



Beckfoot School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107386
LEA Bradford
Inspection number 277749
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Dr Linden Phillips HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Wagon Lane
School category	Community		Bingley
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Yorkshire BD16 1EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01274 771444
Number on roll	1589	Fax number	01274 771445
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr B Robinson
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr D Horn

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 277749
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Beckfoot School is a community comprehensive school for girls and boys aged from 11 to 18. The school was part of Bradford's reorganisation in 2000 when it added pupils from middle schools. The school is growing and, including 230 in the sixth form, has a total of almost 1,600 pupils on roll.

There is a larger than average number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school welcomes a slightly higher than average number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and that number is growing; most pupils are from white British backgrounds. Fewer pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school has been a Technology College since 2000 and has been re-designated for a further four years with a second specialism of Performance Arts.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Beckfoot School is a good school and it is poised to improve and become outstanding. Inspectors agree that, although there are areas to improve, the school is on its way to meet its own demanding aims.

The school's examination results are broadly in line with national averages, but most pupils make good progress. The dip in overall attainment in 2004 has been addressed with energy so that the general upward trend in progress was reflected in 2005.

Value for money is outstanding. The school receives less income for each pupil than is the norm locally and nationally and keeps a close watch on the prudent allocation of its finances, carefully anticipating future costs. The school has considerably improved its resources. Learning outcomes are monitored and linked to a strong focus on using resources to match pupils' needs and improve learning.

The curriculum has improved, addressing issues from the last inspection report. Recent and planned changes are designed to meet the needs of more of its pupils. Some pupils could achieve more. The behaviour of a few could be improved. There is a sharper emphasis on teaching skills. This has led to a common adherence to good practice, although this can be formulaic and the school could emphasise more the sheer enjoyment of learning. The sixth form provision is improving and this is reflected in its increased numbers.

Pupils like coming to school and are proud of their many, strong contributions to local and wider communities. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. The links the school makes to ensure the well-being of its pupils are excellent. The headteacher, the extended leadership team, many subject managers and staff share a joint vision to make Beckfoot an outstanding environment for all its children to learn, to progress and become whole-hearted contributors to their local and wider communities.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is growing and developing as a strength. Standards are average, but students make good progress across a range of subjects. However, this provision still lacks a sufficiently wide curriculum to meet the requirements and aspirations of its widening cohort of students. The school recognises this and is taking steps to offer a broader selection of courses.

Teaching and learning are good, with examples of very good practice. Students' progress is tracked and recorded very well. Students enjoy their studies and feel well supported and guided, both academically and personally. They particularly welcome the increasing encouragement to increase ownership of their own learning. Some able students could still achieve more.

The sixth form is led effectively and managed efficiently. The school has clearly evaluated the sixth form's strengths and weaknesses. These provide a convincing

picture of the successes and a clear statement of practical actions to be taken to ensure further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on teachers' skills to increase the emphasis on pupils' learning.
- Ensure that the school's positive behaviour policy is consistently applied in all lessons.
- Within the context of progress for most, the school should further identify those individuals and groups who could improve at a faster rate.
- Continue to explore ways to extend the sixth form curriculum to provide the breadth of courses and levels to meet the needs of all students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils arrive at the school with lower than average attainment but by the end of Year 9, they attain standards which are in line with national averages. This reflects their good progress. Girls' attainment overall is generally higher than that of boys.

Results at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in 2004 showed a decline from a generally upward trend over the previous three years. The school effectively identified and analysed the factors which contributed to this, and implemented a range of corrective measures, such as giving additional curriculum time to some courses, and offering booster classes to pupils. These measures have contributed strongly to pupils' progress, which is good and improving. The effectiveness of these measures is further demonstrated by the unvalidated GCSE results of 2005, and by the standards seen by inspectors in classes and in pupils' workbooks, which are generally in line with national averages.

In the sixth form, students make good progress and attain standards which are generally in line with national figures. However, there is a cadre of potentially higher attaining students, who have not attained as well as they could. The school has effectively identified the causes, and is successfully implementing measures to overcome this.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in relation to their capabilities, because provision for them is well organised.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that the personal development and well-being of learners are good. Pupils show consideration to others, appreciate the diversity of different cultures, and abide by a moral code that teaches them to value and respect all members of their community.

Attendance is satisfactory and gradually improving. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The school's effective, 'positive behaviour' strategy is addressing some small pockets of misbehaviour.

The school promotes health and safety awareness well. It was named Bradford's healthy eating champion and, partly as a result of pupils' requests, the school offers a range of healthy dining options. The physical education department plays a major role in encouraging a healthy lifestyle by offering a wide range of popular activities. Pupils make an outstanding contribution both within and outside the school community. For example, excellent relationships have been established with primary schools who use the school's information and communication technology (ICT) and drama facilities to develop their learning and skills, and are often assisted by Beckfoot pupils in a variety of activities. There is an active school council. Pupils' views are valued, respected and actively sought in matters as diverse as the design of new buildings, the appointment of some staff and the quality of teaching. In a variety of ways, such as the help they give to younger pupils with their reading skills and the development of the ability to make decisions and to form arguments, pupils are enabled to develop qualities and skills that contribute to their social well-being as well as help them to prepare well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and plan their lessons carefully. In good lessons pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations. Teachers make particularly good use of interactive whiteboards to excite pupils' interest and capture their imagination. They generally manage pupils well so that behaviour is good and learning is not interrupted. However, occasionally, when the lesson is rather dull and undemanding, pupils lose concentration, the teacher repeatedly has to remind them to listen, and learning becomes too slow.

