

The Bemrose School

Uttoxeter New Road, Derby DE22 3HU

Inspection dates

16–17 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, or of their behaviour. As a result, not all pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' progress in different subjects is too variable. At Key Stage 4, pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English.
- In a few classes, pupils display poor attitudes to learning that go unchallenged by teachers.
- While attendance is improving, some groups do not attend as well as others. This impedes the progress they make.
- Actions taken to improve teaching have not secured improvement rapidly enough. Improvement targets for some teachers lack rigour.
- Not all subject leaders hold teachers sufficiently to account for the progress that pupils make. They do not intervene quickly enough when pupils underachieve.
- Governors have not ensured that pupil premium funding has resulted in rising achievement for these pupils.
- The primary phase is expanding rapidly. Currently, there is not enough support for the primary and early years leaders, and this is slowing the rate of improvement in these phases.
- The early years requires improvement. The role of the early years leader is underdeveloped. Children are not always clear about what they should be learning. Teachers and teaching assistants do not always model good language for children, or take opportunities to extend their vocabulary.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are driven by a strong sense of moral purpose to provide stability and a good education for the vulnerable communities that they serve.
- Leaders provide good pastoral care for pupils. They have developed good links with local communities and are effective in increasing parental confidence and engagement in their children's education.
- Teaching in English is consistently good, leading to good rates of progress in this subject.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because of the good quality support they receive.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are good, and meet learners' needs well. All students progress to higher education, employment or training.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they can achieve in lessons
 - teachers across all phases consistently take pupils' starting points into account to plan learning that is consistently challenging for all pupils
 - pupils in the primary and secondary phases have more opportunities to practise and develop their writing and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Improve outcomes, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - gaps in pupils' progress are identified and addressed with greater urgency.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that all pupils have consistently positive attitudes to learning and display consistently good behaviour around school
 - improving the attendance of White British pupils, especially those who are disabled, or have special educational needs, and ensuring that strategies to reduce exclusions for these pupils are effective.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels take responsibility for driving improvements in their areas by rigorously monitoring and evaluating the quality of work in their departments, and holding teachers more stringently to account for the progress that pupils make
 - incorporating plans to develop and support leadership of the primary phase into the whole school improvement plan
 - evaluating the impact of actions taken to improve achievement, and ensuring that this information is used to improve the quality of improvement plans
 - ensuring that performance management targets for all teachers are rigorous and linked to the progress that pupils make.
- Improve the early years by:
 - developing the leadership of the early years
 - ensuring that all staff model and extend children's vocabulary in a range of settings
 - ensuring that children are clear about the purpose of the activities.

