

Brighton Hill Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116441
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357968
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Russell HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrence Jolly
Headteacher	David Eyre
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Forty lessons were observed, taught by 39 teachers; there were also a number of short visits to lessons. Meetings were held with students, staff and members of the governing body, and telephone discussions were held with a local authority officer. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, 102 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.

- Whether all groups of students, particularly those of lower-ability, make at least satisfactory progress.
- Whether teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of all groups of students.
- The way in which leaders monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness.

Information about the school

Brighton Hill is larger than most secondary schools. The large majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school is a specialist sports college and a training school. It holds a number of other awards including Healthy School status.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' achievement, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the governing body.

Brighton Hill has a number of significant strengths. Students are well cared for and supported, and the way in which the school keeps them safe is exemplary. Most aspects of their personal development, such as the way in which they make a contribution to the school, are good. There have also been a number of important improvements recently, most notably to students' attendance, which has increased dramatically. Behaviour is also improving and there have been a number of useful changes to the curriculum.

However, examination results have fallen over the past three years, particularly in 2010, because students are not making enough progress as they move through the school. This is especially the case for lower-ability students; it is also particularly the case in mathematics. The reason for this dip in achievement is the variability in the quality of teaching. While much is good and some is outstanding, too much teaching is inadequate or barely satisfactory.

Leaders have demonstrated the capacity to make the necessary improvements. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, although their views of some aspects of the school's work are overly positive. They acknowledge the sharp decline in achievement and recognise that the key to improvement lies in more consistent teaching. They know where the weaker and strong teaching is to be found and are working to reduce the variability; this is gradually leading to better teaching. This in turn is leading to improvements in achievement, particularly in the lower year groups, although the attainment of Key Stage 4 students in particular is still too low, given their abilities. The governing body provides some useful support, but the way in which it challenges the school's leaders is not sufficiently focused on the key areas of achievement and teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall achievement of all groups of students, particularly those of lower ability, and raise achievement in mathematics.
- Reduce the variability in teaching by ensuring that, in all lessons:
 - the work is appropriate for students of different abilities, so that everyone is challenged appropriately and everyone can make progress

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- teachers use skilled questioning to engage and challenge students, enabling them to achieve more
- teachers make consistent use of the behaviour policy.
- Ensure that the governing body provides appropriate challenge to the school's leaders, focusing on the key areas of achievement and the quality of teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Students' achievement is inadequate: their attainment at the end of Year 11 is average, but they do not make as much progress as they should as they move through the school. Examination results have declined in recent years from a previously very strong position. Until a few years ago, they were significantly above national averages by almost all measures; in 2009 and 2010, they were broadly average.

Patterns of achievement across different groups are variable. Lower-ability students and most of those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities make less progress than others. This is because the work in lessons is often not closely matched to their needs. The exception is the group of students with more significant needs who receive specialist support outside of lessons: this support is well focused and enables these students to make better progress than others.

Students are polite and courteous. They say that they feel safe in school and are very well supported by staff. They behave well around the site and in most lessons, although misbehaviour does occur in a few lessons. Most of the younger students have good attitudes and respond enthusiastically to effective teaching. This is also true of most older students, although some can be rather uninterested and difficult to motivate at times. Most students collaborate well with each other in group work. Most speak with confidence, although some are more reticent.

A large number of students take up the wide range of opportunities to contribute to the school community. Specialist status plays an important part here, as many students act as sports leaders at Brighton Hill and other schools. Many students in Years 10 and 11 also play a valuable role by acting as peer mentors for younger students. The school also does much to help students enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Everyone has at least three hours of physical education (PE) per week and a large proportion of students take part in extra-curricular sporting activities.

Attendance is an area of particular improvement. It was low in 2007/09, but improved last year and was just below the national average. It has continued to improve this year. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has fallen appreciably, although it is still relatively high.

The extent to which students develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being is satisfactory. There are some notable strengths, such as the way in which the school helps students to prepare for their next steps when they reach the end of Year 11. As a result, almost all go on to education, employment or training. However, while students leave with average levels of attainment, in many cases, their basic skills such as numeracy are not as well developed as they should be given their abilities.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	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 overall quality of teaching is inadequate because it is too variable. There is much good teaching and provision in some subjects, such as the specialist subject of PE, is consistently strong. However, too many lessons do not enable students to make sufficient progress. To some extent, this reflects a period of relatively high staff mobility as, at times, the school has struggled to recruit new teachers. In the best lessons seen during the inspection, students made rapid progress because activities were varied, they were very interested by the work and the pace of learning was brisk. Teaching took full account of students' targets and current levels and students were closely involved in assessing their own and each other's work. This motivated them and helped them to achieve more.

