

Broad oak Mathematics and Computing College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109315
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	356524
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Harrett 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	901
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Brock
Headteacher	Shelagh Pritchard
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 33 lessons taught by 33 teachers. They held meetings with teachers, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment and tracking data for pupils, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, documents concerning self-evaluation and the school improvement plan, and documents and policies relating to safeguarding and other issues. Questionnaires from students and staff were analysed along with 173 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

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

- Whether the decline in recent years in attainment and progress, particularly in English and mathematics, has been reversed.
- How well teaching and assessment meet the needs of individuals and groups of students across subjects and year groups.
- Whether the curriculum meets students' individual needs.
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels in driving improvement in achievement and whether this is sufficiently rapid and secure.

Information about the school

This oversubscribed school is average in size. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is below average, but the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has specialist status mathematics and computing. It has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School status, Artsmark and Sportsmark. The school works in partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Twenty-seven teachers left the school in the two years up to July 2009. The headteacher took up her post in September 2009. Staffing in the school is now stable.

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

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and improving. Good leadership and management have raised the quality of the curriculum and teaching and learning after a period of uncertainty so that achievement is improving. The good quality of care guidance and support ensures that students feel safe in school and that their personal development is good.

Turbulence in staffing had an adverse impact on achievement. Consequently, attainment at the end of Year 11 in 2009 and 2010 was low. In 2010, students made inadequate progress overall and in English. Targets in specialist subjects were not met. However, the good leadership of the new headteacher has halted this decline. There is robust evidence from the school's own data and from observations during the inspection that achievement is improving throughout the school. Consequently, attainment is now broadly average, with improvements in mathematics and English. Learning and progress are satisfactory and improving, with any gaps between groups and year groups narrowing.

The reversal of the school's fortunes has been achieved by leaders and managers taking targeted, focused and decisive action. Students are following courses that reflect their needs and aspirations more clearly, with accreditation that more accurately reflects their ability. This is particularly the case in science and for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with an increasing proportion that is good. The school is rigorous in monitoring it and judges its quality and strengths accurately while identifying areas for improvement for the whole staff and for individual teachers.

Although assessment is satisfactory and the use of data to raise achievement has improved, assessment of written work in exercise books is relatively weak. There are examples of good practice, but there is considerable inconsistency within and between subjects in its frequency and quality, particularly in stating clearly and regularly what students have achieved and the precise steps that they should take to improve their work. Although lesson planning is consistently satisfactory throughout the school, assessment for groups and individuals does not usually lead to plans being tailored to take account of differing needs, with most concentrating on whole-class activities. Although attainment has risen in English, progress in writing remains relatively weak. There are insufficient opportunities within the subject and across the curriculum for students to tackle extended writing tasks for a range of purposes. In English, the assessment of writing does not consistently provide sufficient detail on what the students should do to improve their work.

The considerable task of improving achievement required decisive leadership. Leaders and managers have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have put in place new structures to plan for improvement and to monitor progress, involving a wide range of staff in doing so. Policies for improving teaching and learning

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have been developed carefully and accompanied by rigorous and accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior and middle leaders. The level of confidence in the process and in the school is rightly high. Parents and carers, staff and pupils expressed satisfaction with the leadership of the school in questionnaires and are positive about the school's future. Students show their commitment to their education by their excellent attendance. The improvements made so far, after a period in which the quality of achievement declined, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve, achieved through good leadership and management in difficult circumstances.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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 the quality and use of the assessment of written work across the school by:
 - establishing clear expectations of the regularity and quality of assessment
 - ensuring that assessment of written work clearly states what has been achieved and identifies precise next steps for improving standards
 - using information from assessment in lesson planning to provide activities tailored to meet the needs of groups of students and individuals
 - monitoring the use of assessment across the school.
- Raise attainment and improve progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that writing is given more prominence in the planning for learning in English in all year groups, with more opportunities to write in a range of styles for different purposes
 - ensuring that the planned opportunities promote progression in important skills for improving writing
 - ensuring that writing in English is marked regularly, with a focus on what has been achieved and the next steps for learning, so that students are aware of how to improve their work and so that teachers can plan activities tailored to their particular needs
 - providing more opportunities for writing in other subjects and monitoring the range and quality of this work across the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly average, though with fewer students than is usual at the top end of the ability range. Attainment declined overall in the last two years. The proportion gaining five good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics remained static while the figures improved nationally, so that the school's position in comparison was increasingly low. However, this situation has now been halted and attainment is now broadly average and improving, with clear indications that the progress being made in different year groups is building the capacity for sustaining improvement. Learning and progress are satisfactory overall, with increasing proportions making good progress in lessons throughout the school. Gaps in learning and progress

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between groups are narrowing and those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. This is achieved by careful, tailored intervention and support for groups and for individuals within lessons and additional sessions and by ensuring that such students follow appropriate courses in the curriculum. In discussion, students expressed a high level of enjoyment in their learning and displayed this in classrooms, particularly where the teaching was good and involved them in their learning. For example, in a good science lesson on heat transfer by conduction, convection and radiation, students were absorbed in the practical activities, working safely and well to reach their individual objectives. Clear objectives and ongoing assessment of their own work meant that they were engrossed in their learning and in considering how to improve their understanding. The students behaved well and worked briskly and effectively.

Students behaved well in the lessons observed and around the school. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and spoke highly of the opportunities for physical exercise in the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A good programme of assemblies, trips and visits to the school by a wide range of individuals and organisations, including the Royal Shakespeare Company, makes a good contribution to their development. However, the students' knowledge and understanding of different cultures is less well developed. Although they are well prepared for their future economic well-being by being given many opportunities to develop important skills, their basic skills are less well developed, though this is improving. Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are more developed than those in literacy and numeracy.

