

# Brimsham Green School

Broad Lane, Yate, Bristol, BS37 7LB

## Inspection dates

22–23 October 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In recent years, students have not made sufficient progress as they move through the school. As a result, their GCSE results have not been as high as they should have been, especially in English.
- The achievement of students eligible for extra funding has been too low. Although they now make better progress in English and mathematics, as a group, they achieve less well than others nationally and within the school.
- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been consistently good. Teachers do not always plan activities at the right level of difficulty to help students make rapid progress. Expectations have not always been high enough, especially at Key Stage 3.
- There is also inconsistency in the rigour of how subject leaders ensure that standards of teaching and learning are good enough.
- The sixth form requires improvement because achievement has not been high enough. Some students have not always been able to follow courses that were suited well enough to their needs.
- Governors have not, until recently, held school leaders to account for students' progress and the quality of teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher leads the school community with significant determination and moral purpose. A number of sustainable improvements are now starting to have an impact on teaching and learning; the school is improving.
- Students attend school regularly and are well behaved and courteous. They have respect for themselves and others and are justly proud of their community. They are kept very safe.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very positive. Teachers are now helping students to improve their work through regular marking and useful feedback.
- The standard of teaching and learning in mathematics has considerably improved.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are very well supported so that they achieve well.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 39 lessons, some of which were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a range of staff and members of the governing body to explore how well the school is being led and managed. They took into consideration the views of 77 members of staff who completed an Ofsted questionnaire.
- Inspectors also held meetings with six groups of students from across the school to collect their views and opinions. They also talked to students in lessons and around the school during breaks.
- A range of documentation was examined relating to aspects such as safety, student progress and achievement, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors looked at the school’s self-evaluation and its plans for the future. They also read the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Examples of Year 11 work were examined to consider students’ rates of progress and other aspects of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 128 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, as well as two letters from parents.

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Richard Butler	Additional inspector
Mark Everett	Additional inspector
Joseph Skivington	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Brimsham Green School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is well below average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There is a specifically resourced provision for students with physical disabilities which supports 14 students.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students (for whom the school receives additional government funding, known as the pupil premium) is well below the national average. This funding is for looked after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- There are currently 20 students in Year 7 eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding. This is funding for students who did not achieve the expected levels in English or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A small number of students attend vocational courses at Filton College, while others gain vocational skills at the local KTS Training organisation.
- A small minority of students with medical needs benefit from the support provided at The Junction, which is part of the South Gloucestershire provision for children educated outside of school.
- No students currently attend the local pupil referral unit.
- Historically, the school works in partnership with Chipping Sodbury School to provide a wider range of sixth form courses for both schools; plans are established to extend this partnership to a third school.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2013.
- The school meets the government current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better, especially in English, to ensure that all groups of students make at least good progress between ages 11 to 16 by making sure that:
  - teachers consistently plan activities that are at the right level of difficulty to inspire and enable all students to achieve as highly as possible
  - all subject leaders secure standards of teaching and learning in their subject areas that are always at least good.
- Accelerate achievement in the sixth form by ensuring that all students are able to be enrolled on the most appropriate courses and are then supported in their learning to achieve as highly as possible.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - extending and strengthening governors' understanding of their roles and responsibilities and also their skills in carrying them out
  - ensuring leaders at all levels raise expectations of what students throughout the school should achieve
  - improving the achievement of students eligible for extra funding by making sure that support measures put in place have a highly positive impact

