

The Bramcote School

Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3GD

Inspection dates 9–10 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although achievement is improving, progress in English is not yet good enough because teaching in this subject is not consistently good.
- English teachers do not always make it clear to students what key things they are looking for in good writing.
- Teaching also varies across other subjects and, overall, there is not enough consistently good or outstanding teaching to promote good progress.
- Students are not always able to learn independently because often they do not know enough detail about how to achieve their targets.
- Information about students' performance is collected regularly but is not always used effectively by teachers to plan lessons matched to their individual needs. In some lessons, work is too hard or too easy for some students, and this slows progress.
- In some subjects, teachers' marking does not give students enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- When teachers of subjects other than English mark work, they do not all give enough attention to correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving rapidly because of the executive headteacher's drive and ambition for the students. He is ably supported by other leaders, including the governing body.
- Many students are on track to get good passes in a range of subjects.
- Students behave well and attendance is above average. Most students feel safe and are happy at school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength, evident in students' lively and creative work displayed around the school and their reflective response in lessons.
- Leaders are improving the quality of teaching. Teachers work together in this school and with others in the federation to share good practice.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 30 lessons or parts of lessons. Six of these were observations with senior leaders. They also made shorter visits to lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, governors, staff and groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of 42 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and phone calls from parents, and also looked at the school's own recent survey of parent opinions.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents about the school's work, including information about how well students achieve and the school's records relating to behaviour, attendance and exclusion. Inspectors considered the school's evidence of performance management and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Jackie Easter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Davis

Additional Inspector

David Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Bramcote School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school
- The school converted to an academy in October 2012. When its predecessor school, The Bramcote Park Business and Enterprise School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The school is part of the White Hills Park Federation Trust. It shares an executive headteacher and governing body with other schools in the federation.
- Most students are from White British heritage with a below-average proportion of students from minority ethnic groups. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is above average although the proportion of students supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- One student attends off-site provision at the Daybrook Learning Centre, organised by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons at the right level of difficulty so that lessons match the needs and abilities of the full range of students in the class and provide suitable challenge, particularly for the most able
 - promoting students' independence by providing detailed advice so that they know how to achieve their targets
 - ensuring that written feedback gives students clear guidance on how to improve their work and teachers provide opportunities for them to act on the advice.
- Improve achievement in English by ensuring that:
 - marking in all subjects gives attention to grammar, punctuation, spelling and presentation
 - English teachers make good use of success criteria so that students are very clear about what a quality written response looks like and what they have to do achieve their best
 - teaching in English is at least good, through consistently applying the above teaching points for improvement in English lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Overall, achievement is improving but progress in English is not yet good enough. When students join the school, standards in English and mathematics are broadly similar to those in other schools. In Year 11, though standards are broadly average, attainment in mathematics is higher than in English. The proportion of students making expected progress in English is below the 2012 national average.
- The proportion of students on track to achieve five A* to C grades in GCSE subjects or equivalent qualifications is high because a broad curriculum provides a range of opportunities for students to choose appropriate courses. The proportion on track to achieve five A* to C grades including English and mathematics is significantly lower.
- Most disabled students and those who have special education needs make progress similar to others at the school. Their needs are identified accurately and their progress is carefully tracked. A 'nurture group' provides good support to students with significant needs and has helped to ensure that these students make good progress.
- The schools' well-focused support has enabled reading to improve. Students show enjoyment of reading. The school library is used well and encourages and supports independent reading through a range of activities, interesting and stimulating displays, and a wide range of texts for loan.
- In Year 7, students who join the school with low reading ages are provided with intensive support through a personalised reading programme. Students enjoy the programme and say that it is helping them to improve their reading.
- The impact of pupil premium funding has been good. In English and mathematics, students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding are around one third of a grade behind other students, but gaps have narrowed in both English and mathematics due to well-planned interventions.
- Students benefit from a wide range of vocational courses across the federation and make good progress in these subjects. Where students receive alternative provision, this is effective, and the school checks on how well students are doing.
- Targeted early entry in GCSE mathematics for some students has had a positive impact on the number of students achieving a grade C or above. Able students entered early have not suffered; where they reached their challenging target grades they have started advanced courses.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although good and outstanding practice exists, teaching is not yet consistently good enough across all subjects to raise achievement. A higher proportion of good teaching is needed to move progress to good, especially in English.
- Not all teachers plan lessons that are individually matched to the needs of the range of students in the class. This means that, sometimes, more-able students, in particular, find the work too

easy or finish work quickly. Others sometimes struggle to keep up.

