



Brimsham Green School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109319
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278183
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006
Reporting inspector Jim Sage HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Broad Lane
School category	Community		Yate
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		Bristol BS37 7LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 868888
Number on roll	1100	Fax number	01454 868880
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Janice Jones
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Richard E Warrillow

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 19	1 March 2006 - 2 March 2006	278183

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Brimsham Green School is a popular comprehensive school that has expanded significantly over the past five years. It has had Humanities Specialist College status since 2004, with English as the lead subject. It takes pupils from the local area that is neither strongly advantaged nor disadvantaged socially or economically. The school has link sixth form arrangements with two other schools.

Most pupils come from a White British background and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is in line with the national average, the proportion with statements of special educational need is above. There is a resource base for pupils with physical disabilities within the school; these pupils are fully integrated into lessons.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money. Self-evaluation is thorough and the school is clear about its strengths and weaknesses. It also judges itself to be satisfactory. The school has the capacity to make the necessary improvement, as reflected in the satisfactory improvement made since the last inspection.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory. It is better in Key Stage 3, where it is good, than in Key Stage 4. Here, whilst achievement is satisfactory overall, some boys underachieve. An underlying cause of this is low levels of literacy; the school uses a range of effective measures to tackle this for targeted groups of pupils, but there is inconsistency in how this is addressed through teaching across the school. Although the school gathers and makes use of extensive data, some pupils are unclear about their current level of achievement and targets.

The school does many things well; for example, promoting pupils' personal development and well-being and the care, support and guidance it provides. Most pupils enjoy coming to school, with excellent attendance. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, much is good. However, a minority of parents and pupils raise concerns about disruption that restricts other pupils' learning in a minority of lessons. This concern is shared by inspectors.

The school effectively enables pupils to be healthy, stay safe, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. They are provided with excellent careers information, advice and guidance. The school is very inclusive; this is illustrated well by the integration into lessons of pupils with physical disabilities.

Self-evaluation and monitoring procedures are generally used well to target interventions and support, and this has had a positive impact on achievement and standards in Key Stage 3. They are yet to have the required impact in Key Stage 4, where the school has not met its specialist college achievement targets. However, one impact of the specialist college status has been on professional development, with good examples of staff in both English and humanities providing effective training for other staff.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form at Brimsham Green is organised in collaboration with two local schools and students travel between schools for many of their lessons. This means that the results achieved by Brimsham Green students reflect the quality of provision across all three schools. The school judges that the sixth form provision is satisfactory, a view shared by the inspectors. Examination results are similar to those found nationally. Students make satisfactory progress from Key Stage 4. They receive good guidance and support. Arrangements for monitoring their progress are co-ordinated well and students have a clear picture of how they are progressing. At present there is no overall

system across the three schools to monitor, evaluate and develop the quality of teaching and learning. This is acknowledged as an area for development and there are appropriate plans to make an appointment at deputy head level to lead on this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve overall achievement and standards in Key Stage 4.
- Improve the performance of boys in those areas identified by the school.
- Adopt a more consistent approach to developing pupils' literacy skills through teaching.
- Address the low-level disruption that restricts learning in a minority of lessons.
- Make better use of existing pupil performance data with pupils and parents so that all pupils are completely clear about what they need to do to achieve as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. The school makes accurate judgements of the achievements and standards of pupils and recognises the underachievement of some boys and that standards in Key Stage 4 could be higher. The school has put in place a number of strategies to deal with this, including improving the use of data to set challenging targets for pupils. Pupils with physical disabilities are fully integrated and make the same progress as their peers.

On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' standards are broadly in line with the national average, but there is a significant group, of boys in particular, with low levels of literacy. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average, with good progress in mathematics and science. Progress overall in English is satisfactory, but girls achieve significantly higher standards than boys. There has been a steady improvement in standards over the past three years.

By the end of Year 11 there is significant variation in the standards achieved across subjects. Whilst pupils make good progress in some subjects, and standards overall in 2005 show a modest improvement over 2004, in a minority of subjects pupils make insufficient progress. Overall, progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and not as good as that in Key Stage 3. There is significant underachievement by some boys, with almost twice as many girls as boys achieving five A* to C GCSE grades. In English, the proportion of girls achieving at least a grade C is far greater than for boys.

Standards in the sixth form are close to the national average. The average grade achieved by students in 2005 was, however, a little lower than in 2004. Students make satisfactory progress from Key Stage 4 and most achieve the grades expected of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Most pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and secure, and demonstrate good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through engaging in a wide range of experiences. Humanities subjects make a good contribution

to spiritual experiences and there are extensive multicultural links, for example, through Culture Club links with Ethiopia. The revised programme of personal, social and health education is supported by enthusiastic groups of teachers and valued highly by pupils.

Attendance is excellent, and the attitude of the large majority of pupils is good; they work together well. Behaviour around the school is usually good. Occasional incidents of bullying are dealt with satisfactorily.

