



Ernest Bevin College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101053
Local Authority Wandsworth
Inspection number 285958
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector John Kennedy HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Beechcroft Road
School category	Community		Tooting
Age range of pupils	11–19		London SW17 7DF
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	020 8672 8582
Number on roll (school)	900	Fax number	020 8767 5502
Number on roll (6th form)	183		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr I Cheshire
		Principal	Mr M Chivers and Ms R Sheikh
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

Age group 11–19	Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007	Inspection number 285958
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Ernest Bevin College is an over-subscribed, average-sized boys' comprehensive college with a mixed sixth form. The college serves a broad catchment area. Students come from a wide range of economic prosperity with an above average number eligible for free school meals. The college takes students from the full range of ability but overall their attainment, when they start, is slightly below average. The college was awarded specialist status for sports in 2000 and mathematics and computing in 2004. The college has had 'Leading Edge' status since 2004.

Few students leave or join other than at standard times. The students come from a wide range of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, with the biggest proportions being those of Black Caribbean, Black African, Pakistani and White British heritage. Almost half of the students do not speak English as their first language and 40 students are in the early stages of acquisition. Since September 2006 the college has been led and managed by two co-principals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ernest Bevin College is a good college with high aspirations and expectations. The staff and students accurately describe it as a caring environment where racial harmony and mutual respect are central. The positive response from parents demonstrates that they also agree.

From the time they come to the college, students make good progress in most subjects by the end of Year 11. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of students well. Enrichment activities are excellent, extending the students' learning and their personal, social and cultural development. The combination of the strong curriculum and good attitudes to learning ensures that students achieve well. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and improving with much of it being good. However it does not always engage students sufficiently or give them chances to become actively involved in learning.

In general, students are polite and well-behaved. The college tackles incidents of poor behaviour rigorously. Students enjoy coming to the college, are well-motivated and willing to work. They take pride in their environment which is maintained at a high standard. Poor attendance by a small number of students hinders their progress. The college has given priority to raising levels of attendance with recent improvements evident in most year groups.

Leadership and management are good. The two co-principals lead most effectively and are supported by a strong leadership team. The team-spirit and shared focus amongst all the staff is a significant strength that contributes to the college's good capacity to improve. The impact of the strong leadership and management is clear and can be seen in, for example, the rapidly improving quality of teaching, strong monitoring and evaluation systems and much improved behaviour management. A key to the success is the continuity and stability of staff which contribute towards the sense of it being a safe place for students to enjoy their learning. The non-teaching staff are a strength of the college and make a valuable contribution to all aspects of college life. One student remarked that what makes the college good is that 'teachers stay on here'.

The exemplary quality of the college's concern for each individual's personal and academic welfare provides the secure foundation for all students to make good progress. Whether through the curriculum, sporting opportunities, or through sensitive personal support, the college is highly effective in nurturing each student's development. One parent, summing up the effectiveness of the college, commented that: 'Our own son is being stretched educationally. He enjoys coming to school to learn. We feel we have made a wise choice.'

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form is satisfactory and improving, and the majority of students are making the expected progress given their starting points. However, there are variations in the

progress that students make in different subjects. The college is acutely aware of this and has taken appropriate steps to improve tracking, monitoring and the overall quality of provision. Leadership and management of the sixth form, which are now good, have resulted in students being well matched to courses. Students are appreciative of the regular checks on their progress and of interventions to support them. Whilst attendance at registration is weak, particularly in Year 13, the college monitors attendance at lessons rigorously and is now taking appropriate steps to address individual concerns.

The measures to improve achievement and standards are having a positive effect. Teaching is satisfactory overall and, while students' ability to work independently is satisfactory, this could be better. Strong and effective monitoring of teaching and learning is rapidly improving its quality, ensuring that teachers know what steps to take to accelerate students' progress. Students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, and are successfully being encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the progress that students, including those in the sixth form, make by working with parents and students to raise levels of attendance
- Raise the quality of teaching so that it stimulates and motivates all students and encourages them to be more active in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Students enter the college with standards that are slightly below the national average, although this has risen over the last few years. Achievement is good overall in Years 7 to 9, and students reach above average standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science. Test results have shown a marked and steady improvement year on year. Students' achievement in mathematics is particularly noteworthy, although fewer achieve the very highest levels in English and science. Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani students achieve as well as other groups and students with English as an additional language make good progress, with no groups significantly under-performing. Provision for students with learning difficulties is well managed and, as a consequence, they achieve well.

At the end of Year 11, standards reached at GCSE are above average overall and have risen significantly in the last two years, with 63% of students achieving 5 or more A*-C grades, a high proportion. However, in 2006 due to the poor performance of some students in English, the percentage achieving five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics fell to 25% which was well below average. As a result, the college has taken appropriate steps to improve the quality of teaching in English and students are now making good progress. In addition, some able mathematicians take their GCSE

early in Year 11. This also reflects the impact of improved teaching. The successful introduction of greater curriculum flexibility in Years 10 and 11 has contributed well to students' overall achievement by the end of Year 11. The weak attendance of a minority of pupils in Year 11 is hampering their progress. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are making good progress in their studies because of the careful support they are given. Standards in the sixth form are average and achievement is satisfactory, with a significant number of students leaving the college to go on to university or further training.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Attendance has improved since September as a result of the systems that the college has put in place for more effective tracking, rewards and follow-up. An atmosphere of vibrant social harmony is tangible and students feel safe and behave well as a result of consistent classroom management, support for those with particular needs and a 'no-nonsense' response to inappropriate behaviour.

