

The Bemrose School

Uttoxeter New Road, Derby, DE22 3HU

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Achievement in English, mathematics and most other subjects except science is better than is seen nationally. Science requires further improvement but is improving rapidly. The school achieved its best ever examination results in 2012.
- The quality of teaching is mainly good, although there is little outstanding practice. The teaching of English is a particular strength and the provision for students who are in the early stages of learning English is excellent.
- Support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs in the main school and in the 'Elmtree' autism unit is good.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Students are able to achieve well in this warm and cohesive community. Attendance is improving, although still below average. Pastoral care and support are good.
- Governors and senior leaders have a good grasp of the strengths and weakness of the school. Self-evaluation is rigorous and judgements about the quality of teaching are accurate. The targeted actions of senior leaders are improving teaching and outcomes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too little teaching is outstanding, leading to merely good achievement over time.
- Some teachers do not take sufficient account of the differing needs of students when preparing lessons.
- When marking students' books, most teachers correct mistakes in spelling, grammar and the use of punctuation but some do not.
- Some students are absent too often.
- White British boys make less than expected progress.
- The sixth form requires improvement because A level attainment, although now strongly improving, is not yet high enough.
- Members of the governing body ensure that resources are managed effectively but they are less secure in their understanding of the school performance data.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at short notice.
- Inspectors observed 35 lessons taught by 35 teachers.
- Meetings were held with staff, students, a parent governor and a representative of the local authority.
- In planning the inspection, inspectors noted that there were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The views of 35 parents and 26 staff expressed in paper questionnaires were taken into consideration. A survey of parents' views conducted previously by the school was also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including plans, reviews, policies, students' work and reports about the school from the local authority.

Inspection team

David Anstead, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Melvyn Blackband

Additional Inspector

Lisa Fraser

Additional Inspector

Kevin Harrison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- Around three-quarters of students come from several minority ethnic groups with the majority being of Pakistani heritage. More than half of the students are learning English as an additional language. This is a much higher-than-usual proportion.
- The school has a specialist language unit which it operates on behalf of all the local authority schools. Students arriving in the country with little or no spoken English spend six weeks at the unit receiving intensive tuition in English as an additional language. Those students who have not attended a school before are taught classroom etiquette.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- There is specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. A specialist autism unit, known as 'Elmtree', is attached to the school. It caters for nine students with more severe autism and challenging behaviour.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expected for students' attainment and progress.
- A representative of the local authority is Chair of the Trust to which this school and a neighbouring secondary school belong and which was formed since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement overall and especially in science, the sixth form and of White British boys by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use the information they have about students' prior attainment and their individual needs to plan work of appropriate challenge for all abilities in the class
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently good and increasing the proportion of teaching that is outstanding
 - ensuring that all teachers promote a high standard of literacy whatever the teacher's specialist subject
 - raising attendance overall, and of White British boys in particular, to the national average.
- Strengthen governance by helping some members of the governing body to analyse trends in performance data.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment on entry is well below average. The proportion of students making and exceeding the expected three levels of progress in English and mathematics by the time they leave school is greater than is seen nationally from a range of starting points. Attainment at GCSE remains below average but has improved consistently year-on-year since 2004, and the gap with the national average is closing rapidly.
- Progress in other subjects is generally good but not in science. In 2011, achievement in science was inadequate but the 2012 results were markedly better. Results already awarded to current Year 11 students confirm the school's prediction that science achievement will improve further in 2013.
- Students of Pakistani heritage, those learning English as an additional language, those eligible for the pupil premium and disabled students and those who have special educational needs make better progress than the same groups do nationally. Some White British boys, however, make less-than-expected progress.
- Students attending the Elmtree specialist autism unit and those attending the specialist language unit make good progress because they are taught well and well supported.
- These outcomes demonstrate that the school promotes equality of opportunity well and effectively tackles discrimination.
- Good achievement in English and mathematics means students are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Of Year 11 leavers in 2012, more than 97% progressed into one of these three options.
- Students joining the sixth form have low attainment on entry. In the past, the sixth form entry policy allowed some students to commence A-level courses when their prior attainment meant they had little chance of succeeding. The range of qualifications students can pursue is now appropriate to students' starting points. AS attainment is now close to average and A2 attainment, although sharply improved in 2012, was still below average.
- Around one third of sixth formers follow an appropriate one-year apprenticeship pathway which includes a single AS level qualification. As none of this group continue their AS level to A2, the published retention rates are much lower than they would otherwise be. Success rates now indicate achievement in the sixth form requires further improvement.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching seen during the inspection was good with a minority of lessons requiring improvement. No inadequate teaching was seen but in only one lesson was the quality of teaching outstanding. It is clear that the consistently good teaching students have experienced over time in most subjects is leading to their good achievement.
- Where teaching is best, notably in English and humanities lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan engaging and imaginative activities. In such lessons, teachers use information from earlier assessments well to plan activities of varying challenge which meet the range of needs in the class. Learning proceeds at a good pace and homework is used regularly to reinforce students' understanding. Question and answer sessions are used well to check and

extend students' understanding, with students being expected to give detailed responses.