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices; this is a strong feature of the school. Their healthy eating includes Fair Trade options. Pupils and sixth form students make excellent contributions to the local community, are involved in charity days, organise a sports day for a neighbouring special school and produce a community newspaper. Sixth form students hold a weekly club for older people and support local schools. Pupils are able to fully develop economic awareness through young enterprise and other citizenship activities. There is very high participation in extra-curricular activities, especially sport and music, and the youth club is well supported.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching varies in quality. It is satisfactory overall, although much is good. Teachers plan and prepare thoroughly for their lessons. Many share lesson objectives well with pupils, although in a minority of cases these objectives lack the clarity to enable pupils to have a clear understanding of what they are expected to achieve. Teachers make good use of their knowledge of the subject to provide effective explanations and use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. They give clear instructions and present proficient practical demonstrations. In the large majority of lessons pupils show good attitudes and behave well. However, in a minority of lessons teachers do not deal effectively with low-level disruption that restricts the learning of other pupils. This often arises from pupils who are insufficiently engaged by the teaching or the learning activities.

Although the school has put in place a range of strategies to tackle the low level of literacy in a significant proportion of boys, for example, through the breakfast club, there is no consistent approach to addressing this through teaching across the school.

Marking of pupils' work is carried out regularly, although there is significant variation in teachers' use of assessment information to target their teaching and support. The school makes extensive use of performance data and has introduced a well-planned system of academic review, although this has yet to have a positive impact across the school. Whilst the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are clear about their targets and current level of achievement, there is wide variation in pupils' understanding of their achievement and targets in Key Stage 3.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

At Key Stage 3, there is a suitable curriculum for both boys and girls. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 offers an appropriate range of courses, with a small number of vocational options. Good provision is made for a small group of lower-attaining students who do fewer GCSEs and follow a strongly vocationally-based programme. Effective and well-managed links exist with a local Further Education college, where a group of students pursue vocational courses for one afternoon a week.

The school's self-evaluation does not fully address the appropriateness of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. It recognises the need for further flexibility for the 14–19 age range and plans to increase the vocational element of the curriculum from September 2007. The intention had been to offer this earlier, but the opening of a new 14–19 vocational centre in a partner school has been subject to delay. However, these intentions are not yet supported by detailed action plans within the overall school development plan.

The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sports and music.

At sixth form level, the well-established collaborative arrangements ensure that a good range of advanced-level courses is offered to students. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education for all sixth formers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils and sixth form students are supported well by strong teams of tutors who know them well and provide a high level of care, guidance and support, and promote their health and safety well. Risk assessments are made where appropriate. Child protection arrangements are robust, with a nominated co-ordinator, and training is available for all staff.

There is an excellent programme of careers information, advice and guidance throughout the school. This system is used well from Year 9 onwards on an individual basis to ensure pupils make appropriate choices. In the sixth form, guidance has led to excellent progression for students going on to Higher Education.

Tutors monitor pupils' overall progress effectively, and discuss targets and assessments with them. Despite this, some pupils in Key Stage 3 do not have a clear understanding of their achievements and targets in particular subjects. Parents receive regular reports and are involved when there is concern about lack of progress.

An excellent system of induction and links with primary schools, including two day visits by intending students, ensures that there is a good start for all new pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Self-evaluation is accurate; the headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides a clear sense of direction focused on raising achievement. He is supported well by the senior management team. This has led to improvements in achievement and standards in Key Stage 3, but has not yet had enough impact on Key Stage 4. Attention is now directed at this and improving added value in the sixth form. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Although the link arrangements are generally managed well, there is no overall system to monitor, evaluate and develop the quality of teaching and learning across the three schools.

The school gathers extensive data to monitor its performance, but the use of the analysis of this data is not yet fully effective. In some areas, the school's procedures are not applied consistently; for example, in the application of strategies for developing literacy skills and raising boys' achievements across the curriculum. There are good arrangements for the professional development of all staff and the school is building on the sharing of good practice to improve consistency.

The school is committed to promoting inclusion and pupils are well cared for and guided. It takes good account of the views of pupils and is in touch with parents and responds to their concerns, although there is a small minority of parents who feel that this is an area for improvement. There are good links with external bodies which provide effective support for pupils' development.

Governors are very supportive. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are involved in helping the school to improve. Despite low levels of funding, the school makes efficient use of resources and provides satisfactory value for money.

The strength of the leadership and management, the accuracy of the self-evaluation and the effectiveness of the improvements already introduced show the school has the capacity to improve.

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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?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

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	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
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?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
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	3	
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	Yes

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

Following our visit to your school, I and the inspection team would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for sharing your views with us. We would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

We believe that the staff care about your personal development, are very committed to supporting you during your time at school, and take good care to listen to your views. There is a wide range of subjects and courses, and so most of you can follow a programme of study that suits you best. The school is working to provide a wider range of courses for those of you aged 14 to 19, and we think that this is a good development. Very many of you join in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and music. You make good use of the opportunities to be involved in the community outside of the school. We noticed that most of you behave really well, but a small number of you in some classes prevent others from working as hard as they would like.

You told us that the lessons you enjoy most are those that involve lots of practical activities and interactive learning. The teaching in your school is at least satisfactory, and much of it is good, but we think that it would be helpful if teachers made sure that all of you understand how well you are doing and made it clearer what you need to do to improve.

You are making good progress in Years 7 to 9, and sound progress in the sixth form, but some of you, especially some boys, are not doing as well in Years 10 to 11. The school works hard to make sure you all have the basic skills you need to do well in school, but in some lessons, not just in English, more attention could be given to making sure some of you have the necessary skills in literacy.

The headteacher and the other school managers are clear about what the school is doing well and where it needs to improve. They have already made changes that should help you all to make better progress, and others are planned.