Microsoft academy.

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

3

Main findings

Bridgnorth Endowed School is satisfactory. It is in a period of rapid change. The headteacher took up his post in January 2009. He set in train a programme to improve teaching and learning and the curriculum and establish a new management structure. Students' attendance is above average and their behaviour is good. They feel safe in school and make a good contribution to the school and the wider community, especially through the programme of sports' leaders. The school has established good partnership arrangements both with its partner primary schools and with a nearby secondary school in the joint running of the sixth form.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors observed a full range of practice from outstanding to inadequate. In the best lessons teachers give careful thought to thorough planning of lessons. Students experience a variety of activities, including working in pairs and small groups. They have opportunities to articulate their understanding and expectations are high. By contrast, the less successful teaching is characterised by a looser approach to preparation and planning. Teachers do not give enough thought and preparation to the learning objectives of the lesson, to the rich and varied activities that could bring them to life or to the key questions and dialogue that could embed learning and enable the teacher to assess its quality. In some lessons, the most-able students are not sufficiently challenged.

School leaders have developed a system to track the progress students make which is providing useful information in Years 10 and 11. However, the system is not sufficiently developed across the whole school and the information is not used to enable all students to understand their progress clearly enough, know their targets, or what they need to do to improve.

The new management structure is having a positive impact on improving the accountability leaders and managers have for their areas of responsibility. In developing teaching and learning, however, there is too much variability in the degree to which leaders and managers are confident in modelling and sharing best practice, in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility and in contributing to the whole-school drive for improvement.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since the last inspection, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C level, including English and mathematics, has improved significantly. However, progress in securing all the improvements needed in English and mathematics has been slow and the changes to the middle-management structure, having been delayed by a now resolved senior manager's absence, are not yet embedded. With attainment improving, the school is therefore demonstrating a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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Up to 40% of 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?

- Improve learning by raising the quality of lesson planning and preparation to the level of the best in the school to ensure that:
 - students experience rich and varied tasks
 - questioning and dialogue raise students' understanding and enable teachers to assess students' learning
 - more-able students are suitably challenged in all lessons.
- Develop effective ways to monitor the progress of every student and use this information to set high-quality and challenging targets and ensure that students understand how to achieve these.
- Improve the quality of the leadership and management of teaching and learning to the calibre of the best in school so that all leaders and managers:
 - model and share good practice across their areas of responsibility
 - are confident and adept in monitoring and evaluation
 - take an active role in driving improvement across the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students have broadly average attainment when they join the school in Year 7. They then make satisfactory progress. When students have the opportunity to take an active role in their learning, they respond very well and join in with enthusiasm. In a mathematics lesson in Year 8, students tried out a range of games involving probability and then had the task of designing their own in small groups. They worked with enthusiasm on the task, but then focused immediately when the teacher reinforced a particular concept with the whole class. Occasionally, work is not pitched well to their abilities. For example, some Year 7 students were unable to understand the language used in a poem from the First World War and they became bored and distracted.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Here again, they respond to interesting and well-planned tasks but less so when work is not well matched to their needs. The small numbers of students from minority ethnic groups make equivalent progress to that of their peers.

Students take on responsibility well. Over one hundred have trained as sports leaders. Partner primary school headteachers appreciate the impact these students have when they visit local schools and take a lead on a whole range of sporting activities. The school council feels that it has a strong voice in the school, appreciates the approachability of the headteacher and is active with the local town council. It is campaigning to improve access to the school. Students understand how to stay safe and say they feel safe while in school. Above average attendance and punctuality, allied with good attitudes to learning and secure literacy and numeracy skills demonstrate a good preparation for their future economic well being.

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Students enjoy the wider sporting and cultural opportunities that are available in school. During the inspection, many students were actively engaged in a production of 'The Wizard of Oz'. They have a well-developed moral sense and are alive to the needs of others, such as victims of the Japanese earthquake or the African community they saw in a video who were dependent on drinking water that was contaminated and dirty.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

The curriculum meets students' needs, although the range of vocational choices available in Years 10 and 11 is currently limited. Many aspects of the school's curriculum are innovative. For example, in Year 7, students follow the 'Opening Minds' project for geography, history and religious education. In this there is a strong emphasis on the broader skills that students need for learning. These skills benefit the students as they move through the school, when they have opportunities to exercise them. From Year 9 to Year 11, students opt for certain subjects for a single year, and then make new options the following year. While the teaching observed in these mixed-age option classes was often good and occasionally outstanding, students and parents and carers expressed concerns to inspectors as to the coherence of the future pathways in education that will be available. Leaders and managers have a clear vision and a plan for these pathways but have not yet sufficiently conveyed the detail to students and their parents and carers.

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While teaching is satisfactory, some subjects have been hard hit by the unforeseen illness of teachers, especially mathematics. In the very best lessons observed, detailed and perceptive lesson planning enabled the succession of high-quality and interesting activities. For example, in an outstanding design and technology lesson, students constructed an electronic moisture sensor. They worked partly in small groups, where each student knew his or her assigned role. They worked as individuals and in pairs and operated soldering irons and drills safely as needed. At times, the teacher assembled the class to watch short safety videos that students had produced. Extension work was provided for the most able. The atmosphere in the class was of relaxed, enjoyable but highly focused work.

