



Belle Vue Girls' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107368
LEA Bradford
Inspection number 277748
Inspection dates 12 September 2005 to 13 September 2005
Reporting inspector Ms Josephine Nowacki HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Thorn Lane
School category	Community		Bingley Road
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Bradford, West Yorkshire BD9 6NA
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	01274 492341
Number on roll	1038	Fax number	01274 490559
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Lynnette Kirk
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2001	Headteacher	Ms Margaret Platts MBE

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 12 September 2005 - 13 September 2005	Inspection number 277748
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Belle Vue Girls' school, located in the Upper Heaton area of Bradford, serves a wide catchment area. There are currently 1,038 girls at the school, including 182 in the sixth form. Over 95 per cent of the girls are from Asian heritage backgrounds and there are significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. The number of girls who have free school meals is much higher than the national average. Approximately 92 per cent of girls have English as an additional language and about a quarter have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of girls with statements of special educational needs is low. Girls enter the school with levels of literacy and numeracy that are well below average. Belle Vue Girls' school has been a specialist language college since 2003.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. An effective management and strong leadership team is well supported by the governing body. It has worked continuously to drive up standards and raise achievement for all. The teaching is good and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is a high level of care and support for all students, including the most vulnerable. The school has the full confidence of parents. It works exceptionally well with other partners in order to improve provision for its own pupils and others. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing its weaknesses. Improvements in information communications technology (ICT) are particularly successful. Students in all years benefit from well structured ICT courses and attainment has improved considerably at Key Stages 3 and 4. Music is now offered at Key Stage 4. Improvements to whole school literacy and numeracy have been less consistent. A revised literacy and numeracy policy is now part of the school's intention to improve the 'climate for learning'. Inspectors judge the school's capacity to improve as good. The headteacher has been in post since 2003, but the senior leadership team has been together for a much shorter period. Many good practices have been established by the team in a very short time, although further work needs to be done to ensure that these are applied rigorously across the whole school and sixth form.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school believes that its sixth form is satisfactory and inspectors agree with this judgement. The sixth form curriculum offered is broad, balanced and inclusive. However, girls are not always guided onto the most appropriate level of course. Although sixth form girls are well cared for and supported, the monitoring of their progress is not as rigorous as it is in the rest of the school. Standards of attainment on entry are well below average. Girls generally achieve the grades expected, based on their general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results. The school is aware of the weaknesses in its sixth form and is about to conduct a review of its provision. The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school should seek to raise achievement still further by:

- ensuring that new practices are consistently and rigorously applied across the school ;
- ensuring that teaching meets the needs of the wide range of pupils' abilities;
- carefully reviewing the curriculum, especially the opportunities for progression from Year 7 through to post-16;
- ensuring that procedures for monitoring girls' progress in the sixth form are applied rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards in the Key Stage 3 tests and at GCSE are very low but are steadily rising. Attainment in 2005 for all core subjects at Key Stage 3 showed significant improvement from the previous year. Girls with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well and make good progress. In GCSE, there are variations in performance between subjects, which the school has convincing strategies in place to address. Attainment on entry is very low compared to the national average. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is very high. Therefore the school's results represent good and sometimes very good progress for the vast majority of girls. The school sets itself, and largely meets, challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges that this area of its work is good and the inspectors agree. In this outward-looking school, girls make good progress in their personal development: personal, social and health education pervade all aspects of school life. Through religious studies and assemblies, girls are encouraged to understand and respect other cultures. Older girls act as monitors or 'buddies' to younger pupils. Many girls participate in a highly successful community placement scheme and make very effective contributions that help develop good awareness of the wider world of work.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good; most pupils are polite and courteous to each other. They respond well to the high expectations set by staff, have a positive attitude to learning and are keen to achieve their best. A few girls lack enthusiasm or are hesitant to contribute in lessons. Attendance continues to improve and is now in line with the national average. The school continues to work hard with families to raise awareness of the negative effects on their child's education of taking extended holidays in term time. Through an effective personal and social education programme girls enjoy learning about how they can keep themselves safe and healthy. They look forward to their lunchtime and after school clubs, although for some girls transport difficulties prevent them from being involved.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school judges the quality of teaching as good, and satisfactory in the sixth form. Inspectors' confirm the school's judgement. In the best lessons, teachers plan engaging work which involves girls in a range of activities that help develop independent thinking

and learning. Teachers have high expectations and these, along with the aims of the lesson, are clearly communicated well. Planning and deployment of learning resources are generally good. In all lessons, inspectors were struck by the harmonious atmosphere where mutual respect and good humour permeated relationships. Good progress has been made towards the school's aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning. In most lessons, girls clearly enjoy learning and know how well they are doing. In a few lessons activities were not planned to meet the pupils' wide range of needs and there was insufficient involvement of pupils in their own learning.

