

Belle Vue Girls' School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	138087
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	398287
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Mick Hill

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	1128
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynette Kirk
Headteacher	Mary Copeland
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2009
School address	Thorn Lane Bingley Road Bradford BD9 6NA
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mick Hill	Additional Inspector
John Hucker	Additional Inspector
Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Additional Inspector
Jackie Jackson-Smith	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 43 lessons and 43 teachers across a range of subject areas and all key stages. A further set of brief observations was carried out specifically to examine behaviour. In addition, inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers, groups of students, and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised a full range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, assessment information, records of lesson observations and information related to students' behaviour and their safety in school. 207 questionnaires from parents and carers, and all those returned by students and teachers were analysed.

Information about the school

Belle Vue is a larger than average-sized girls' secondary school. Almost all students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Pakistani heritage. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is very high. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above that found nationally. A well above-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It is designated as a specialist academy for languages and science with mathematics and it converted to academy status in April 2012. The school has Investors in People status and has the International Schools Award and Healthy Schools 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school because school leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are ensuring that the majority of teaching is good or better. It is not outstanding because a minority of lessons remain in which teaching is satisfactory.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. Effective leadership is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching which is satisfactory and improving. The guidance provided to students on their choice of courses is also improving.
- There is a rising trend in both GCSE and Advanced level examination results. The progress made by the majority of students is good. That made by those in the sixth form is satisfactory and rising.
- School leaders are successfully improving the quality of teaching through the effective management of teachers' performance, linked to focused professional development. As a result, most teaching is good or better and none is inadequate. This gives the school's mission of 'educating the woman of tomorrow' real substance.
- Students greatly enjoy school and are very keen to learn. As a result their behaviour is outstanding. Poor behaviour is unusual and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively. Students say they feel safe and that bullying is rare, and when it happens, it is tackled robustly.
- The leadership provided by senior leaders is driving improvement. Middle leaders are developing in confidence, but have further to go in taking responsibility for improvement. Governance is strong and directly engaged in monitoring performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Strengthen the quality of teaching overall, and in the sixth form, so that it is at least good with a high proportion of outstanding practice, by:
 - promoting greater levels of active and independent learning
 - ensuring the effective use of in-class support
 - improving the quality of written feedback so that students know what they need to do to improve
 - systematically planning to extend students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in lessons, building on the strong provision of extra-curricular opportunities.

- Further develop the role of middle leaders in driving improvement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students join the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment that are well below average. They make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 4 reach broadly average levels of attainment. The majority continue their education in the sixth form, which welcomes students with a wide range of abilities. They make satisfactory and improving progress overall in the sixth form, and good progress in portfolio-based vocational courses.

Disabled students, those with special educational needs, and the well above average proportion known to be eligible for free school meals make progress similar to that of their peers. Intervention to improve the reading, writing and communication of students in Key Stage 3 is having a measurable impact on raising literacy levels. As a result these students are better equipped to access learning in all subjects. Similarly, students entering the sixth form are effectively supported through the school's English for Academic Purposes programme.

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say they are happy with the progress their children make in the school. Students are keen to learn and respond positively to opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning or to work independently. However, progress in some lessons is impeded because students are given too little opportunity to take the initiative and develop as independent learners. Opportunities to accelerate progress are also missed when other adults available to support students in lessons are not used to best effect.

Scrutiny of students' work shows that teachers are diligent in marking work and making comments which celebrate effort. The school has a clear and appropriate marking policy. This advises developmental comments and gives guidance on the correction of spellings. Inspectors found that this policy is not being consistently applied with the result that the regular marking undertaken by teachers is not as effective in driving progress and improving literacy skills as it could be.

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Quality of teaching

Parents, carers and students express satisfaction with the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence supports this view. The quality of the large majority of teaching is good or better, including the teaching of disabled students and those with special educational needs. It is having a positive impact on students' progress in lessons and over time. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall, but is improving and examples of good and better teaching were observed.

Students take pride in their work, help each other, and enjoy learning. They have very positive relationships with adults and each other. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers have a secure understanding of the students' needs, including those of disabled students and those with special educational needs, which informs their teaching. This was noted in a Year 7 Arabic lesson where the tasks were carefully matched to students' abilities. Homework is regularly set which extends students' learning beyond the classroom.

