



Bradon Forest School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126503
LEA Wiltshire
Inspection number 282126
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006
Reporting inspector Tom Winskill HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	The Peak
School category	Foundation		Purton
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Wiltshire SN5 4AT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01793 770570
Number on roll	1181	Fax number	01793 771063
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Procter
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Leonard Spiers

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	1 March 2006 - 2 March 2006	282126

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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

This above average sized comprehensive, specialist arts school serves Purton, Cricklade and the surrounding villages in North Wiltshire, as well as the west of Swindon. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low, as are the proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those having English as an additional language. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average.

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 an effective and improving school which provides a good quality of education for its students. Students, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress overall.

The school has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. Achievement and standards are good because teaching and learning are effective and the curriculum meets the needs of the great majority of students. The curriculum is particularly effective in Key Stage 4, with a wide range of provision planned to meet the needs of students with different abilities and aptitudes.

Some students, however, particularly in Key Stage 3, are not clear about how well they are achieving and the steps needed to achieve their targets. In addition, monitoring and tracking of individual students' academic progress is inconsistent. Behaviour and attitudes are good and, in many classes, excellent. In a very small minority of lessons, however, progress is slowed by poor behaviour. Relationships between students and staff are good, resulting in a positive working atmosphere in the school. Students' personal development and well being are good. This is the result of the wide range of opportunities provided by the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as the effective care and support students receive.

The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money. The school, including the governing body, has a clear and accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses which mirrors that of the inspectors. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The strong leadership of the headteacher has led to consistent improvement in the last three years. It has clearly demonstrated that it is well placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

As the school recognises in its current improvement plan, in order to raise standards and improve progress, particularly in Key Stage 3, it should:

- improve the consistency of monitoring and tracking of individual students' academic progress
- ensure that all students know how well they are achieving, what they have to do to improve and what their targets are in each subject
- work with students and teachers to ensure behaviour management and associated support strategies are effective and rigorously applied.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Students make good progress overall, with boys making better progress than girls. Students with learning difficulties make good progress and those who receive high levels of support make outstanding progress.

In Key Stage 3, progress is satisfactory and has been so for the last three years. The school broadly meets its targets for Key Stage 3. However, these have not been

sufficiently challenging to drive improvements in students' progress, particularly for higher attaining students. In Key Stage 4, progress is good and has improved over recent years. In 2005, the school was very close to achieving its challenging target for the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE grades of C and above.

Standards in both key stages have been consistently above average for at least five years. At Key Stage 3, standards in English, mathematics and science are all above average. Higher attaining students, however, do not achieve as well in English as they do in mathematics or science. At Key Stage 4, standards overall are well above average and have improved over the last two years. In addition, the percentage of students who include English and mathematics in their five or more good GCSE passes is also well above the national average.

At GCSE in 2005, with the exception of art and design, in all subjects students achieved standards which were average or above average. The school's specialist arts status has only been operational since September 2005 and consequently has yet to make a positive impact on test and examination results.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Students have a wide range of opportunities to develop good social and cultural awareness, in lessons and through out-of-school activities. They have a very clear sense of right and wrong and are encouraged to express their views on issues which affect their lives. As a result, they develop a mature sense of what moral and ethical behaviour entails and how this sometimes conflicts with easy choices. Spiritual development, identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection, is now good. It is effectively planned and encouraged in assemblies and in curriculum areas such as personal and social education, and religious education.

Students' enjoy most of their lessons and are positive about their teachers and proud of their school. This results in good attendance and punctuality. Behaviour around the school, and in many lessons, is extremely good. However, a very small minority of students cause problems in a few lessons through their poor behaviour and this is a concern for some parents.

Students feel safe and well cared for. They are made aware of safety issues in different situations. They become increasingly mature and able to assess relative risk as they discuss real-life scenarios or work with simulations. Students have a good awareness of the requirements for a healthy lifestyle. They are confident that there are adults they can go to for help and support. There are occasional instances of bullying, but students are happy that the school deals with these promptly and effectively.

There is an effective student council. Older students have good opportunities to take on additional responsibilities within the school, as prefects and in mentoring younger students. This includes working with students in the local primary schools. They also initiate or participate in a very large number of charity and fund-raising activities. This

enables them to develop their key skills and demonstrate their concern for people in need.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, engaging students and enabling them to learn well and make good progress. In the most effective lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons well, with tasks that are suitably challenging and meet the needs of all students. For example, in a good religious education lesson, the teacher's questions encouraged students to think deeply, producing well thought out responses. In an outstanding modern foreign language lesson, students made excellent progress as a result of dynamic teaching and a fast pace. In good business studies and science lessons, students progressed well through working independently and in teams.

The school has developed systems which enable students to know how well they are doing and how they can improve to achieve their targets, but these are not used consistently. For example, in some subjects students know what grade or level they are expected to achieve. They are also given criteria describing the requirements for each grade or level and specific guidance how to meet these criteria. In other subjects, particularly in Key Stage 3, students are unaware of their targets and are less sure how to improve their work.