The care, guidance and support available to students are good. There is helpful transition of students moving up from the partner primary schools. Teachers work well with a range of agencies to support potentially vulnerable students. Work to support attendance has been effective. Consequently, attendance has improved considerably. Pastoral support is provided through mixed-age tutor groups, which are appreciated by the students. There is good transition guidance to post-16 courses.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear vision and drive for improvement and has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is now a shared understanding of what constitutes high-quality teaching and learning, and many teachers have responded to the challenge and improved their practice. The senior leadership team and many middle managers communicate high expectations. Partnership work is good, including with partner primary schools, and the sixth form link is making a strong contribution to students' education. The schools' specialist status has been well managed both in achieving good standards in technology in school, and in supporting other schools. The leadership of pastoral and academic care, guidance and support and that for special educational needs has led effectively to improved systems and good performance. Despite the good strengths evident in leadership in securing ambition, as evidenced by recent improvements, the leadership of teaching and learning remains satisfactory, however, hampered as it is by some leaders and managers lacking confidence in evaluating lesson performance or guiding their colleagues in how to plan effective lessons.

The governing body meets its statutory duties to keep students safe, and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The governing body receives regular reports on the progress of the school. It receives the views of students and parents and carers, but not

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systematically enough for members to fully challenge school leaders and hold them to account.

The school is thorough in its attempt to engage with parents and carers. It provides a range of useful newsletters, consultation evenings and options evenings. The school held well-attended consultation events on the new curriculum for example. The school has been very successful in liaising with parents and carers of students who have particular needs. However, the engagement with parents and carers is not fully effective, as evidenced by the limited endorsement expressed in the parents and carers' survey that accompanied this inspection.

The school is successful in promoting equal opportunities in that there is little difference between most groups in achievement or participation in activities. A new policy on equal opportunities is ready to be approved by the governing body but is not yet embedded in practice. The school is satisfactory in its promotion of community cohesion through its positive links with the local town, including projects with the local council, but currently there is little evaluation of the impact of this work.

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

Sixth form

The sixth form operates in a formal partnership with a local secondary school. This arrangement allows for a wide range of courses to be available - far more than would be possible in one school. Some students, on leaving Year 11, follow their sixth form education elsewhere, and those that remain have lower attainment when they begin the sixth form than is the case nationally. They make satisfactory progress and a higher-than-average proportion progress from Year 12 to Year 13. In some lessons, they are actively engaged and make good progress. Some lessons, however, are dominated too much by teachers and do not meet the needs of either the most-able students or those who need

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more support. Sixth form students willingly take up the opportunities to engage in charity fund-raising and the mentoring of younger students. Leaders and managers monitor students' performance but, as the school itself acknowledges, this monitoring is not effective enough. Currently, the head of sixth form has only limited access to assessment data.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
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 views of parents and carers were less positive than is normally the case in a secondary school. Parents and carers expressed two particular concerns in their responses to the questions in the questionnaire: the quality of mathematics teaching, given high levels of teacher absence, and the curriculum choices that students make from Year 9 to Year 11. Inspectors noted that the mathematics department has suffered from more than one case of long-term absence this year and that the school has worked hard to secure replacement teaching. They noted also that the previously vacant post of subject leader has been filled as from January 2011. In the case of the new curriculum, inspectors note that the school does have a plan concerning progression pathways but that it has yet to explain this sufficiently to parents and carers. The school intends to act to advise and reassure them further on these matters.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bridgnorth Endowed 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 204 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 965 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	25	117	57	25	12	6	3
The school keeps my child safe	62	30	130	64	8	4	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	19	127	62	31	15	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	22	125	61	25	12	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	32	16	121	60	23	11	6	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	17	114	56	41	20	10	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	13	141	70	26	13	4	2
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)	51	25	114	56	17	8	6	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	23	119	59	23	11	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	22	115	57	21	10	9	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	14	105	52	38	19	11	5
The school is led and managed effectively	50	25	114	56	17	8	5	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	27	116	57	22	11	5	2

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.

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.



1 April 2011

Dear Students,

Inspection of Bridgnorth Endowed School, Bridgnorth, WV16 4ER

Thank you for your help and for taking time to talk to us during the recent inspection. Special thanks go to those who returned questionnaires. I am writing to tell you about the main findings.

Your school is satisfactory. The pastoral care that you receive is good. Your school works well with its partner primary schools to make sure that students move smoothly from one to the other. You are also prepared well for your future education. We have recommended that your school improves teaching and learning by making sure that more lessons are planned with interesting activities in mind. We have also recommended that the school should keep good records of your progress and use these to set you challenging targets and make sure that you know what you need to do to improve your work. We have recommended that subject leaders take more of a lead in sharing good practice across the school.

We were pleased to see your active approach to many aspects of school life, including the 'Wizard of Oz' which was being performed during the inspection. Many of you are sports leaders, and your local primary schools really appreciate the contribution that you make. We were impressed with how active your school council is. We were pleased to note your concerns for those in the world less fortunate than yourselves.

Your headteacher and his colleagues are working hard to make sure that the school improves all the time. You can help by continuing your good attendance and behaviour and by working hard in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour

Her Majesty's Inspector

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