- In the lessons where teaching was not good, especially in science, the pace of learning is slower because, for instance, teachers tend to talk for too long. The same work is set for all students, despite their different starting points, which means that tasks are too difficult for some and too easy for others.
- Teachers are provided with copious high-quality information about the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs in their classes. This is mostly used well by teachers in planning appropriate individualised work.
- Where teaching requires improvement, insufficient attention is often paid to the needs of these students in planning the lesson. However, even in such lessons, disabled students and those who have special educational needs generally still make good progress because of the strong and effective support they receive from teaching assistants, which compensates for the deficiencies in planning.
- Assessment of students' work is good. Books are regularly marked with teachers providing formative comments. Mistakes in the subject content are usually corrected but some teachers do not correct mistakes students make in their spelling, use of punctuation and grammar.
- Students in the early stages of learning English receive excellent support when learning in other subjects. They are accompanied by staff who specialise in teaching English as an additional language and who jointly teach the lesson with the subject teacher.
- Teaching in the Elmtree autism unit is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- A high priority is given to students' social and moral development. Students are helped to appreciate that while they may come from different places and backgrounds, at the school they are all members of one 'Bemrose community'. Students are proud to be members of this school and are proud too of their new school uniform. This is a harmonious and friendly community which embraces its diversity.
- There are effective strategies for promoting good behaviour which have had a noticeable impact. Students know what is expected of them and what is acceptable. Attitudes to learning and behaviour as students move about the school are generally good, although some sanctions are necessary. A handful of students are required to attend 'night school' where they learn apart from their friends in school during the evening.
- The school's behavioural records show that the number of incidents is waning and the need for the use of formal exclusion from school is declining. The pastoral team make good use of external support agencies and can demonstrate the marked improvement they have been able to bring about over time for some individual students.
- Students say bullying is not a problem at the school and that instances of homophobic and racist name-calling are rare. Sixth form students who have been at the school for six or more years are especially appreciative of how much behaviour has improved during that time. One girl said that she would defend Bemrose's reputation for good behaviour 'to the death'.
- The school fosters good relationships between different student groups.

- The vast majority of parents and carers responding to an Ofsted questionnaire agreed that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. Of the few who disagreed, all but two said they would still recommend the school to other parents. School staff were equally positive about the good behaviour and relationships at the school, with just a handful dissenting.
- Attendance has been low for several years. It improved last year to 92.5% when new pro-active and rigorous approaches to chasing up those with poor attendance were introduced. Seven prosecutions of parents and carers were brought for allowing poor attendance, with one of those resulting in a custodial sentence. Attendance is still below average though because the attendance of some White British students remains stubbornly low.

The leadership and management are good

- Self-evaluation is excellent and ensures strategic planning and improvement work is directed at the right priorities.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching is comprehensive and thorough. Outcomes of the annual audit inform the professional development programme provided for all staff and address individual development needs. Teachers whose teaching is deemed to be less than good by the school join a 'satisfactory teachers group' and receive additional coaching and support. Records show this approach has a good impact on improving teaching.
- Performance management is rigorous and linked to the statutory Teachers' Standards. Some teachers eligible to pass through the pay threshold have not done so because their performance was judged by the school to not meet the required standard. A few teachers who were successful previously have made slower progress up the upper pay spine than others because they missed their performance management targets.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with a good range of opportunities for students to access vocational training at other providers across the city. Opportunities for students to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are inconsistent. The school is aware of this and has made embedding literacy in learning in other subjects a whole-school priority for all teachers this year.
- Previously, the newly established sixth form curriculum was inadequate because the courses on offer were mostly inappropriate for the prior attainment of the students, leading to a high failure rate. It has been modified so that it now matches students' needs and it includes an innovative apprenticeship pathway which around one third of sixth formers access. Consequently, sixth form achievement is rapidly improving.
- The local authority provides good support to the school through training senior leaders in making accurate judgements of the quality of teaching and in quality assuring the rigour of self-evaluation. The Trust appoints most of the governors and holds the governing body and the school to account for its performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance effectively supports and challenges the school to improve. Searching questions are asked of senior leaders and learning directors about how they intend to improve aspects of the school's performance. The headteacher does not have things all her own way with, for example, members of the governing body rejecting her initial proposals to modify the curriculum and demanding she look again at protecting time for religious education in recognition of the diverse range of beliefs held by students at the school.

- The governing body uses the statutory principles of ‘best value’ well to underpin the management of resources.
- The governing body is too reliant on the Chair of the Trust and senior leaders in interpreting school data.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112951
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	401327

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	670
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Parnham
Headteacher	Jo Ward
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2009
Telephone number	01332 366711
Fax number	01332 296955
Email address	admin@bemrose.derby.sch.uk

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