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

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not acted quickly enough to bring about the necessary improvements, particularly in mathematics. Until recently, leaders have not tackled poor-quality teaching with sufficient urgency. As a consequence, although the achievement of current pupils is improving, it remains variable across subjects, and within departments.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that all teachers manage pupils' behaviour equally well. In a few lessons, pupils' poor attitudes to learning go unchecked, and impede the progress that they and others make.
- Subject leaders do not hold teachers rigorously to account for the progress that pupils make. Each department undertakes a yearly review of its performance; until recently, these reviews have lacked rigour and have not pinpointed the precise reasons for underperformance. Consequently, in some departments, the same groups of pupils have underachieved year on year.
- Leaders at all levels have not evaluated the impact of actions taken to raise achievement carefully enough. As a result, they are not certain about which actions have been effective.
- The management of teachers' performance is inconsistent. While some teachers are set challenging objectives linked to pupils' achievement, this is not the case for all of them. The impact on improving teaching is therefore variable.
- Newly qualified teachers and those who are new to the school speak highly of the quality of support they receive from senior and subject leaders. Support is provided for those teachers whose teaching is not at an acceptable standard. Training for all teachers, however, has not ensured that teaching is consistently good across all subjects, because it does not focus closely enough on teachers' individual needs.
- The primary phase is growing rapidly. The primary leader is highly committed to ensuring high-quality provision; however, currently there is insufficient support in place for her. Whole-school action plans do not focus closely enough on how to manage the rapid expansion of this phase.
- Leaders are driven by a strong moral urge to improve the life chances of the very vulnerable communities that they serve. They have developed effective links with local communities and have won the trust of parents who previously have held ambivalent attitudes towards education. This has resulted in highly effective work with hard-to-reach communities and good pastoral care for pupils. The attendance of some groups is now much higher than the national averages for these pupils.
- Leaders work effectively to ensure that pupils from different communities treat each other with understanding. During the inspection, pupils listened with interest and respect as their classmates from a range of cultural backgrounds overcame language barriers to share their different experiences of Christmas.
- The use of additional funding has not been consistently effective. In the primary phase, sports funding is used well to support pupils' physical development and the use of the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils who are disadvantaged) has been effective in raising the achievement of eligible pupils. The use of this funding in the secondary phase has been less successful, leading to improvements in achievement in English, but not in mathematics. Leaders have recently reviewed the strategies to engage with disadvantaged pupils and have put changes into place. For example, the appointment of a family support worker is proving effective in improving the attendance rates of these pupils.
- Leaders have been effective in promoting reading for pleasure across the school. The 'Drop Everything and Read' strategy (DEAR) has seen pupils of all abilities develop a love of reading; the library is a well-used and much-loved resource. Library staff carefully monitor borrowing rates among pupils and have plans in place to target those who do not borrow books on a regular basis. The impact of this action cannot be judged as yet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of topical issues, because the school's culture promotes open discussion of news and current affairs. For example, after the recent attacks in Paris, the executive headteacher ensured that all teachers took the opportunity to discuss the events with pupils. Pupils who spoke with inspectors told them how much they appreciated these opportunities to discuss 'real' issues with their teachers, and how their teachers helped them to have a good understanding of each other's communities, traditions and cultures. Such experiences ensure that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The current curriculum across all key stages offers sufficient breadth of learning. At Key Stage 5 in particular, there is an appropriate blend of academic and vocational learning, and good opportunities for pupils to develop their workplace skills. Leaders rightly recognise the need to reconsider the curriculum

time given to different subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4, so that pupils are better able to develop their skills and depth of understanding in different subjects.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the programme of assemblies and through the school's ethos of discussion, understanding and respect. During the inspection, there were many examples seen of how teachers made the most of opportunities to link pupils' academic learning to their wider personal development. Particularly effective examples were noted in English and humanities.
- The school's specialist autism unit, Elmtree, has a team of staff who are specialists in the field of autistic spectrum disorders. Their expertise ensures that the needs of pupils who attend the unit are well met.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the early years and primary leaders, and to the school's new leadership team. The school's improvement officer has a good understanding of the school's context and of its strengths and weaknesses. Officers did not act swiftly enough to help leaders halt the decline in the achievement of pupils in mathematics. They have now brokered a partnership with a local outstanding school to support the leadership of the mathematics and humanities departments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully aware of their statutory duties, for example regarding safeguarding. They are aware of the actions they must take if there are safeguarding concerns.
 - Their good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is helping the school to make the necessary improvements. They work closely with leaders to establish and address the causes of weaknesses in pupils' achievements.
 - Governors share the vision of the leaders to expand and develop the primary phase to ensure a good quality of education from 3–19. The development of the primary phase is not currently monitored with sufficient rigour by governors, and there is no governor with specific responsibility for, or expertise in, this area of the school's work.
 - Until recently, governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding was effective in closing the gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have a good understanding of the safeguarding issues that are prevalent in the local community, and of the full range of risks that pupils may be vulnerable to, including radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. They have ensured that all teachers are confident in spotting and reporting any concerns, and work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support and help they need.
- Good communication between pastoral staff ensures that issues are quickly picked up, addressed, and reviewed at regular intervals.
- Leaders ensure that parents are better informed about safeguarding procedures, for example by employing teaching assistants who speak the same languages and who work with parents to explain the importance of good attendance, and the school's systems for keeping pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. Teaching in the 16 to 19 study programmes is generally better than in the primary phase, and in Key Stages 3 and 4. There is much variability in the quality of teaching in departments. While teaching in the English department is consistently good, this is not the case in mathematics, or in some other subjects. As a result, not all pupils make good progress in their lessons.
- Teachers do not all show the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve, or of how they should behave in class. Some accept work that is below the standard expected. Not all teachers challenge low-level disruption in the classroom.
- Some teachers plan learning that takes pupils' prior knowledge into account, but this is not consistently the case. A few set work that pupils are already competent in and, as a result, pupils' progress stalls.
- Not all teachers provide feedback in line with the school's policy. In the most effective examples seen, teachers tell pupils either in written or verbal form precisely what they need to do to improve. In a few cases, teachers provide pupils with detailed feedback that is beyond the level of their understanding and does not then lead to improvements being made.
- Where learning is good, teachers use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding. For example, in an English lesson on the poem 'Prayer before birth', the teacher pushed pupils to explain fully and justify

