

Bentley Wood High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137178
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	397451
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Raymond Lau

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1024
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Lewis
Headteacher	Janice Howkins
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
School address	Bridges Road Stanmore Middlesex HA7 3NA
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Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	10–11 May 2012
Inspection number	397421



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Introduction

Inspection team

Raymond Lau	Additional inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional inspector
Elizabeth Bull	Additional inspector
Martin Marsh	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team sampled 43 lessons, observing 43 teachers. Eleven lessons were observed jointly with the members of the senior leadership team. A series of brief observations of learning in classrooms and around the school was also conducted. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors considered the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, scrutinised documentation including improvement plans, records and analyses of students' behaviour, the tracking of students' progress and examples of students' work. They looked at the school's attendance figures and monitoring information. They also analysed questionnaire responses from 49 staff, 78 parents and carers, and 170 students.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized girls secondary school. Most students are from backgrounds other than White British. Approximately two thirds of students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school recruits students from over 50 primary schools and has a high mobility rate of students; some do not start or complete their education at the school.

The school holds the Sportsmark, Artsmark, Healthy Schools, the Princess Diana and Basic Skills Awards. The school converted to academy status in August 2011. The school specialises in mathematics, computing and science. It exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The sixth form works in collaboration as part of Harrow Collegiate.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school which is highly inclusive. The senior leaders possess a relentless drive and ambition in ensuring that every individual succeeds. The school's motto, 'learning today: leading tomorrow' permeates through students' attitudes and the commitment of staff; all are united in working together.
- Achievement is outstanding. Students' progress is exceptional, resulting in above average attainment. This is especially strong in English, and their specialist status subjects, in particular, mathematics and science. Increasing numbers of students are attaining the highest grades at GCSE across many subjects.
- Outstanding teaching stimulates the students' passion, igniting their enthusiasm and interests for learning. Teachers skilfully plan a range of activities that are very well sequenced and meet the needs of all learners. The quality of assessment is exemplary and information gathered is used very effectively to accelerate students' progress.
- Students' behaviour around the school and their attitudes to learning in lessons are exemplary. Exceptional relationships exist between students which are developed through a culture of trust and learning. They support and stimulate each other to learn even more. Students understand the importance of safety and also make significant contributions to the life of the school and to the work of charities.
- The headteacher, governing body and senior and middle leadership teams collectively provide outstanding leadership in driving improvements and raising standards. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are highly effective. The curriculum is very well matched to students' needs and promotes student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- The sixth form is good. It is small but growing in size, and improving. Achievement is good and is rapidly rising as a result of increasingly effective teaching. Actions undertaken have accelerated achievement at AS level but have yet to impact at A2 level over time.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in the sixth form, by July 2015 to outstanding for all learners so that it is consistent with the high levels of achievement in the main school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with attainment found to be typically below the national average. Their progress thereafter is rapid and sustained and consequently attainment is above average by the end of Year 11. In 2011, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics was above the national average. These results have been consistently improving over time. Attainment in mathematics and science continues to rise and is consistently above average. Literacy is well developed across subject areas and highly targeted intervention work results in English attainment being above average and rising consistently. The school's strategies in improving the provision available for more capable students have increased the proportion of higher grades awarded in a large number of subjects. Current indications show attainment is set to rise further. Students' attainment in reading rapidly improves during their time in the school because of excellent intervention strategies and literacy provision, which results in attainment which is above average by the end of Year 9. Disabled students and those with special education needs, including students with specific literacy difficulties rapidly accelerate their reading ability, typically by 12 to 24 months.

In lessons seen during the inspection, students made at least good and often outstanding progress. This view is supported by the parents and carers, and by students. In Years 7 to 9 students display extremely positive attitudes to learning in the classroom. They respond to the outstanding teaching with enthusiasm and commitment and consequently develop a strong capability to think and work independently, and for teamwork. In a Year 9 art lesson, students worked collaboratively, thus, strengthening their social skills, to produce different mythical monsters. Their highly original creative thinking was evident in the structures they designed and in the colours they used. Achievement is accelerated, in particular in Years 10 and 11 by constantly effective teaching for all groups of learners. Older students continue to show high levels of concentration, engagement and motivation to learn and succeed. They develop rapidly into mature and reflective learners. In an outstanding Year 11 religious education lesson, students were preparing for examinations and as a result of effective teaching, demonstrated an exceptional knowledge and application of the syllabus. In particular, students articulated strong moral views concerning euthanasia and abortion. All groups of students make similarly outstanding progress. Students with disabilities and those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of their peers.

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Students enter the sixth form usually at the level found nationally. The 2011 A2 results were average. However, the AS results were significantly above average, demonstrating students' good progress. There is now a larger and increasing number of students attending this popular and growing sixth form. Students' strong independent study skills are evidence of their maturity and commitment.

Observations from the inspection show that the standards in the sixth form continue to rise rapidly. This is validated from early examination results and coursework data.

Quality of teaching

Over time, the teaching continues to be to an exceptional level. Almost all students, parents and carers support the view that teaching is effective. An increasing proportion of lessons are outstanding. The most effective lessons are characterised by teachers' excellent subject knowledge and planning that fully meets the needs of all learners. On rare occasions, some more able students are not sufficiently challenged. Very well targeted skilled questioning enables students to think, reflect and understand. The very skilful teaching in a Year 8 English lesson encapsulated and stimulated students' thinking and reflection, resulting in exceptional progress in their creation of poems. In a Year 11 Travel and Tourism lesson, excellent use of resources facilitated students to discuss and reflect, resulting in them making accelerated progress.

