

The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College

Grange Avenue, Wickford, SS12 0LZ

Inspection dates 13–14 June 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Given their starting points, too few students make enough progress in English.
- Teaching is not consistently good or better. Work is not demanding enough in some lessons.
- Some teachers do not use data on students' progress to tackle underachievement quickly enough.
- Students are not given appropriate advice about how their choices of course affect career options.
- Senior leaders and governors have not taken enough steps to ensure that all students make good or better progress.
- Attendance is well below the national average. Despite leaders' efforts, too many students are persistently absent and this slows the progress they make.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Students do not make enough progress in some AS-level courses.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are polite and courteous and value the good opportunities they are provided with to take responsibility. They say they feel safe in the school.
- Students' attainment is average in most subjects.
- The school is successfully narrowing the gap in the achievement of those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not.
- The quality of teaching is improving as a result of teachers being set targets linked to students' progress and being given support and training.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 42 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders
- Inspectors heard students read in a reading recovery group.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, attended assemblies and scrutinised students' work, records relating to behaviour and attendance, the impact of professional development on the school's performance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior staff, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, staff and students.
- Inspectors took account of the 61 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaire responses from 53 members of staff were analysed
- Inspectors scrutinised the arrangements and records kept to safeguard students.
- Inspectors looked at the school's development plan and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data that teachers use to monitor students' progress.

Inspection team

Linda Austin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Hume	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector
Martin Wyard	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Carpenter	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- Bromfords School converted to become an academy on 1st January 2013. When its predecessor school, The Bromfords School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Most students come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the governments' current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Eighteen students are currently studying for a BTEC qualification at South Essex or Prospects College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better throughout the school by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of students and use probing questions to develop and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills
 - all teachers regularly monitor the progress students are making throughout the lesson
 - all teachers provide more opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning
 - students are given more chances in all subjects to improve their skills in reading, writing and speaking.
- Improve rates of progress for all groups of students so more of them make good progress by ensuring that:
 - data systems provide greater detail about students' starting points and show that all students are expected to make good or better progress in relation to national expectations by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4
 - work is matched more closely to students' different abilities, particularly in providing greater challenge for more-able students and consistent support for less-able students
 - marking in all subjects consistently gives students clear guidance about how they can improve and requires students to act upon teachers' advice.
- Improve attendance and reduce the numbers of students who are persistently absent by working closely with families to raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and by taking appropriate legal action when necessary.
- Improve the advice given to students about their subject choices and future careers, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- Undertake an external review of the governing body to identify what further support and training governors need.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The proportion of students expected to attain five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is in line with the national average. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is at the national average in English and mathematics.
- Given their starting points, the progress made by students in some subjects including English has been insufficient. Whilst they are now making better progress in English in Years 10 and 11, this is still not the case in Years 7 to 9.
- Achievement in the sixth form is uneven between years 12 and 13 and requires improvement. Students make average or better progress in their subjects studied in Year 13, including the vocational courses. However, achievement in some Year 12 AS courses is below average.
- School leaders regularly check students' progress and support for underachieving students has generally been successful. However, the data systems and target-setting process do not yet provide precise enough information about prior attainment or show that students are expected to make good or better progress.
- The attainment of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is in line with that of similar students nationally. The school provides additional lessons for students who need to catch up, for example with reading or spelling. Their progress is checked and measured frequently and all students with specific or complex difficulties are supported well.
- Literacy programmes and lessons that provide additional support for targeted students combined with a whole-school approach to improve the profile of reading are beginning to have an impact upon achievement in the upper school. There is also evidence that Year 7 catch-up funding for targeted students in Year 7 is having a positive impact upon their progress.
- As this is the school's first year of operation, no end-of-year data is yet available that shows the gap in attainment between students eligible for the pupil premium and their classmates. The imaginative use of the pupil premium funding in providing additional support, such as counselling, mentoring and one-to-one tuition is helping these students to make faster progress.
- Some students are entered early for their GCSE examination in mathematics. Most of them are then provided with additional support to achieve higher grades. However, a few students who have reached a C grade, no longer study mathematics but instead receive additional support with their English. They are thus not able to achieve a higher grade in mathematics.
- Students who attend courses at South Essex College and Prospects College are well supported and make good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching requires improvement and a very small proportion is inadequate. However, new teachers joining the school, combined with training of existing staff, sharing good practice and robust performance management have increased the amount of good and outstanding teaching.

- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, expectations are not high enough and activities are not demanding enough. Questioning does not always push students to think deeply about their answers.
- Students are too reliant on their teachers so that opportunities for high-quality independent work are limited.
- Not all teachers make effective use of the information they have about students' attainment in order to plan lessons matched to students' different abilities. There is insufficient challenge for more-able students in some lessons and a lack of support for less-able students.
- The development of literacy in all lessons is inconsistent. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of methods to improve their students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson where students were designing their own websites, the teacher included a variety of challenging tasks to develop students' writing. However, in some lessons, there was little evidence of extended writing, there were errors in spelling, and the students' spoken use of English were not corrected.
- Most students know their target grades but they do not all understand what they have to do to reach them. Students do not always act upon comments made by teachers in their marking in order to improve their work. This means that errors recur.
- Teachers do not consistently assess the progress that students are making in lessons.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement. There are missed opportunities for students to take the initiative because teachers talk for too long. There is insufficient challenge for more-able students.
- In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high and careful planning ensures that the learning needs of all students are met. Students are encouraged to learn from each other and to assess each other's work. In a Year 9 music lesson, for example, after skilful modelling by the teacher, students were able to judge the quality of the singing of other students using technical language. The teacher's skilful questioning enabled all students to make excellent progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Whilst attendance has recently improved for Years 7 to 10 and for some persistent absentees, it is still too low in relation to the national average. Attendance has been affected by the lower attendance rates of some students admitted mid-term from other schools.
- A significant minority of parents and a small minority of staff believe that students' behaviour and the way that the school deals with bullying could be improved.
- The behaviour of students in lessons is mostly good but, occasionally, students' behaviour deteriorates when lessons do not interest them.
- There have been no permanent exclusions. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is high in relation to the national average. This has been a result of the school needing to assert appropriate standards of behaviour with students who are new to the school. A range of options for support, including anger management sessions and work with parents, are having a positive impact upon the behaviour of some students. Consequently there has been a fall in the number of fixed term

exclusions since January 2013.

- The inspection confirmed that students behave well around the school. They come into and out of assemblies quietly and calmly and are friendly, courteous and helpful. Relationships between staff and students are warm and respectful.
- Students told inspectors that they felt safe in the school and that there is always an adult available to help them sort out any issues.
- Students say that bullying is rare. They are familiar with the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic behaviour, and are confident that issues will be addressed.
- Students make a very positive contribution to the wider community and are involved in organising a variety of fundraising events for charity. Senior students play an important role in advising the headteacher about improvements they would like to see, which are often listened to and acted upon.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not ensured that teaching is consistently good to enable students to make good progress. They have not ensured that staff consistently plan their lessons to meet the needs of all learners and to tackle underachievement. Monitoring systems are not always effectively used by staff to drive forward improvements in learning, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- The school does not give a high enough priority to systematically developing students' literacy skills in other subjects.
- The school has yet to be successful in gaining the support of those families whose children do not attend school regularly.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement because there are variations in the quality of teaching and the progress students make.
- Senior leaders have accurately identified areas requiring improvement and have devised well-considered action plans.
- A rigorous programme of staff development and performance management (the setting of targets to improve staff's work) is in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The breadth of the range of Key Stage 4 courses is enhanced by part-time placements on alternative vocational courses at South Essex and Prospects College.
- Some students express concern about a lack of advice about the consequences of the subject choices they made at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, upon future career options.
- There is a range of opportunities for the promotion of social, moral and cultural development. A wide range of activities all help to make sure that the students have an enriching school experience: for example, charity work, assemblies on determination and cultural awareness, visits, trips and links with schools abroad and a range of after-school activities and clubs.

- Safeguarding policies, practice and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements and ensure that students are safe while in school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body holds senior leaders to account in their management of resources, including the pupil premium. Governors are ensuring that rewards for teachers are based on the progress of their students. However, governors are readily accepting without challenge reports on the performance of the school. They are not challenging the headteacher to improve the effectiveness of some subjects, or raise the achievement of all groups of students. For this reason, an external review of the governing body is recommended.

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	139181
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	420104

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

Type of school	Academy Converter
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	1208
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony King
Headteacher	Marian Spinks
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01268 471201
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