Assessment arrangements are good overall. Recent improvements in providing accurate pupil level data to inform assessment are thorough and timely, although more work needs to be done to ensure that all staff make best use of this data.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good at all key stages. Provision and attainment in ICT have improved considerably; music is now offered at GCSE and throughout the school. Approaches to improving literacy and numeracy can be seen as part of the school's climate for learning. In Year 7, a number of subjects are taught by one teacher. This helps girls settle quickly and develop their language skills: reading levels have improved. There are a few alternative routes through Key Stage 4 and a good range of courses and levels are offered in the sixth form. A curriculum policy that makes sure that all pupils have opportunities to study courses and subjects that suit them is not yet in place. This is particularly important for those who do not attain well in GCSE.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school cares well for its pupils. As a result of the very good transition arrangements, Year 7 girls are enthusiastic about their new school and full of praise for the 'taster days', which help to allay their fears. There is a well planned careers education programme and the girls appreciate the care that staff take to guide them as they make decisions about their futures.

The school generally provides a safe environment, although limitations in accommodation contribute to congestion at break and lunchtimes and have a negative effect on some girls' feelings of security and safety. The girls have confidence that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly.

The school has very effective arrangements for supporting individual girls and works extremely well with other professionals to reduce the barriers to learning for those who are most vulnerable.

Individual pupil's progress is tracked carefully and regularly. Girls review what they have done well and agree what they should try to improve on. The twice-yearly review days are popular with parents and have significantly improved the numbers who attend

school to discuss their daughters' progress. However, not all girls who enter the sixth form are helped sufficiently to make the right choices in course selection. In addition, the monitoring and evaluation of their subsequent progress is underdeveloped.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are good in the school and satisfactory in the sixth form. The headteacher, supported by the governing body and senior leadership team, provides a clear direction to the school. Senior managers know their school well and strive energetically to tackle weaknesses. This has been effective in the school, but less so in the sixth form, where attainment is only satisfactory. Managers have correctly focused on raising achievement. For example, the profile of teaching and learning has been raised through more rigorous lesson observations and the introduction of teaching coaches. Although best practice is not yet fully embedded, these initiatives are beginning to have a clear impact on raising standards at Key Stages 3 and 4.

The new leadership team, effectively use performance data to monitor progress and raise standards, but not all staff are confident in its use. A strong school ethos exists in which every child matters. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to safeguard girls.

School buildings are generally well maintained and good use is made of girls' work to create attractive wall displays. Resources are generally good, though some of the accommodation is cramped. The school provides good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming the Ofsted inspection team into your school. We appreciated the time many of you gave to talk with us and to let us know your views.

These are our main findings from the inspection.

- Belle Vue is a good school which cares well for you and encourages you to lead healthy lifestyles. You value the support and guidance which teachers and other staff give when you transfer from primary school and as you move through different year groups.
- The school is well led. The headteacher and staff have been very successful in helping you to improve your examination results and you are making good progress in Years 7 to 11. Those of you in the sixth form could achieve higher standards and we would encourage you to think carefully about how you could do this.
- Much of the teaching is good and those of you who need extra support receive it, both in classes and in base rooms.
- There is a wide range of courses for you to choose from in the sixth form. In Years 10 and 11, the school needs to extend the range of courses even further, particularly for those of you who find it difficult to achieve high grades in GCSE.
- Your attendance has improved and is now better than it was at the last inspection. Some of you, quite rightly, have targets to improve your attendance even further.
- Your behaviour around school is generally good and most of you are keen to learn and achieve your best, although some of you could show more enthusiasm and contribute more in lessons.
- We agree with you that the school is a safe place to be for most of the time but sometimes there is crowding in the corridors at the changeover of lessons and some of you feel anxious about this. You need to help your teachers make this situation better by being more careful and tolerant of each other when you are all on the move at the same time.

We have mentioned above a few areas where we think you could help to improve the quality of education at your school for yourself and others. Below are the main points which the staff and governors need to improve.

- Improve examination results.
- Review the curriculum to make sure that there are clearer opportunities for you to progress from Years 7 to the sixth form.
- Ensure that the quality of education provided in the sixth form is more closely monitored.

Once again, may we thank you for your support with this inspection. You and your teachers can be proud of what you have achieved and we wish you every success for the future.