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	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	1
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

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How effective is the provision?

The proportion of good teaching in the school is increasing, but is not consistent. Where the teaching is good, students are clear about the purpose of the lessons and they are motivated well by a range of activities that involve them in their learning. In such lessons, teachers ensure that their planning takes account of students' differing levels of attainment and needs so that they are all enabled to make good progress. Questioning is used well in such lessons to probe understanding and challenge the students to think deeply rather than simply to answer straightforward questions. Assessment within these lessons and of written work from previous lessons enables students to gauge their progress accurately. In satisfactory lessons, teachers, sometimes, spend too long introducing topics from the front of the class, leading to long periods when students remain passive, leaving insufficient time for them to get involved in the main purpose of the lesson. Such lessons tend to be planned with one series of tasks for all students, with too little attention to the differing needs of individuals or groups.

School leaders have prioritised improving the curriculum so that it provides a broader range of appropriate pathways for students and have done this successfully. The curriculum promotes improvement in achievement well and ensures that the personal development of the students is good. The specialist subject of ICT makes a good contribution to the curriculum and to the quality of teaching and learning, but basic skills in literacy and numeracy are not developed so well. Nevertheless, the increasing responsiveness of the curriculum to the needs of individual students has had a significant impact on raising achievement in the school and the full range of activities outside lessons is much appreciated by the students.

The school ensures that students are well prepared for joining the school and those who are about to leave are given a good range of advice and guidance, including visits to local colleges and good guidance about future courses and employment. The school works well with families to maintain high levels of attendance and reduce the very small proportion whose absence is persistent. Extensive mentoring arrangements support students well. The school works regularly and effectively with other professionals and agencies to ensure the safety and progress of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The good leadership of the headteacher has been the driving force behind reversing the decline in achievement and the road back to recovery. The improvement has been given a

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further boost by the appointment of the deputy headteacher, who has introduced rigorous and accurate analysis and use of data in driving improvements in achievement. The headteacher and deputy are supported ably by an effective leadership team. Robust monitoring of teaching and learning, in line with new policies, has enabled leaders to gain an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and to identify general areas for improvement as well as particular areas for individuals. Middle leaders are increasingly confident and effective in participating in this process and are starting to play a significant role in leading improvements in provision. The school is increasingly drawing on the growing expertise of staff to lead professional development, an area of priority which has been tackled successfully. The governing body is effective and professional. It holds the school to account effectively and provides good strategic direction and support. The governing body acknowledges that an area for their development is to improve communication and collaboration with parents, carers and the student body. Safeguarding complies with requirements and checks on staff are rigorous.

The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Rigorous and regular analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils ensures that any gaps in progress and attainment between groups of students are identified and action taken to close them. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Although the school can point to the success of many of its initiatives in this area, there is some unevenness in the students' understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and across the world. Evaluation of the school's work in this aspect lacks the rigour of self-evaluation in other areas. A particular strength of the school's leaders and managers is evident in the work undertaken to improve the extended services, which are now wide ranging and providing good provision for the school and wider community. This work demonstrates how well the school works in partnership with others, successfully promoting the personal development of students so that it is good and increasingly ensuring that the achievement of the students is satisfactory and improving throughout the school.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the quality of education and care at the school and in its leaders and managers. Many parents and carers made positive comments about the school, particularly about the commitment of staff and the extent to which their children enjoyed the school. Typical comments included, 'Teachers are approachable, professional and most helpful?. my child has exceeded my expectations?.teachers encourage a good rounded education.' One parent noted that, 'Our children can't wait to go in and have joined lots of the after- school clubs provided.' However, some parents and carers expressed concerns about poor behaviour, particularly stating that some lessons are disrupted by it. Inspectors spoke to students about behaviour informally around the school and in arranged discussions. They observed behaviour in lessons and around the school. They found, in common with the views of most of the parents and carers who completed questionnaires, that behaviour in lessons was good. However, they brought the concerns that were expressed to the attention of the school's leaders and managers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Broadoak Mathematics and Computing 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 173 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 901 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	44	84	49	10	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	77	45	93	54	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	78	45	85	49	8	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	48	79	46	9	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	39	93	54	6	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	31	100	58	17	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	23	103	60	18	10	2	1
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)	65	38	93	54	6	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	38	90	52	11	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	32	92	53	14	8	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	24	98	57	18	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	72	42	90	52	4	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	48	82	47	3	2	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



14 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Broadoak Mathematics and Computing College, Weston-super-Mare BS23 4NP

Thank you for the welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school recently and for your thoughtful contributions to discussions. After a period when many teachers left the schools and attainment dipped, we found that the school is once again on an improving trend. In your questionnaires and in our discussions with you, you told us that you enjoyed school and that you had faith in the school's leaders, teachers and other staff. Your excellent attendance shows how much you value your education. We found that you are right to value the school highly and that your school is well led and managed.

Broadoak provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Attainment is rising and is broadly average compared to other schools in England. You make satisfactory progress in your learning. The quality of the care you receive and of the curriculum are good. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but the amount of good teaching is increasing. You behave well and respond well to the many opportunities to get involved in the life of the school.

We have asked the school to improve two areas so that your progress can improve further. We found that marking of your work is inconsistent, both in terms of its frequency and usefulness. We have asked the school to establish a common approach which points out clearly what you have achieved and what you need to do to improve your work. We want teachers to use this information more carefully in planning your lessons. We have asked the school to increase the amount of writing that you do in English and in other subjects and to plan and mark this work very carefully so that you can make better progress in writing.

We wish you success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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