their answers and, as a result, they were able to offer thoughtful and reflective analyses of the poem.

- In the early years, not all teachers ensure that children develop a good vocabulary and express themselves well.
- Teaching promotes pupils' personal, social, moral and health and economic education well. For example, in a Year 9 humanities lesson, pupils enjoyed a lively discussion on which patients would deserve a transplant operation. They worked well in groups, ensuring that all had a chance to speak, and developed a good understanding of the social and ethical issues that the topic raised.
- Pupils in the specialist Elmtree unit receive close care and attention and expert support and as a result, make similar progress to their peers.
- There is a clear strategy in place for the deployment of teaching assistants in different departments and to support pupils and groups of pupils. Their effectiveness in the classroom varies. Some provide good support to the class teacher, working with different groups to keep them engaged and on task, and using good questioning to develop pupils' learning. Others have less impact.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement because in some lessons pupils display poor attitudes to learning that affect their own progress and that of others.
- Some pupils do not show sufficient regard for their work. Teachers do not always insist that pupils present their work well and that their books are free from graffiti.
- The school is increasingly successful in helping pupils to become self-confident and resilient learners. For example, many pupils join the school having spent little time in education previously and with very little knowledge, if any, of English. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to build their social skills, give them strategies to develop their language skills, and encourage them to make a positive contribution to school life. These experiences increase their self-esteem and enjoyment of education, and ensure that they are better prepared to take a full part in society.
- The school has an inclusive approach and makes clear that prejudiced behaviours will not be tolerated. When leaders noted a rise in racist language following the Paris attacks, for example, they made sure that these issues were discussed openly with pupils. Pupils who spoke with inspectors explained how these and other sessions help them to have a better understanding of each other's cultures.
- The programme of careers education begins in Key Stage 3 and continues into the sixth form. Pupils told inspectors that the good advice they received helped them in making their next choices. The proportion of those who go on to be not in education, employment or training is steadily reducing and is below the national average.
- Pupils are aware of the different kinds of bullying and are confident that teachers deal with it swiftly and effectively. Records provided by the school show an overall decline in the number of bullying incidents. Older pupils confirmed that leaders' actions to reduce incidents of bullying have been effective.
- The programme of personal, social, moral, health and economic education helps pupils to have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including online. However, not all the pupils who spoke with inspectors had a clear understanding of what is meant by radicalisation. Some told inspectors that they would like more opportunities to discuss and learn about relationships.
- The range of extra-curricular activities on offer promotes pupils' personal development well. Inspectors observed pupils enjoying sessions in creative writing, board games and reading. Many were excitedly rehearsing for the school Christmas show, a play written by the pupils themselves. These opportunities make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The high standards of behaviour seen across the primary phase of the school, and in the sixth form, are less evident at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The school's behaviour policy is not applied consistently by all teachers. Not all teachers manage poor behaviour equally well in the classroom, or ensure that all pupils display positive attitudes to learning.
- The large majority of pupils behave well and are respectful; this is particularly true of pupils in the primary phase and in the sixth form. In the secondary provision, there are a few who do not always show the required respect and whose behaviour interrupts the learning of others. While older pupils state that

behaviour has improved over time, younger pupils who spoke with inspectors feel that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils behave well in lessons as well as at break times.