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- School leaders have recognised that expectations of student achievement have not been high enough. Examination results have been too low. Historically, there has been insufficient focus on high-quality teaching, particularly in the lower school.
- In recent years, achievement in the sixth form has been too low. Leaders have not consistently matched the ability and interests of students to courses, or ensured that teaching has taken the full range of ability of students into account.
- Although there is some improvement in the progress of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics, they generally do not achieve as well as others in the school or nationally. Consequently, further improvement is a top priority. Although significant funding is being used to provide useful extra teaching support in English and mathematics for this group of students, the quality of teaching across all subjects has not been as effective in embedding skills.
- The headteacher, ably supported by her senior leadership team, has ensured that the school provides a safe, happy and well-ordered community in which there are high expectations of student behaviour and many opportunities for academic and personal development.
- On joining the school, the headteacher recognised that expectations and aspirations of both staff and students were not high enough. To address this, sustainable improvements have been made to teaching, including through tackling areas of underperformance. Students are beginning to make faster progress and forecasts for GCSE and A-level results for the next two years show improvement.
- Senior leaders now evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately and have developed rigorous but more sustainable plans to raise achievement and move the school forward. There is a comprehensive performance management system based on the Teaching Standards, and targets and training are closely linked with student achievement.
- There is variation in the effectiveness of the work of middle leaders. While some secure notable improvements to standards of teaching and learning, others do not monitor teaching closely enough nor intervene swiftly when standards and expectations are too low. This inconsistency is being addressed comprehensively by the school but improvements have not yet had time to have full impact on student achievement.
- The safeguarding and care of students feature in all aspects of the school. This extends to ensuring that discrimination of any kind is actively discouraged and tolerance and respect for others promoted. This is reflected in the excellent provision for physically disabled students; equality of opportunities is pursued and secured wherever possible.
- The range of subjects offered at the school provides a firm foundation for further study and employment. The school has recently been awarded the Employability Chartermark for its investment in and commitment to work readiness. Students who access external vocational courses achieve well because they are motivated and supported to learn.
- The school uses its valuable partnerships with local businesses and organisations to enhance learning and prepare them for the future. Careers advice and guidance is now more focused and effective. Disadvantaged students are given extra careers guidance to motivate them and to extend horizons.
- The school offers a wealth of opportunities that promote personal development. In particular, there is a full programme of activities after school, especially in sport and music, and strong links with the community. The partnership with Hosanna School in Uganda has promoted multicultural, moral and social awareness, offered opportunities for volunteering and sparked creativity.
- Parents have considerable confidence in the school and how well students are cared for and taught.
- The local authority has supported the school in its pursuit of improvement, and this has been valued by leaders, staff and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has recognised that it has not in the past secured good provision. It has begun to improve its capacity to provide direction, support and challenge to the school through the recruitment of new governors, training and changes of role and responsibility. They are moving from a position of being aware of the priorities for the school to one of actively setting and overseeing them.
  - Governors understand clearly that achievement, especially of disadvantaged students, is not good enough; they now analyse data more effectively. They are beginning to work with the school to explore the most effective use of funding. Furthermore, they have been appropriately involved in appraisal discussions this year and are developing a better understanding of teacher performance and have ensured that it links to any salary rises.

- Governors ensure that the school is financially stable and that all statutory safeguarding and other requirements are met.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good both in terms of their conduct around the school and their attitudes to learning. Students say they enjoy school and their attendance is above average.
- They are proud of their school and this is reflected in the way the site is mostly litter and graffiti free. Most dress tidily and arrive at their lessons punctually and well equipped, ready to learn.
- Relationships within the school community are a strength. There is very little bullying; students are tolerant, have respect for the feelings of others and get on well with their teachers and other staff.
- Students with physical disabilities are fully supported by both staff and other students; they enjoy being included in as many school activities as possible.
- Students settle down to learning quickly and try their best to complete the work given. Even when teaching is less than effective, students put effort into their learning and make as much progress as they can. Where teachers have higher expectations of the students, they respond accordingly and, consequently, make strides in their learning.
- A few students sometimes distract others at a low level or engage less actively, but most behave in a way which helps them and others to learn. The majority of students organise and present their work tidily, although a small minority take less pride in their work.
- There are effective systems in place to support students who do not behave appropriately. These include good provision for those students with the most challenging behaviour, some of whom have joined the school on a fresh-start basis.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations both in and outside of school, such as safe internet use.
- Safeguarding routines and procedures are very well organised and adhered to. Recruitment checks are rigorously followed and staff ensure that risks to students' health and well-being are minimised. Students with medical needs are particularly well cared for, with external support provided by The Junction.
- The safety, attendance and behaviour of students who attend off-site courses, including in the sixth form, are of a good standard and are checked weekly.
- Within school, prejudice-based bullying is very rare, reflecting students' positive attitudes to people of different race, beliefs or sexuality.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Expectations of student achievement are variable, and while improvements to standards of teaching have been made, students are not consistently helped to reach the highest levels of achievement possible. Work is not always stretching enough, including for more able students. There is now greater priority given to raising aspirations, the impact of which has yet to be realised fully.
- Teachers generally expect students to behave well in class, and they do. There is an established culture where students engage, participate and take some responsibility for their learning.
- Teachers gather a useful range of information about their students, their needs and performance over time. Some teachers use this information to pinpoint precisely what is needed to help students improve. Where planning is less precise, individual students or groups do not make such good progress.
- School leaders have prioritised marking and assessment as a lever to improve rates of progress and examination results. Nearly all teachers now mark work effectively and, in many cases, this makes a strong contribution to students' learning. Increasingly, students respond actively to suggestions for improvement.
- In mathematics particularly, marking and assessment have contributed to improvements in learning.
- The most able students sometimes achieve at the highest levels, but where teachers have not given them sufficiently challenging work, they do not always excel, as they should. More able students say they feel well supported and are given opportunities to excel, but this has yet to be reflected in examination results.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported particularly well and make good progress. Teaching assistants are deployed thoughtfully according to student needs and are most effective

when the teacher has planned how they can be used to maximise engagement and achievement.