Teachers often set good homework tasks for pupils that genuinely extend their learning. However, homework is not set consistently and there are too many gaps in homework diaries. Teachers usually mark pupils' work carefully and give good suggestions about how the work might be improved.

In the last few years, the school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Teachers work together within a whole school focus to share good teaching practice. Expectations of teachers, particularly in terms of implementing the 'secondary strategy' and making better use of assessment, have been increased and the leadership team have used rigorous monitoring to check that the school's requirements are being met by every teacher. The tactic has been successful in ensuring that there is very little inadequate teaching and that all lessons have a clear structure so pupils know what to expect. However, there are some disadvantages to this tight control on teaching. There can be an overemphasis on grades and targets at the expense of rounded learning. Also, inspectors saw few outstanding lessons. As many teachers are both skilful and

confident, it is time to re-emphasise the need to apply good principles more flexibly and concentrate more on producing the best possible learning for pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of the curriculum that it is good. In Years 7 to 9, it provides a broad and balanced range of activities that meet the needs of all pupils. As befits a school with performing arts status, drama is taught as a separate subject to all pupils in Years 7 to 9. An imaginative arrangement in modern languages enables almost all to take a GCSE examination in either French or German at the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum generally meets needs well through the provision of a range of routes of study that cater well for pupils of all abilities and that take into account their rate of progress during their first three years in the school. However, more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to ICT. The school has developed a good alternative curriculum for a small number of pupils who follow a course of personal education (COPE) with appropriate qualifications, including some vocational courses at a neighbouring college.

The school, its teachers and pupils make great efforts to enhance the curriculum with a very wide range of enrichment activities. These make a highly effective contribution to pupils' academic and social development and to their enjoyment of school life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care provided for pupils is good. Procedures for child protection are well established and understood by all staff. The school undertakes careful risk assessments and acts quickly to minimise any identified risks. The school has good arrangements for supporting vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and looked after pupils.

The school is an orderly community and pupils feel safe in school. They say that they always have someone to turn to if they have problems and that occasional incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers. The school's positive behaviour policy is now being used effectively to encourage good attitudes and deal firmly with any disruptions. As a result, behaviour is improving. Pupils in Year 7 appreciate the school's good procedures for introducing them to the school; a pupil who had changed schools several times said that he settled into this school faster than anywhere else he had been.

The school monitors pupils' progress carefully. Any underachievement is identified and action is taken to get the pupil back on track. In particular, there are very good arrangements to ensure that pupils do not default on coursework. The 'coursework club' is appreciated by pupils, even though it means compulsory time spent after school for those who need to complete assignments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The extended management team includes senior and middle managers who are working together effectively. The school has the capacity to improve and become outstanding.

The headteacher has clarity of vision and high aspirations for the young people in the school. He has gathered around him a newly defined senior management team and he delegates effectively to help develop that vision. Pupils support the school well and their views are sought on some quite significant changes, such as year group councils and involvement in the new school building plans. In addition, parents' views and support are sought regularly. Since September, parents have become fully involved in a Year 10 learning event evening when coursework and examination deadlines were fully explained and individual booklets were produced for each pupil. The response to the parental questionnaire was high. Parents offered comments on how the school could be improved and the large majority of parents were positive and supportive.

The governors work hard to support the school and take care to be involved in new developments, such as the development of teaching and learning excellence teams, who monitor standards, and work with teachers and pupils in a drive to raise achievement. This work evaluates the quality of teaching and links with the professional development of staff to improve the quality of lessons and pupils' progress. However, the intensive monitoring and targeting, whilst being useful and effective in a number of ways, must not get in the way of encouraging initiative and individualism within the classroom.

Finances are managed extremely well and very effective use has been made of grant money to raise the profile and skills of support staff, which also helps relieve the work burden on teachers.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
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	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
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	2
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	2

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	2
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	1	
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 very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed our visit and were very pleased to talk with you in meetings, during lessons and around the school.

Inspectors agreed with your headteacher and staff that Beckfoot is a good school and is improving. Teachers work hard to plan your lessons and make sure that you will pass your exams. Most pupils and students at Beckfoot make good progress in their studies. The school looks to your health as well, and there are very good arrangements to help you eat healthily and enjoy sports and exercise.

Teachers and other students generously give their time to offer extra activities including sports, music, performing arts and many others. Pupils who spoke with us enjoyed these activities and you and your parents value the extra experiences the school provides.

We were very impressed by the way so many of you contribute outside school. You help younger children, in your school and at primary schools. You take time to be aware of the world around you and support many charitable causes. You take good care of each other.

Most of your parents are very happy with the school. Replies to our questionnaire indicated areas that some parents would like improved. We agree with the school that it is still improving things and these are the main ones.

- Most teachers are improving the way they teach and you generally enjoy lessons. At the same time we think that there should be some more thought about how and what you are learning. You do need to know what your targets for learning are, but you also need to understand the whole picture.

- Most of you behave well, but some of you disrupt other pupils' learning. You all understand the school's positive behaviour policy and teachers need to help you stick to it.

- The school helps you make progress but some of you could improve a little faster. We have asked the school to support those of you who are not improving as they should.

- Your school sixth form is increasingly popular. As more of you stay on, we have asked the school to investigate how it might increase the range of courses on offer.