



Noel-Baker Community School and Language College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112992
LEA City of Derby LEA
Inspection number 279073
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Shaun Dillon LI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Bracknell Drive
School category	Foundation		DE24 0BR
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332 572 026
Number on roll	1595	Fax number	01332 573 654
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Freda Daniel
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Dr. Paul Davies

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 279073
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Noel-Baker Community School and Language College is an increasingly popular school. A large proportion of students come from areas of relatively high social and economic deprivation. It is well above average size for secondary schools nationally and is above average for the proportion of students eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with learning difficulties, including those with statements of special educational need is above the national average. Overall, the proportions of students with English as an additional language and of students from minority ethnic backgrounds are below national averages. Students' attainments when they start at the school at age 11 are generally lower than national averages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, which concurs with the school's view. Senior leaders correctly judge their school to be an improving school. Students' attainments on entry to the school at age 11 are below national averages, but they make satisfactory progress. Standards of attainment in the sixth form are well below national averages and have been for several years. However, recent improvements have been made to the sixth form curriculum and its entry requirements so that most students are on courses appropriate to their needs. The quality of care and support enables students with a wide range of difficulties to progress satisfactorily. The school works well in partnership with other agencies to promote students' well being. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. However, many lessons are spoiled by frequent disruptions from a minority of students. A significant proportion of students and parents express concerns about poor behaviour and bullying. The senior leadership team knows the strengths of the school and the areas which require improvement. The self-evaluation report is mostly accurate. The school's own data show that considerable improvements in students' attainments in Year 11 were made in 2005. Most of the key issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Leaders and governors have the capacity to make further progress. The school has collaborated well with other providers of education and training to offer courses more suited to the needs of the students in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. The implementation and monitoring of some school policies and practices are inconsistent. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory, which matches the school's self evaluation. Teaching is satisfactory. Students are pleased with the quality of education. Teachers give them appropriate advice on their choice of courses. Teachers keep students well informed of their progress. Students contribute effectively to the school community. The study and social areas are insufficient for students' needs. Students' attainments on advanced courses have been well below national averages for several years. However, students make satisfactory progress. Most students enter the sixth form with below average attainment. Recently, increased collaboration with other providers has enabled students to choose from a wider range of subjects and levels, more appropriate to their needs. The impact of these changes is evident in the satisfactory progress being made by students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise attainment in Year 9 and in the sixth form - Continue to develop the Years 10 and 11 and sixth form curricula to meet the needs of students - Improve the consistency of implementation of key policies - Reduce low-level disruption during lessons - Reduce bullying and misbehaviour

