

# Big Wood School

Bewcastle Road, Warren Hill, Nottingham, NG5 9PJ

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although more students are now gaining five GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics, the numbers making the progress expected of them are below national averages.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching and not enough lessons are good or better. Consequently, not enough more able students are reaching the higher levels
- Teachers do not always provide students with work which is challenging enough or have high enough expectations of what they can achieve.
- Although there is a marking policy in the school, it is not always followed by teachers so students are sometimes unsure about how to improve their work and achieve more.
- The new headteacher and her team have not had sufficient time to bring about all the improvements the school needs, particularly in teaching.
- Until recently, governors have not ensured that teaching and achievement are as good as they need to be.

### The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour is good. Students feel safe, have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Parents, carers and staff agree that the school is improving under the leadership of the headteacher and are pleased with positive changes already in place.
- The school supports students facing emotional difficulties well and skilled mentors and teaching assistants provide good one-to-one and small group help. Students know where they can go to get support when they are feeling vulnerable.
- Attendance is rising and the school acts quickly in cases where students are persistently absent.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons or parts of lessons, including additional support provided through intervention work. There were two joint observations with the senior leaders. Inspectors also observed three examples of school assemblies and tutor time for different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, two members of the governing body and the local authority representative.
- Students' views were sought throughout the inspection, including during lessons and break times, and inspectors met with four groups of students, including members of the school council.
- Inspectors took note of staff views during the inspection and 60 staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own data on students' progress, policies, planning and monitoring information.
- Inspectors paid close attention to school information on attendance, behaviour and all aspects of safeguarding.
- Parents' and carers' views were taken into account through the twelve responses to the online Parent View questionnaire during the inspection and views received by telephone.

## Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Simon Mosley	Additional Inspector
Beverley Mabey	Additional Inspector
Anne White	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Big Wood is smaller than the average secondary school.
- Approximately three quarters of students are of White British heritage. Many of the remainder have European or mixed heritage.
- The proportion of students that speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The number of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The number of students joining the school part way through the school year is in line with national figures.
- A small number of students in Year 10 and 11 attend courses off site in subjects such as construction and motor vehicle maintenance.
- At the time of the inspection, the new headteacher had been in her position for nine weeks.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better and leads to higher standards by ensuring that all teachers:
  - make better use of information about students' progress to plan lessons that meet their needs
  - involve students more in their learning by using questioning to check understanding and by directly engaging students in conversations about their progress
  - make sure that all students, but particularly the more able, are consistently set work that is appropriately demanding and leads to higher standards
  - have consistently high expectations of what their students can achieve
  - mark work more clearly so that students know precisely how they can improve and reach higher levels and grades.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, by ensuring:
  - leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching take into account evidence of its impact on students' progress and results
  - the progress of individual students is tracked more closely and action quickly taken in the case of any that are falling behind
  - teachers are given opportunities to observe the good practice in teaching that already exists in the school, so that this is more widely shared
  - the governing body regularly receives detailed information of students' achievement and teaching quality so that it can better hold the school to account for its effectiveness.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When students join the school in Year 7 they are, on average, slightly behind others nationally and leave in Year 11 in a similar position. Not enough students make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- Standards are improving as a result of improved teaching and other support. The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen. The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs without English and mathematics is now the best the school has ever achieved and is getting close to the national average.
- There is not enough good teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 and this is restricting students' progress. The proportion making expected progress by the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average. The proportion of more able students gaining the top A and A\* grades is low.
- The school has an early-entry policy for mathematics GCSE examinations and students complete this during Year 10. This is beginning to improve results in mathematics and more students are achieving at least grade C by the end of the year.
- The school's use of pupil premium funding is beginning to have an impact on students' achievement. The appointment of a key member of staff to oversee the use of this funding and improved monitoring mean that students' progress is more closely checked and suitable support put in place. As a result, students known to be eligible for free school meals are beginning to catch up with the others and are on target to achieve higher success rates in English, mathematics and science by the end of this school year.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve better than their peers and make good progress in English and mathematics. This is because the school identifies their needs early on and provides the right support for each individual student.
- Students who attend courses off site achieve well. They are motivated to learn because the school ensures that these courses offer good quality teaching and support at all times.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. Not enough lessons are good or better. This means that students' progress varies and not enough make rapid progress in English or mathematics.
- Teaching does not consistently enable enough students to learn well because:
  - planning varies in quality and does not consistently meet the needs of individual students or different ability groups in all classes
  - not all teachers expect enough of their students or set appropriately challenging tasks
  - teachers' checks on progress during lessons are not thorough enough and some students become restless, losing interest and concentration
  - teachers' marking does not give students enough detail about how they can improve their work.

