

Beths Grammar School

Hartford Road, Bexley, DA5 1NE

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The academy successfully creates an atmosphere in which all students are extremely keen to learn and work very hard, and where mutual respect fosters an inclusive community focused on everyone reaching their potential.
- This atmosphere, together with the outstanding teaching, thorough monitoring of students' attainment and well-targeted support and revision, enables all students to make excellent progress and attain high standards.
- All students, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, achieve outstandingly well.
- Across all key stages and most subjects, the best teaching inspires students and engages them actively in demanding work. There are a few occasions when teaching is less interactive or less well matched to everyone's needs.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students' outstanding achievement and personal development prepare them exceptionally well for their future and enable them to gain entry to their preferred higher education or training course.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Students conduct themselves calmly and politely, and feel very safe.
- Leaders, managers and governors relentlessly pursue higher levels of achievement and personal development for students. They manage staff performance very effectively through a strong emphasis on meeting targets and improving teaching. Their sharp focus on areas of comparative weakness has successfully raised teaching quality and students' achievement in targeted subjects.
- The broad range of courses and enrichment activities, responsively tailored to meet students' needs and aspirations, provides students with highly memorable experiences that contribute to their excellent achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 50 lessons, of which 20 were joint observations with senior leaders.
- They also observed registrations, assembly and times between lessons, including lunchtime.
- They looked at students' work and spoke to students about it. They talked to students during break times, lessons and two meetings.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers and four governors.
- They took account of 115 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the academy's records of the attainment and progress of current students and data from the 2012 examinations, improvement planning and self-evaluation, lesson monitoring documents, policies, minutes of governing body meetings, behaviour and safeguarding records, exclusion data and attendance figures.

Inspection team

Gill Close, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jan Allcorn

Additional inspector

Patricia Barford

Additional inspector

Moazam Parvez

Additional inspector

Clifford Walker

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Full report

Information about this school

- Beths Grammar School is a boys' selective academy which admits girls into the sixth form. It is larger than the average secondary school.
- It converted to academy status in October 2010, keeping the same name as its predecessor school. It formed the Academy Trust under which it operates as an individual academy with its own governing body. It has retained emphases on technology, including mathematics, science and design and technology, and on languages, which were the specialist subjects in its predecessor school.
- One quarter of students are from a minority ethnic group, the largest being of Black African heritage, but fewer pupils than average speak a first language other than English.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- There is specialist provision for autism for up to eight students, with seven currently on roll. The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average, as are the proportions of students supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy exceeds the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education and the academy is a National Support School and Leadership Partner School, which involves providing support for other schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Relentlessly continue to raise the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and improve the little that is not yet consistently good, through increased consistency in:
 - giving opportunities to all students to participate actively, discuss complex ideas with others and assess their own progress against well-understood criteria
 - systematically checking students' understanding throughout lessons and adapting teaching accordingly
 - using assessment of students' work and data showing the progress of individual students and groups in relation to their starting points to match teaching closely to their needs
 - monitoring of teaching that focuses on every student's progress, identifies perceptive areas for development, then links support and future monitoring to them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Across all year groups, students make outstanding progress and reach high standards of attainment. Key reasons for this are the outstanding quality of teaching, the thorough tracking of attainment and the close match of courses, intervention and revision to each student's needs, as well as the success of the academy in setting an ethos in which everyone is keen to learn and works hard.
- In the sixth form, a very high proportion of students stay on after AS levels to continue to A levels, and attainment is high. Students make outstanding progress, with many commencing AS-level courses in Years 10 and 11 and taking examinations early, or studying for additional AS-level qualifications during enrichment time. The wide range of opportunities for studying and participation contributes to their successful preparation for the future.
- Students enter the academy with above average attainment. The few who join with standards in reading slightly below those of their peers are supported well in Year 7 and catch up quickly. Students read widely across subjects.
- Students are supported very well through the specialist provision for autism. This enables them to achieve outstandingly well. The school's thorough tracking of each student's attainment and its provision of support for those that fall behind ensure that all groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and those who are of Black African heritage, make excellent progress and achieve outstandingly well.
- In mathematics, the close matching of courses and entry times to each student's attainment enables them to make exceptional progress at GCSE, with a high proportion attaining grades A* and A. A large number then continues to advanced-level courses in mathematics where they also make excellent progress.
- Following a year of not quite such strong progress in English, current students are making outstanding progress across all year groups. Students also make outstanding progress in science. All students take GCSE courses in the specialist subjects of design and technology and modern foreign languages, selected from four options within each subject area. Although there was slightly less strong progress in a few of these options in 2012, current students are making at least good progress, and often outstanding progress, across year groups.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because of its strengths across all key stages and its contribution, together with intervention, revision and students' hard work, to outstanding achievement. In most subjects, much of the teaching is typically outstanding or consistently good. There are a few occasions when teaching dips below good, but these are not concentrated in particular subject areas.
- Teaching in the main school and sixth form is well informed by teachers' high level of subject knowledge. Students praise the good professional relationships with staff, who readily provide help when they are stuck or want to discuss how their work might be extended.
- Typically, the outstanding teaching excites students and gives them excellent opportunities to discuss complex ideas with each other. There are excellent examples of teachers using examination grade criteria to support students in understanding how to improve their work or hone their essay writing.
- The stronger teaching involved matching work closely to students' needs, informed by careful assessment. In such lessons, teachers posed challenging questions that required students to think hard and enabled them to deepen their understanding, so they learnt well, for example when justifying reasons for enclosures in a history lesson.
- On the few occasions where teaching dipped below good, students spent a long time listening to