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall standards attained by students in 2004 are below national averages. However, the progress made by most students, including those with learning difficulties is satisfactory. When students enter the school in year 7, their standards are below national averages. By year 9, whilst their attainment is still below national average they make satisfactory progress, given their low starting point. Students with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets. Girls make significantly more progress than boys. GCSE examination results have been well below national averages for several years. Nevertheless, students make satisfactory progress based on their standards on entry. However, lower attaining students make less progress than other students. The school's data indicate that GCSE results in 2005 are a substantial improvement on previous years. The school's focus on raising students' attainments in the GCSE examinations was successful. In 2004, students did relatively well in English, science, drama and French but less so in humanities, art and design, vocational studies and computer studies. In the sixth form, overall standards reached by students are well below national averages. Most students join the sixth form with relatively low attainments in GCSE examinations. Most students make reasonable progress. The school's data for 2005 show that students are more successful in English and drama and less so in history, geography and sociology. Over half the students progress to higher education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory. Most students enjoy their education. They have positive attitudes towards the school, reflected in improved attendance, which is now satisfactory. Students usually respond well to staff and each other. Students' independent study and learning skills are less well developed. Most students usually behave well and most feel safe in school. However, parents, students and leaders are concerned about misbehaviour and the occasional instances of bullying. Exclusions have been significantly reduced since the recent introduction of the behaviour improvement programme. The school's strong emphasis on social and moral issues helps students' personal development. Students learn about the world of work and benefit from work experience. They have opportunities to eat healthily and to participate in a wide range of sporting activities. They are enthusiastic about cultural and art activities and educational visits. The provision for students to develop their spiritual awareness through religious education is satisfactory. Students who have special educational needs or who are vulnerable are well supported by the student support department. Their individual plans are thorough and make exemplary use of the vast array of services. They make good progress in all aspects of their personal development and learning. However, students who are gifted and talented are less well supported.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with examples of good practice. Inspectors agreed with the judgements of senior leaders when they joined them for five lesson observations. In the best lessons, attitudes to learning are good. Students make good progress because teachers make learning interesting and have high expectations of them. Lessons are planned carefully and have a brisk pace. Learning is enjoyable in modern foreign languages lessons. In other lessons, much time is spent on teachers' input, leaving insufficient opportunities for students to learn and practise skills. In some lessons, frequent low-level disruption by a minority of students hinders learning for the majority. In a minority of lessons, teachers provide different levels of work so that students of different abilities can make good progress. Students with learning difficulties receive effective support from teaching assistants to enable them to make good progress. The assessment system monitors the progress of students and identifies and supports those who need help to achieve their targets. Most students know the levels they are working at and their target grades. However, the marking of work in many subjects does not always tell students what they need to do to improve. Students' books are not marked frequently in certain subjects. Students enjoy assessing their own and others' work and they become more aware of their own strengths and areas for development. The school's revised homework policy is not implemented consistently across all areas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory and this confirms the school's evaluation. In collaboration with other providers, a more appropriate curriculum to meet students' needs is now in place and is being further developed. In Years 7 to 9, students follow a broad and balanced curriculum which builds on transition projects with the feeder primary schools. Year 7 students can access extra help in literacy and numeracy. In Years 10 and 11, all students follow a core curriculum and choose from a suitable range of academic and vocational courses. The curricular provision for students with special educational needs is strong. Many students successfully follow individual, supported programmes which prepare them for employment and their role in the community. The school recognises that its provision for students who are gifted and talented is underdeveloped. The provision for developing students' personal, social, health and safety education is satisfactory. The school successfully promotes fitness and healthy eating. Sixth form students support younger students. Extra-curricular provision includes a range of sporting and cultural activities which students support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Child protection procedures meet requirements, and suitable arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of staff and students are in place. Procedures for students transferring from primary to secondary school are effective. Students in Year 10 appreciate the help and guidance received in choosing their courses. They welcome the increasingly wide choices the school offers, particularly in vocational courses. While most students understand the level at which they work, fewer know what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. Care and support for vulnerable students are sensitive and responsive. Students with literacy and numeracy difficulties receive good support. Students with additional needs are well supported through the student support department. The school has successfully improved students' attendance and reduced the proportion of those excluded. Students and parents are aware of the recent revisions to the behaviour policy. The procedures for dealing with bullying are clear. Whilst most students feel safe in school, some parents and students are concerned about unacceptable behaviour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher and his senior leaders have ensured improved students' attainments in year 11. Improving trends in year 9 and in the sixth form were not sustained in 2005, according to data supplied by the school. Nevertheless, the progress made by students, given their low starting levels, is satisfactory. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Leaders want to improve students' behaviour and reduce bullying and low level disruption in lessons, but these issues persist. The school provides newly qualified teachers with very good support. The continuing professional development programme is comprehensive and is linked to the school's priorities. The school has sufficient accommodation and resources, and continues to invest in improving information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. New accommodation has been built but the study and social areas in the sixth form are insufficient. The school has improved its collaboration with other providers of education and training. The senior leadership team and the governors have an effective strategy to recover last year's deficit within this financial year. Value for money is satisfactory. Governors support the school well and meet their legal requirements except for the provision of religious education in the sixth form and a daily act of collective worship. The chair of governors is experienced and works closely with staff, but most governors do not liaise with departments. The school's view of its performance is mainly accurate. The self-evaluation form and the school improvement plan are comprehensive but they lack analysis and a wider involvement of staff. Improvements have been made to most of the key issues identified at the last inspection, but some aspects persist. The school has a wide range of policies but not all are systematically implemented across the departments. During the last two years the senior leadership team has achieved many of its priorities and it has the capacity to make further improvements.

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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	4	4
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	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
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	3	

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?	3	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?	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	3	
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	3	
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 the friendly welcome and help which many of you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, seeing how you worked with your teachers and finding out how you made progress at school. We think you are part of an improving school which wants all of its students to progress well and to be successful in the future. Most of you mix well with each other and get on with your teachers. Many of you try hard during lessons, behave well and take care over your work. However, some of you are worried about bullying and misbehaviour and frequent interruptions during lessons. Many of you are pleased with the support, care and guidance which your teachers give you. You also like the wide range of opportunities for you to join in activities outside lessons. Many of you do well in examinations and tests, but too many of you do not. Whilst we know that your teachers want to help you succeed, we think that some lessons could involve you more and could contain more interesting things to do. We also think that sometimes your work could be marked more often and contain more helpful comments for you to improve. You told us that in some subjects you don't often do homework and that homework might help you to practise what you learn in school. Your headteacher and other staff are looking closely at how the school can help you to achieve more. Over the last two years some major improvements have been made which have helped some students to be more successful. We have asked the school to spread these improvements out to all students in all years. We know that you liked being asked for your views about how to improve the school. We hope you continue to do so and that the school takes actions, where it can, to continue to improve your experience. We believe that the school is doing some good things, but we have asked your headteacher, his senior team and the rest of your teachers to do the following things: - Improve your successes in Year 9 and in the sixth form - Continue to improve your choices of subjects and courses in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form to meet your needs - Work with you to reduce interruptions in lessons - Work with you to reduce bullying and misbehaviour - Find out why you achieve better in some subjects than others and try to get all the departments to give you the same high standards that the best do now. Best wishes for the future.