Where teaching is less effective, it is normally because the teacher has taken too little account of individual students' abilities and what students already know and are able to do. This means that students are sometimes insufficiently challenged because the work is too easy or because they are simply repeating things that they can already do. In some cases, activities are too difficult for lower-ability students and they struggle to make any progress. Teachers' questioning skills are also variable. In many cases, questioning is not probing enough to capture students' interest or test and extend their understanding. Behaviour sometimes deteriorates in less-effective lessons when teachers do not make appropriate use of the school's behaviour policy. ♦

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The curriculum has many strengths, including the way in which it supports students' personal development. The sports specialism supports a number of popular extra-curricular activities. Leaders recognised that the curriculum was not as closely matched to students' needs and interests as it could be and have made a range of changes. While these curriculum changes have been carefully considered, it is too early to see their impact on students' achievement. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop students' basic skills, such as numeracy and literacy, in lessons.

The way in which staff care for and support the students is a notable strength. Good arrangements are established to support students' smooth transition into the school. Students are also well supported when they choose their Key Stage 4 option subjects or plan for the future when they are in Year 11. The recent introduction of a support centre for students who have become disengaged and disruptive is helping to promote better attendance and behaviour from these students. The appointment of staff to manage attendance and work more closely with parents and carers has led to much better attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
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?

Leaders are ambitious for the school. They recognise the need to improve the consistency of teaching and a range of strategies are in place, including a useful programme of professional development. Lessons are observed and monitored and this has had positive impact on the quality of teaching. The results of lesson monitoring are analysed, but the analysis is not detailed enough to identify trends and patterns in teaching with sufficient precision to establish consistency. For example, leaders do not analyse differences between the quality of teaching in the two key stages. Staff morale is good and the overwhelming majority of staff who replied to the inspection questionnaire said that they were proud to work at Brighton Hill.

Students' achievement is tracked on a regular basis by individual faculty areas, allowing staff to identify and offer useful additional support to underachieving students. This gives senior leaders a broad picture of achievement, but they do not make full use of the data, for example, to look for patterns and trends, evaluate the impact of actions or monitor the progress of different groups. Levels of achievement across different groups are variable, although the school records, monitors and vigorously tackles any discrimination.

The governing body is committed to the school and discharges its statutory duties appropriately. However, the way in which the governing body monitors the school's work is not giving governors a sufficiently clear understanding of the school's strengths and

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weaknesses. The governing body does not provide sufficient challenge to leaders on the key areas for the school: whether teaching is improving and whether groups of students are making enough progress.

A range of constructive work, including some undertaken as a specialist sports college, contributes to community cohesion within school and the local area; the formal planning and evaluation of this work are less well developed. Partnership work has a positive impact on the school's provision. Close work with a range of agencies, for example, helps the group of students with more significant special educational needs and/or disabilities to make better progress than other students.

The school's systems for safeguarding have many exemplary features; for example, all visitors are photographed at reception and provided with photographic identification badges before they enter the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was relatively low. While some parents and carers wrote with positive comments, many had concerns. The majority of these related to variability in the quality of teaching and its effect on students' progress; some referred to the impact of staff changes and temporary staff. These comments matched the findings of the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brighton Hill Community College 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 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	22	68	67	8	8	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	18	18	75	74	8	8	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	26	62	31	11	11	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	20	60	59	12	12	5	5
The teaching is good at this school	8	8	69	68	17	17	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	10	64	63	19	19	7	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	11	69	68	19	19	2	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)	13	13	69	68	8	8	4	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	14	62	61	20	20	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	10	63	62	20	20	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	13	62	61	21	21	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	19	19	55	54	17	17	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	16	66	65	11	11	4	4

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.



25 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Brighton Hill Community College, Basingstoke RG22 4HS

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings.

The inspection team found that the school has a number of strengths, but also some important weaknesses. We have, therefore, given the school a 'notice to improve'. This means that the school will be inspected again next year.

The way in which staff support you is good and the way in which they keep you safe is excellent. Many aspects of your personal development, such as the way in which you contribute to the school community, are good. Your attendance has improved considerably.

The main problem is that the quality of teaching is too variable. Many lessons are good and some are excellent, but too many are not good enough. In particular, work in some lessons does not take sufficient account of your abilities and what you already know and can do. This means that you do not make as much progress as you could as you move through the school, particularly those of you who find learning more difficult and particularly in mathematics. As a result, examination results have fallen over the past three years. We have asked the school to improve the less-effective lessons so that you are able to achieve more. We have also asked them to ensure that behaviour improves in the few lessons where it is a problem.

We have also asked the school's governing body to question and challenge the school's leaders more about teaching and achievement. Nevertheless, the school's leaders know what to do to improve the school. They have already made some important improvements.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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