- The school has a positive, vibrant ethos. Pupils are friendly towards each other, and are very welcoming to visitors. Older pupils in particular showed a keen interest in the work of the inspectors, stopping to chat and hold open doors.
- Attendance is improving, but remains below the national average. Leaders have been highly successful in improving the attendance of Gypsy/Roma pupils, whose attendance is higher than the national average for this group. White British pupils, especially those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, do not attend as well as others. Actions taken to improve the attendance of these pupils, such as the breakfast club, have had some impact in encouraging better attendance, but there is more to do to raise their overall attendance and reduce the proportion who are persistently absent from school.
- The rate of exclusion is falling over time, as pupils become more used to the school rules and routines. Some groups, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are still excluded too often.
- The calm, positive ethos of the Elmtree unit helps pupils to manage their sometimes challenging behaviour effectively.
- Those pupils who attend alternative provision off-site attend well; this is carefully monitored by staff. The strategy is effective in ensuring that these pupils remain in learning and are not excluded from school.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because the progress made by pupils varies as a result of the inconsistent quality of teaching across the school. This is particularly the case in the secondary phase.
- Pupils who completed GCSE examinations in 2015 did not achieve as well in mathematics as they did in English. On average, they achieved one grade lower in mathematics than they did in English. The proportion that made the progress expected in English in 2015 was higher than the national figures. In mathematics, just over half of pupils achieved this measure.
- As a result of actions taken to improve leadership and teaching in mathematics, there is now an improving picture of achievement. The proportion of pupils who are set to make the expected progress is predicted to rise, as is the proportion on course to achieve a C grade and above. Progress rates at Key Stage 3 show further signs of improvement.
- The achievement gaps at GCSE between disadvantaged pupils and their peers show signs of closing in English, but not in mathematics. In this subject, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are still too wide, especially for pupils of middle ability. In the primary phase, actions to improve their achievement have been more successful and in many classes, they are making at least equal progress to their peers.
- Senior leaders have reviewed the school's systems for tracking the progress that pupils make to ensure that the information is more accurate. This is allowing leaders at all levels to identify where pupils are falling behind more quickly and put in place the necessary support.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving. In the 2015 examinations, their achievement lagged behind others. At Key Stages 3 and 4, they are now beginning to catch up; in Year 8, for example, these pupils are making the same rates of progress as their peers, while attainment gaps show signs of reducing at Key Stage 4.
- Over all subjects, the progress of Pakistani pupils in 2015 was higher than that of others in the school. In English and mathematics, their attainment was higher than that of other pupils, although this group did not achieve as well as Pakistani pupils nationally. These pupils achieve well on their sixth form courses.
- Pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage and those from East European backgrounds do not attain as well as their peers in school in GCSE examinations. Many of these pupils join the school part-way through Key Stage 4 and make good progress from their starting points. Of those that joined after Year 9, a fifth attained 5 GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics.
- In the primary phase, leaders effectively track and monitor the progress of pupils and this information, confirmed by observations, suggests that the vast majority are on track to make at least expected progress by the end of the year. However, achievement is variable due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and turbulence in staffing.

- Pupils begin the secondary phase with levels of prior attainment that are well below the national average. There are a range of largely successful strategies in place to support their achievement, including regular library lessons and discrete teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent). This support is effective in helping these pupils to raise their reading ages and communication skills.
- The achievement of the many pupils who speak little or no English is a strength of the school. These pupils flourish as a result of the intensive support they receive, and the well-coordinated strategies to boost their language and communication skills.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision. They make good progress on their chosen courses as a result of regular monitoring of their attendance and achievement.
- Pupils who attend the Elmtree unit achieve well as a result of carefully thought-out strategies to boost their self-esteem and communication skills.
- The proportion of pupils who do not continue into education, employment or training at the end of Key Stage 4 has steadily reduced and is now well below the national average. At Key Stage 5, all learners continue into education, employment or training, with an increasing proportion accessing higher education.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The leadership of the early years is not yet well enough developed. The school has received regular support from a local authority specialist but this has not brought about improvement as quickly as it might. Consequently, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Children are not always clear about the purpose of the independent activities they are set and some everyday routines are not yet secure. For example, while children are able to choose their own snacks, adults do not use this time to extend their social and communication skills.
- Adults do not model language skills consistently well. They do not always ask thoughtful and carefully selected questions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Children are not encouraged to extend the vocabulary that they use regularly enough. As a result, children's speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped.
- The head of primary and the class teacher have an accurate picture of each child's abilities. This knowledge, and careful tracking of each child's development, supports children in making progress that in some areas of their development is good. This was seen, for example, in the introduction of specific activities such as an outdoor balance-and-stretch trail to develop children's physical abilities.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills which are below those typical for their age. In 2015, the overwhelming majority made at least the progress expected of children of their age. However, by the time they leave Reception only a minority of children reach a good level of development. Consequently, a large proportion are not well prepared for entry into Year 1, particularly in their physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children who are disadvantaged achieve well because funding is used well to support their needs.
- Children behave well and are encouraged to match the high standards of behaviour seen across the primary phase of the school. They are taught the fundamental British values of tolerance and respect from the moment they enter the school. They are polite, inquisitive, and eager to learn. They wear their uniform with pride.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and children are happy and eager to learn. Relationships with staff are very positive and this enables children to settle quickly. Parents who spoke with an inspector said that they felt that their children were very safe and well cared for by staff, who they described as very approachable and helpful.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Where learning is most effective, teachers make excellent use of assessment criteria to plan lessons that stretch and challenge learners of all abilities.
- Achievement in the sixth form is rising. In 2015, the minimum standards for academic achievement were met for the first time. Achievement on vocational courses remains above the national average. Disadvantaged learners achieve as well as their peers.
- The sixth form is small, and the curriculum is tailored to learners' individual needs. As a result, learners