- Students have individual targets in the different subjects. However, teachers do not always use the information that they have about students' learning to make sure that students have detailed advice about how to reach their targets. This means that students cannot work towards their targets without direct help from the teacher.
- In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what the students can achieve based on good information about how well the students are doing. They build on what the students already know and plan carefully to ensure that all students can engage successfully in the lesson.
- In the best English lessons, teachers have high expectations and plan challenging and stimulating activities that ensure all students achieve well. For example, in a lesson on persuasive writing, the teacher modelled tasks and techniques well and provided resources so that students developed a very good understanding of the grade criteria. English lessons do not all have enough focus on making sure that students understand exactly what high-quality writing looks like.
- Students achieve best when they are clear about what they are learning and what they need to do to succeed. In an outstanding geography lesson, the teacher used examples from previous students' work to illustrate what a high-quality written conclusion would look like, then showed them a weaker response and shared the mark scheme with the students. As a result, all of the students knew what they had to include in order to write an effective conclusion.
- The quality of marking is very variable. Inspectors saw some helpful written feedback and useful tracking sheets in geography and design and technology; these helped students to understand what they were aiming for and what they needed to do to improve. However, not all teachers' marking helps students to make progress, and opportunities are often missed to respond to advice by improving their work, correcting mistakes or practising skills.
- In most subjects, teachers help to promote students' literacy by explaining specialist words when talking to students, by sharing key words in displays and by involving students in reading. However, marking to improve grammar, punctuation, spelling and presentation differs markedly across subjects.
- Many lessons provide opportunities to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, in an outstanding citizenship lesson on human rights and conflict, the teacher's excellent questioning and the time given for reflection led students to think deeply about the moral and ethical issues raised in the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students say that behaviour is usually good. In almost all of the lessons observed during the inspection and at all times around the school, behaviour was good.
- Students cooperate well with each other in lessons. Students are managed well by their teachers, with very few exceptions, and they are very clear that behaviour is always good when teaching is interesting and work is the right level of difficulty.
- The staff know their students well, and relationships between students and staff are supportive and positive. Responses from parents and the staff questionnaire indicate that behaviour is

managed well and systems for dealing with poor behaviour are strong.

- Students told inspectors that they feel safe and well cared for. There is very little bullying and, if it does occur, teachers deal with it effectively. They are well informed about different types of bullying, such as prejudice and cyber-bullying, and other aspects of safety.
- As a result of a strong and committed pastoral team, effective systems to tackle absence, and the way that good attendance is celebrated, attendance is above average. Leaders are proud that students 'vote with their feet and want to attend school'.
- Behaviour is tightly monitored and incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with immediately.
- Case studies of vulnerable students show that the school supports them well and does all that it can to help students remain in school and succeed.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is ably supported by his senior leaders and managers, and the governing body. His leadership across the schools in the federation ensures that students have a wide range of opportunities because of the collaboration and support that the partnerships offer. Staff morale is good. Almost all staff that responded to the staff questionnaire were extremely positive about the school.
- School leaders and managers have developed effective and helpful systems for measuring students' progress. These give them a clear view of how groups and individual students are progressing. They ensure that the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is appropriately focused on providing support for eligible students, and leaders use data about progress to check that it is being effectively used.
- Staff at all levels are held to account for the progress students make. Teaching is improving as a result of regular observations and the work done across the federation to develop teachers' expertise and share good practice. Subject leaders say that they feel well supported by professional development opportunities and that they are given the time to work with their subject teams to improve practice. Performance management procedures are robust. The school links individual teachers' pay and progression through the salary scale with the impact they are having on students' achievement.
- The school identifies what needs to be done to improve and it prioritises well. The recent focus on literacy across the curriculum has already resulted in improved practice in many lessons and this has had an impact on achievement in some subjects.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. The collaboration across the federation extends students' opportunities and ensures that the subjects that students study are well matched to their needs. They are enriched by a wide variety of after-school clubs, activities, trips and visits, which enable students to develop their spiritual, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding.
- The school works well with parents. Almost all parents that responded to a recent parent questionnaire and the responses to Parent View were very positive about the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements and all staff are actively committed to keeping students safe.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors challenge the school and compare performance with schools nationally. They have a good understanding of data. The governing body is fully aware of the spending of pupil premium funding and it gets regular reports on the difference this is making to the students and their progress. The governing body is strongly involved in appointments and it ensures that teachers' pay is linked to their performance in the classroom. Governors are well aware of the quality of teaching in the school.

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	138837
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	410385

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	585
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Launchbury
Headteacher	Kevin Dean
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0115 9130013
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