The development of literacy is strongly evident across the curriculum to support learning. For example, in Key Stage 3, there is innovative practice where students use ICT very effectively to design 'ibooks'. Activities typically facilitate students to speak, discuss, listen and debate topics and consequently strongly promote their social development. The teaching of reading is highly effective, especially regarding students with specific literacy needs. One student commented, 'I feel that the accelerated reading programme has helped me a lot, the incentives are really good. Reading has become a treat not a chore.' The teaching of disabled students and those with special educational needs is highly effective due to well-targeted support and intervention work.

The quality of assessment is exceptional. Students commented favourably on the relevance of homework to what they were learning in class. High quality marking is consistent across the school as is an effective dialogue between the teacher and the student. Students clearly know their targets and frequently review them to inform what they need to do next. In particular, teachers' understanding of specific examination criteria enables students to achieve as well as they can.

There is good and increasingly outstanding teaching in the sixth form that results in rapidly accelerating students' achievement. In a Year 13 chemistry lesson, students worked in pairs, collaboratively solving and explaining complex equations and utilising teacher created 'video tutorials' to facilitate their learning. The excellent relationships between students increased their knowledge and understanding.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school has successfully created an inclusive atmosphere where mutual respect exists. Parents and carers are mostly positive in their views about behaviour and safety, although a very small minority expressed concerns about behaviour in lessons. Almost all students had very positive views about behaviour and safety. The inspection team concluded that the behaviour and safety of students over time was outstanding and this is confirmed by school records.

Students typically display strong support for each other in their enthusiastic attitudes to learning. The overwhelming majority of students enjoy coming to school, which is demonstrated by their above average attendance. Very few students were deemed to be persistently absent. The school's highly effective behaviour systems ensure that exclusions are extremely low. Students say they feel very safe in the school and this was confirmed through the student and parental questionnaires. They were able to explain how to keep safe and what constitutes unsafe practices. Students articulated an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying and discrimination, including cyber and homophobic bullying. They stated that the school tackled any bullying very effectively, and that some students act as 'peer mentors' to support individuals.

Students' contributions to the school and community are truly exceptional; they have collectively fundraised over £17,500 for charities both locally and nationally in the last two years. Shoe boxes containing stationery have been sent to a school in Morocco. The school council is very proactive, including its work in enhancing the facilities and learning. A number of 'learning leaders' observe lessons, providing feedback to teachers to improve the learning and achievement of fellow students. The students act as ambassadors of the school, assisting in the teaching of modern languages and sport in local primary schools.

Leadership and management

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has facilitated a climate of trust and respect, galvanising her senior and middle leadership teams to maximise the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work. The management of teaching is outstanding. A very rigorous 'year by year' monitoring system enables middle leaders to adopt a personalised approach to their department and staff through a range of activities. The excellent management of performance enables tailored professional development that meets the needs and interests of all individual staff. The 'school improvement groups' proactively lead the school's key priorities. For example, the constructive feedback group have conducted research, delivered staff training and reviewed their initiatives such as the consistent use of green pen marking.

The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding and there is no discrimination. Through the excellent use of data and target setting an exceptional range of very specifically targeted interventions has led to outstanding achievement for all groups of learners. The sustained outstanding achievement and exceptional progress of students, above average attendance and very high quality of teaching

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demonstrate the school's outstanding capacity to improve further.

The curriculum meets students' needs extremely well by providing a very wide range of highly positive experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning. It also promotes their exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively through, for example, the enrichment and 'memorable moments' it provides via numerous trips, visits and clubs. In one such example, the senior school choir were seen rehearsing a song in three-part harmony with great accuracy. The school's specialist status has accelerated achievement in the specialist subject areas, promoted greater links within some of the feeder and partnership schools, thereby strengthening the teaching and learning further. The governing body is appropriately critical in holding the school to account and is very effective in carrying out its responsibilities. In conjunction with senior leaders, they are proactive in evaluating the quality of teaching. The arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements; for example, there are very robust procedures for vetting staff.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Achievement is increasing rapidly, in particular at AS level, as a result of better teaching and monitoring of students' grades. The improved quality of teaching is yet to impact consistently at A2 level, in a few subjects where students' performance is not as strong. The school is aware of this and is currently tackling these areas with clearly identified priorities and timescales for improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which 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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Bentley Wood High School, Stanmore, HA7 3NA.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you. These are our findings about your school.

- You go to an outstanding school that is exceptionally well led and managed, where achievement and teaching are both outstanding. Your sixth form is good but continues to improve at a rapid rate.
- You are polite, mature and responsible individuals, actively contributing to your own learning and that of others. As a result, we have judged your behaviour and awareness of safety issues to be outstanding.
- All of you feel safe, and were able to say very clearly how to keep safe. In the questionnaire that some of you completed, almost all of you said you liked attending school; this is shown by your high levels of attendance.
- You make an exceptional contribution to the school and to the community, including raising significant amounts of money for charities. You have an active school council and lots of leadership opportunities, such as 'leading learners'.
- There is a diverse range of extra-curricular activities on offer, especially in sport and the arts. We enjoyed listening to your senior choir singing with such enthusiasm and energy. We saw the proud displays showing the exceptional and memorable moments of your school, such as your 'International day' and some of you assisting in teaching languages in the primary schools.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to make improvements to your school by:

- improving the achievement of those in the sixth form to compare more favourably with the outstanding achievement in the main school.

Those of you in the sixth form can help with this improvement by continuing to work hard and achieve your best. I wish you the best of luck in your future studies.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Lau
Lead inspector

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