Relationships between students and teachers are good. In a very small number of lessons, students' progress is limited as a result of ineffective management of poor behaviour instigated by a tiny minority of students. Students speak highly of their teachers and consider that they explain tasks well and provide good support for those who are finding the concepts difficult to understand.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it is broad, flexible and interesting to students, enabling them to achieve well. Students achieve well in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. A particularly good aspect of the curriculum is the creative range of subjects offered to students in Key Stage 4. This enables them all to follow courses that are relevant to their needs and to gain skills that equip them well for their future education, training or employment. In addition, very strong links with the local business community, partner schools and a local college enable students to access a wide range of vocational and work based courses. Students also displayed their good knowledge of business when winning the regional final of the Young Enterprise competition. The school has fostered very good links with partner primary schools, especially in the arts, as a result of its specialist status.

A high proportion of students participate in a wide range of activities outside lessons, especially in the arts and in sport. In this rural area, students who do not live close to

the school are able to attend because the school provides transport for after-school activities. Many students also participate in cultural and language visits. The school makes a good contribution to raising students' awareness of healthy and lifestyles. Examples of this include the health road-show in Year 9 and science lessons on the dangers of smoking. The school is part of the Healthy Schools programme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care guidance and support are good. The school takes great care to ensure students' safety and emotional well-being. Child protection procedures are secure and all staff have received the appropriate training. The pastoral system enables tutors to monitor attitudes and behaviour effectively. Tutors do not consistently track pupils' academic progress, which reduces their ability to support the students in raising standards and improving their academic progress. Tutor time is not always used effectively. Students' views on issues which affect them are sought and valued and their opinions, for example, on bullying and attendance are taken seriously.

The promotion and monitoring of health and safety are given a high priority. There are effective systems in place to manage risk assessments. The school employs a counsellor and makes good use of support from many other professionals whose expertise promotes students' well being.

The particular needs of students with learning difficulties are clearly identified and they are well supported both in small withdrawal groups and within the classroom. This support contributes to the good, and sometimes outstanding, progress they make. Teaching assistants are increasingly linked to subjects. This is developing their expertise and providing more confident and effective support for students.

Most parents agree that they are kept well informed by the school, for example through the monthly newsletter and by telephone calls from tutors to discuss any problems. Careers education and guidance are good and students now have many opportunities to acquire workplace skills through work experience, visiting speakers, and the vocational choices available in Key Stage 4

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's strong leadership has set a clear direction for the school and is developing a culture of both support and challenge. As a result, there is a relentless drive for improvement which has increased the progress made by students and raised the standards they achieve. The headteacher is very well supported by his recently restructured senior team. Heads of subjects and year leaders are becoming increasingly effective as a result of robust line management arrangements. These provide a coherent framework for monitoring and improvement planning.

Staff feel valued and are encouraged to contribute to self-review and school improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning, an area for improvement at the

last inspection is now good. Systems for checking teaching, the work of subject departments and other aspects of the school are comprehensive and student performance data is analysed rigorously. This monitoring information is shared widely between departments. Consequently, the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and plans accordingly. However, inconsistencies in practice, for example in the strategies used for behaviour management and the use of tutor time have not yet been fully ironed out. The school development plan provides a good basis for further improvement, although the criteria used to gauge success are not always sharply defined.

The school is using its specialist arts status to develop effective partnerships with neighbouring schools and to build on existing good community links. In addition, there are imaginative plans to improve key learning skills, such as speaking and listening, in all subjects.

The school has the confidence of parents, whose views are regularly canvassed through questionnaires and consultation evenings. This confidence is reflected in the high demand for places at the school, which is heavily oversubscribed. Governors know the school well and play an active part in both planning developments and monitoring progress. Financial management is very good, and the school makes good use of its resources and additional funds to plan for improvements to its accommodation.

The school's improving performance, its success in tackling the key areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, and its good plans for further development ensure it is very well placed to make further gains.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

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 inspect your school, we would like to tell you our findings. We enjoyed our time at Bradon Forest, particularly visiting your lessons and discussing the school with you. You helped make us feel welcome.

You are being well educated at a good school with a lot of positive features. There is a wide choice of subjects for older students. Teachers help you make good progress and gain above average results in examinations and tests in many subjects. You get on well with your teachers and you tell us that they help you a lot. You are well prepared for life after Bradon Forest. You do well in tests and examinations but we think you can do even better. To do so, each of you should know how well you are doing and be clear about what grades or levels you are expected to achieve in each subject. You should also have very clear guidance about what to do to improve your work. We have asked the school to continue its work to make sure this happens. We also think your tutors could keep a closer eye on how well you are doing in your subjects and do more to help you make to more progress.

We were impressed with how well the vast majority of you behave. A tiny minority of students behave badly in some lessons. This stops them, and others, making progress, which is unfair. We have asked the school to make sure behaviour is of a high standard in all lessons.

The school works hard to make sure you are safe and well cared for and most of you enjoy coming to school. Mr Spiers and his senior team run the school well. They know what needs to be improved and how to do it. Many improvements have been made since the last time the school was inspected and we expect there to be more in future.