are well motivated and keen to succeed. They enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and display consistently positive attitudes to learning.

- Those learners who join the sixth form without a grade C in GCSE English or mathematics receive good support; the vast majority go on to achieve this measure before leaving the sixth form.
- The overwhelming majority of learners continue from Year 12 into Year 13; the proportion of learners who progress to higher education is rapidly rising and is now above the national average.
- In the vast majority of lessons observed, learners were making good progress. Since class sizes are very small, teachers are able to take learners' individual needs into account and provide learners with highly personalised guidance to improve. Most learners respond well to this feedback. Occasionally, learners are not challenged enough to achieve as well as they could.
- In addition to their academic and vocational courses, learners undertake a programme of personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education that develops their social and employability skills well and is much valued by learners. Learners who spoke with inspectors were very confident about how to stay safe in different situations and appreciated the school's work to develop this aspect of their learning.
- Learners receive good careers advice and guidance that enables them to make informed choices about the next stages of their education, employment or training. Advice is impartial and is adapted to their individual needs.
- Learners in the sixth form are good role models for younger pupils. They attend well and undertake a number of leadership roles in school, for example, acting as reading buddies, sports captains and prefects. They receive advice on how to support other pupils, and all Year 12 learners have been trained in basic first aid. Such experiences prepare them well to play an active role in society.

School details

Unique reference number	112951
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10009899

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Foundation School
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	900
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Parnham
Executive headteacher	Mr Neil Wilkinson
Telephone number	01332 366711
Website	www.bemrose.derby.sch.uk
Email address	nwilkinson@bemrose.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized all-through school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has opened a primary phase and early years. It now has pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 1 to 4.
- Following the retirement of the previous executive headteacher, the school has a new executive headteacher, and new headteachers of the secondary and primary phases.
- The Bemrose Littleover Partnership Educational Trust, to which the school belonged at the time of the previous inspection, has been disbanded.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- Just over three-quarters of pupils come from several minority ethnic groups with the majority of these being of Pakistani heritage. More than half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. This is a much higher-than-usual proportion.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- A specialist autism unit, known as Elmtree, is attached to the school. It caters for 16 pupils with more severe autism and challenging behaviour.
- A small number of pupils access off-site alternative provision at Murray Park High School, Derby Adult Learning Services, Derby College, Junction 16, Learning Limited and Age UK.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 33 lessons, or parts of lessons. Some of these sessions were jointly observed with leaders.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the headteachers of the primary and secondary phases, senior and subject leaders, newly qualified and new teachers. The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and with the school's improvement officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, information about the achievement of current pupils across the school and records relating to safeguarding. Records of behaviour, attendance and bullying logs were also considered.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). An inspector spoke with a few parents at the start of the school day.
- A range of pupils' work was scrutinised, some jointly with school leaders.

Inspection team

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