Good or better teaching is characterised by the active involvement of students and the opportunity to work independently on challenging tasks suited to their abilities. In a Year 10 art and design lesson on aboriginal painting, for example, students assessed each other's work critically but with sensitivity. They then worked independently, applying the techniques they had seen demonstrated with effective support from the teacher and support assistants. The teacher's comments on their work ensured students knew what they needed to do to improve.

Where the teaching observed was satisfactory, inspectors noted too much talking by the teacher. One consequence of this was that classroom assistants were passive observers, with too little opportunity to work alongside different students in support of their learning. While there is a consistent approach to lesson planning throughout the school, this planning takes too little account of the most effective use of extra support where this is available. In addition, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not sufficiently focused on, with the result that opportunities for this are not planned for and taken in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students are enthusiastic about learning and display very high levels of engagement in lessons. They are courteous and helpful to visitors and to each other. In and out of lessons they show respect towards adults. Attendance, which had been low in comparison with national averages, has improved dramatically in the past year and is now above average. This is because the school has made attendance and punctuality a priority, effectively communicating to parents, carers and students the negative effects of poor attendance and celebrating and rewarding good attendance.

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe that their children feel safe in school. A similarly large majority of students

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agree. Students understand about risks inside and outside school and know how to manage their own safety. They are acutely aware of different types of bullying, for example cyber-bullying. The school takes the risk of this form of bullying very seriously and has successfully instituted cyber-bullying mentors. Students are confident that bullying will be dealt with effectively. There is a focus on restorative justice, which ensures that students learn to accept responsibility for how they treat others.

A small minority of parents and carers in response to the questionnaire said that their children's lessons were occasionally disrupted by bad behaviour. Few students responding to the questionnaire, and none of those who spoke with inspectors, expressed any strong concerns on this matter. School records give a similar picture. Inspectors paid close attention to behaviour in lessons and carried out additional brief observations of lessons focused on behaviour. Inspectors judge behaviour in lessons and around the school to be outstanding.

Leadership and management

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire appreciate the efforts made by the school; almost all would recommend it to others. The governing body and senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are determined to secure improvement. In the past year, leaders and managers have successfully turned their attention to improving achievement in the sixth form. As a result, weaknesses in achievement in AS and A levels are being tackled well and students' progress in these courses is improving. This is because teaching is improving and students are better guided and supported. The school's good capacity to improve is seen in the steady progress towards its ambition that teaching is always at least good.

The monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching, the management of performance and the quality of staff training are strengths. Staff morale is high because they can see the impact their good teaching is having on students' achievement. Middle leaders are keen to develop their role in driving improvement. They are ready to take on greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and for sharing best practice across the school.

The curriculum ensures equality of opportunity and meets the needs and aspirations of students. It successfully prepares students for their next steps as educated 'women of tomorrow'. Its effectiveness is reviewed regularly and adjustments made as necessary. This is seen in the more effective 'pathways' model introduced in the sixth form. As a result, most students move on to employment, education or training. An example of the effective careers guidance available to students was provided in a Year 12 sports studies lesson. Each of the six students outlined her ambitions for further study and future career choices, explaining how these linked to their programmes of study.

The languages and science with mathematics specialism has a positive impact on

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students' learning, for example, through the use of specialists to teach the mathematical elements of A and AS level courses. The mixed-aged tutor groups and the wide range of enrichment activities, including links with schools in China and Gambia, promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outside lessons. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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.



6 July 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Belle Vue Girls' School, Bradford BD9 6NA

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you and took careful note of your views and those of your parents and carers in making our judgements about the school.

We were very impressed by your enthusiasm for learning and your friendliness. We were also pleased to learn of your greatly improved attendance rates. You told us that you feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. You said if bullying does happen it is dealt with quickly and well by staff. We think that your behaviour in school is outstanding.

We judge your school to be providing you with a good education. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. As a result you make good progress in most of your lessons. The headteacher and her staff are determined to give you the best possible start in life. We have suggested some ways in which they can further improve your education. These are:

- making sure that all teaching is as good as the best
- giving you more opportunities to work independently and actively
- making better use of the staff who support you and your teachers in lessons
- improving the quality of the written feedback on your work so that it helps you improve
- building into your lessons more opportunities for you to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally
- sharing responsibility for improving the school more widely.

You can all play an important part in making your school even better by continuing to work hard and attending regularly. We wish you all happy and successful futures.

Yours sincerely

Mick Hill
Lead inspector

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