- There has been considerable focus on improving the achievement of disadvantaged students. Much of the funding is used to provide extra support in English and mathematics, but teachers also give this group priority when marking work, for example.
- Literacy is promoted in all subject areas and students are increasingly adopting useful strategies to improve their own writing skills, using the 'right first time' technique.
- In addition to the after-school club programme, teachers incorporate opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally within the school day. For example, Year 9 students are helped to appreciate the wonder and power of volcanoes in geography. There are theatre trips, European music tours, introductions to African art, and debates on the caste system in India and immigration issues. Students are actively encouraged to volunteer to contribute to their communities, often as part of their studies.

### The achievement of pupils

#### requires improvement

- Over the last three years, the achievement of students in their GCSE examinations has been too low. The proportion of students achieving at least five good grades, including in English and mathematics, has risen in 2014, but the proportion of students making the progress expected of them in English remains too low. Achievement in mathematics has risen steadily because of improved teaching, and science results are generally above average, especially for the most able.
- Results for GCSE examinations in English have historically been lower, partly because the school had not adapted to the new examination board requirements. This issue has now been remedied and teachers are now assessing work more accurately.
- Students generally have good literacy skills but boys achieve less well in English. They often join the school with lower literacy levels but teachers are increasingly using successful ways to engage them.
- Students currently in the school achieve well when teachers set work that is at the right level to help them make rapid progress. Students tend to achieve more highly in Key Stage 4. This is because expectations have been lower in Years 7 and 8 particularly. The school has recognised this and has now placed more emphasis on the quality of teaching and rates of progress in the lower school.
- Achievement in the sixth form has been variable. Because teaching has not always been sharply focused on the learning needs of students, examination results have been too low in recent years.
- As a group, disadvantaged students do not achieve as well as others in the school. Compared to disadvantaged students nationally, they often make similar progress despite achieving less well in their examinations. In 2013, the in-school gap in achievement was around three-quarters of a GCSE grade in English and just under half a grade in mathematics. In 2014, disadvantaged students made better progress in English and mathematics, narrowing the gap, but examination results remain too low and gaps have widened in some areas
- Disabled students, especially those registered at the specialist resource provision, and those with special educational needs are supported effectively and achieve well. Support for students who are eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding is well targeted and these students also make good progress.
- Although many students gain excellent GCSE and A-level results, enabling them to go on to the universities of their choice, the achievement of the most able students has not been consistently high; there is now more emphasis on ensuring that all groups make rapid progress.
- Those students who attend courses outside of school make good progress because they are motivated to learn and are supported well.
- The school does not enter any students for examinations early.

### The sixth form provision

#### requires improvement

- AS- and A-level results have frequently been too low in the past, although the school does meet the government's 16–19 minimum standards. The sixth form is now a priority for improvement within the school in terms of student achievement, attendance and staff training.
- Students have not always been guided on to the most appropriate courses. This, combined with teaching that has not focused precisely enough on students' needs, has resulted in lower rates of progress.
- Historically, the collaborative sixth form with Chipping Sodbury School has offered mainly academic subjects. This has recently changed with the introduction of appropriate work-related qualifications. The partnership will be extended to a third school next year to widen the choice of courses further.
- The impact of the school's work to improve standards of teaching is emerging; increasingly, sixth form students are benefitting from more skilful teaching to help them master more difficult concepts.

- Retention rates have generally been good but sometimes students have lost interest and confidence in their courses and consequently have achieved less well.
- The programmes of study offered at the school are now more comprehensive and adhere to government recommendations. All students now have high-quality enrichment opportunities. Aspirations are being raised through the inclusion of the Extended Project Qualification and critical thinking course. Provision for students to retake GCSE English and mathematics is good, enabling students to master key concepts within small teaching groups. Systems to ensure that students use their study time more productively have been put in place.
- Disadvantaged students often make relatively better progress than others but there are still gaps in their achievement, although smaller than in the main school.
- Students take on a bridging role within the community, acting as good role models. They mentor younger students and engage in a considerable number of other leadership and volunteering roles within the school and in the wider community.
- Sixth form leaders now have a good understanding of how to improve provision and have implemented many changes. These have not yet had time to have an impact on examination results.



## 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>	109319
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	449111

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>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,060
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janice Wragg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kim Garland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 December 2011
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