the teacher and were given little opportunity to engage actively in discussing challenging ideas. Such teaching was not well enough informed by assessment of students' understanding and progress beforehand, or systematically during the lesson, to ensure that all students made at least good progress.

- The customised timetable and individual support for students in receipt of the specialist provision for autism enable them to make similar outstanding progress to their peers, including some excellent achievement in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students demonstrate outstanding attitudes to learning in lessons and in less formal contexts, such as the library. When teaching is outstanding, they are highly engaged as active and independent learners, managing their own learning very effectively.
- Behaviour around school, in the corridors, canteen and courtyards and on the school field, is also exemplary. Students are always courteous, respectful and very civilised.
- There is excellent mutual respect between students and between staff and students. The academy is an extremely cohesive community. New students in Year 7 speak very highly of quickly becoming part of the academy community as do girls joining the sixth form.
- Incidents of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, and of discriminatory and derogatory language, are infrequent. Students and parents and carers report that they are dealt with promptly and decisively.
- The level of exclusions is low because any unacceptable behaviour is handled consistently and fairly. Students who experience difficulty in controlling their own behaviour are supported very well so that their behaviour improves over time and their progress improves.
- Students' positive attitudes to school and learning are demonstrated in their excellent attendance, which is well above national averages for almost all groups, and their punctuality in arriving at school in the morning and in getting to lessons on time during the school day.
- Students learn very well how to keep themselves safe. They and their parents and carers overwhelmingly say that they feel safe and are happy at school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, governors and staff are completely focused on raising achievement and personal development to ever higher levels to enable all students to maximise their potential.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching thoroughly, particularly in subjects where results show any weaknesses. They link professional development to identified areas of need, and this quickly brings about improvement. Middle leaders also monitor and support teaching effectively. Performance management is used robustly to drive up teaching quality. In the records of lesson observations, there are some inconsistencies in the emphasis on each student's progress and the linking of perceptive areas for development to subsequent support and monitoring.
- A comprehensive system of improvement planning and evaluation, including analysing students' views, effectively involves all departments in setting targets that contribute to overall academy targets. It leads to improved achievement because weaknesses are identified and appropriate actions are then taken to overcome them. These actions include changes to various aspects of provision, such as teaching materials or revision, although they do not always involve improving teaching quality in lessons.
- Staff use the tracking of students' attainment and progress during each year very well to monitor and support individuals, and to keep students and parents and carers informed. They know the students well and make sure their targets are demanding, but the data do not show them readily the progress from students' starting points or of groups.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity extremely well, is highly successful in fostering

good relations between all groups of students and with staff, and is praised by students and parents and carers for tackling discrimination very effectively.

- Courses are carefully planned and evaluated to provide students with a rich range that meets their individual needs and enables them to acquire a substantial number of qualifications through taking some early, while still maintaining high levels of achievement. The popular and extensive enrichment opportunities, such as the Year 8 camping trip, contribute extremely well to students' high levels of achievement, behaviour and personal development.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and actively promote a culture of safety, for example through a contract on responsible use of information and communication technology.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is well focused on holding senior leaders to account and takes active steps in agreeing whether performance management targets are met
 - is based on a highly committed drive to improve and maintain outcomes, backed up by a strong understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses, which is informed by direct evidence from staff and students as well as senior leaders
 - is informed effectively by a range of well-understood data on achievement and behaviour, although the information is not always synthesised to provide analyses by groups or of progress across year groups since students' starting points.
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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	136334
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	395654

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,250
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rosemary Webdale
Headteacher	Mr James Skinner
Date of previous school inspection	not previously inspected
Telephone number	01322 556538
Fax number	01322 526224
Email address	admin@beths.bexley.sch.uk

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