- Students make the best progress in lessons where teachers regularly check that students' have understood the lesson and adapt their teaching where necessary. In the best lessons, students know their targets and make good use of their teacher's advice and comments to help themselves to improve further. However, these strengths are not evident in all lessons or subjects. As a result, a number of students are unable to make rapid progress.
- Teachers' do not always use questioning effectively and there are occasions when students' concentration and interest are lost because they are not able to share the full extent of their knowledge and understanding.
- Support staff make a good contribution to students' learning. They work well with teaching staff and their support is appreciated by teachers and students alike.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Almost all students are polite and well behaved around the school. They respond well in class, especially when teaching is good, and show positive attitudes to learning. Students co-operate well with staff and each other and work well as a team and in groups.
- Where teaching is less engaging, students occasionally lose their focus and become restless, but generally respond to teachers' reminders about their behaviour. The school manages behaviour well and staff are generally consistent in their use of the school behaviour policy. Students appreciate this and older students say that behaviour has improved.
- The small number of parents and carers who responded to Parent View and staff who completed the staff questionnaire agree that behaviour in lessons and around school has improved.
- Students are proud of their school community and older students speak positively about how the atmosphere has changed for the better. They treat each other with mutual respect and are tolerant of each other's differences. Some have trained as councillors and make themselves available to help and support their fellow students when they need a listening ear.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it occurs. Students understand risk and know about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, especially on the internet. There are few racist incidents and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. The school has been active in raising attendance and continues to tackle persistent absence. The school looks closely at the attendance of specific groups and this has been helpful in strengthening contact with families who struggle to ensure their children attend regularly. The number of exclusions is falling.
- Students' attendance at courses organised off-site is good. The school keeps a careful check on their attendance and liaises well with providers of these courses to ensure students enjoy and benefit from the education they receive.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership overall is not yet good because students' achievement and teaching require further

improvement. However, since taking up the position at the start of term, the headteacher and her leadership team have already made noticeable improvements within the school, particularly in the improvement in girls' achievement and that of students receiving free school meals.

- The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has formed a close working partnership with her team who know their roles and responsibilities and share her vision for making the school more successful. The school has recently introduced a better tracking system to measure students' progress more accurately and, whilst it is too soon for the impact of this initiative to be felt, it is indicative of the school's willingness to embrace new ideas.
  - The headteacher has introduced new systems for improving teaching by linking them more effectively with professional development programmes for individual staff. There is also a stronger emphasis on ensuring teaching brings about clear improvements in students' learning. These initiatives, too, are only in their early stages and have not yet generated the consistently good teaching the school needs.
  - The school offers students a range of different subject choices and enables them to learn through both school-based and work-related courses. Students benefit greatly from other trips, visits, clubs and activities, and from days where there is a focus for a whole day, such as the recent Year 9 visit from a poet.
  - The school has received close support from the local authority in the past but this has recently been changed to 'light touch' support following the achievement of better results and the appointment of a new headteacher.
  - Parents and carers appear to be happy with and supportive of the school. A parent spoke highly of the school's support for their child and the good feedback received through tutors.
  - All statutory safeguarding requirements are met. The school carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. All staff have undergone training at the required levels.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governance requires improvement. Although governors now work in close partnership with the school, they have been unable to ensure in the past that teaching and achievement are as good as they needed to be. There is now a clear determination across the governing body to improve standards, whilst holding on to a strong belief in each student as a unique individual. They know the students and their families and understand what is needed to help them to succeed. They ensure that finances are efficiently managed, and know precisely how the pupil premium money is spent. Governors have not in the past asked sufficiently searching questions about the school's work, for example how results compare with other schools, or identified exactly where further improvements were needed, but this is now improving. Similarly, their oversight over the way the school manages teachers' performance and relates pay to teachers' effectiveness in the classroom is much sharper; governors now regularly visit the school to check directly on achievement, the quality of teaching and leadership and management. This enables them to quickly challenge the school if they feel it should be doing better.
-

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122844
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	406117

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	744
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrea Healey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9539323
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9208052
<b>Email address</b>	admin@bigwood.nottingham.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