Students, through their involvement in the College Council, citizenship and religious education, have developed a good moral and social sense. They make a positive contribution to the college and global community through, for example their work on recycling and collecting money for earthquake victims. Students say they enjoy life in the college and show evidence of having adopted healthy lifestyles. The healthy schools' programme is well advanced and each year its focus has resulted in significant changes in the lives of students, for example the response it has been providing to students with mental health needs. Students make the most of the ever-growing range of opportunities for them and their spiritual and cultural development is good, as can be seen in their reflections in the 'Bevin Weekly' and the very many cultural events such as African drumming, Irish music and salsa.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with a significant and increasing amount that is good. In many lessons, students are inspired to learn and they do so with confidence and pride; teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained and activities are carefully designed to challenge the students to learn at a swift pace. Students' levels of enjoyment and motivation are high. Praise is used extensively to motivate students. Teachers take care to ensure that students know exactly what is expected of them

and what they need to do to improve. Working relationships in these lessons are excellent.

However, while teaching is satisfactory, the teachers' desire to ensure that all students understand the work results in more teacher-direction than is necessary. This is often at the expense of practical 'hands-on learning' which makes more demands on the students to be active and independent in their learning. As a result, there is over-reliance by students on their teachers, especially in the sixth form.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The good curriculum is broad, flexible and balanced. It is enriched in Years 10 and 11 by the addition of a number of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses, which better meet the needs of students. Students attend the local city learning centre (CLC) to study BTEC diploma courses in design, performing arts, media and music technology. Other relevant vocational courses are provided for students at South Thames College of Further Education, including vocational link courses. Progress is monitored well and results have improved. Students study French, German and a number of heritage languages as part of the rich curriculum on offer. Sixth form students choose with appropriate guidance from a wide range of over 20 academic subjects and five vocational subjects. Work related learning is good with all students in Year 10 undertaking valuable two-week work experience during which aspects concerning personal financial management contribute well to their economic well-being.

The college's recent specialisms have already had a positive impact on GCSE results in information and communications technology (ICT) and mathematics with more students successfully taking mathematics early in Year 11 and choosing the subject in the sixth form. The sports specialism contributes to students' pride in the college. In particular, a significant number of students participate in cricket, volleyball, judo and rugby and have considerable success at national and regional level. The college will soon open the very much-needed purpose built sports hall and swimming pool. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities such as a reading club, jazz band and table tennis are provided. Students are also involved in field trips, and numerous educational visits; these add to students' confidence and their health and well-being. Students report that they have gained considerably from these activities and from the support that staff provide in the lead-up to public examinations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The staff know their students' needs exceptionally well and students have confidence in being able to speak to them if they have any concerns. The college has a dedicated counsellor supported by a highly experienced and effective welfare team. For example, staff, working with outside

agencies, have provided bereavement and counselling support to students to help them cope well with two recent tragedies.

The college has a well-managed Learning Support Centre and this provides very good individual and group therapy, social skills and learning support to students. Regular multi-agency panels bring together a range of professionals to provide support for students, for example those with emotional or behavioral needs who may have complex social or family backgrounds. A key feature of the college's support is its mentors, who are very good role models. One former student spoke of the 'immeasurable impact' the college made to his life and regards it as a privilege to come back to the college as a mentor.

Robust safeguarding and staff vetting procedures are in place. Well-developed systems exist for the guidance of students and tracking their progress and for intervening with focused support when a student needs help or is in danger of underachieving. The college has given priority to refining these to ensure, for example, that students and their parents are made more aware of the links between their targets and the impact of good attendance on their achievement. On entering the sixth form, students receive helpful guidance on the range of vocational, advanced courses and future opportunities available to them. Throughout the college the Connexions Service provides good careers advice and students are aware of the options available to them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The co-principals, one appointed in September 2006, work very well together with a strong drive and determination for continuous improvement and for providing the best for the students. This co-leadership arrangement is successful and supported by all staff. It generates time for the co-principals to lead and manage the college effectively. Leadership and management links between senior and middle managers, restructured in September 2006, are now very strong and effective. Staff morale is strikingly high and the strong camaraderie at all levels contributes to the good relationships within the college.

The impact of the leadership and management can be seen in the clear strategic guidance, effective behaviour management and the development of a highly motivated and committed staff. The college's view of teaching is accurate. Senior managers are fully aware of the college's strengths and weaknesses and know that the quality of teaching must be raised to generate even higher standards and achievement. Monitoring and evaluation are now a secure aspect of management. Lesson observations are rigorous and are effectively allied to continuous improvement through the dissemination of good practice and advice by colleagues. As a result, the proportion of good teaching has improved.

The direction for further improvement is clear as is the continued focus on equality of opportunity for all students, so that they make the best progress possible. Whilst

there are good systems in place to capture attendance and other data, the information is not yet used dynamically enough to identify particular groups of non-attenders and the impact it is having on their achievement.

The governing body brings a wealth of relevant experience to its deliberations and is extremely supportive of all the college's work. Staff welcome opportunities to extend their skills, to learn from others and to support colleagues, including those from other schools, for example with their 'Leading Edge' work with another neighbouring college to improve, amongst other aspects, the teaching of literacy.

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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 effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
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	2	3
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	2	
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?	3	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?	1	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below 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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your college recently. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection. If you want to read the complete report you can download it from www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Your college provides you with a good education and a caring environment in which to learn. You are right to be proud of it. Overall the sixth form is satisfactory but improving. We saw good behaviour by you in lessons and throughout the college. We hope you will continue to try hard to make the college a place where good behaviour is the norm. Most of you have very good attendance but some in each year group do not attend as often as they should, and this is having an effect on their progress.

The college has given you a wide range of opportunities and you told us how much you enjoy activities, such as sport and music. You told us that you like your teachers. The college is working hard to make teaching more challenging and motivating and help your learning be more interesting and enjoyable. You are keen to do well and achieve good results in examinations. We were impressed with how well the teachers and other staff get to know you and keep an eye on your progress, so that they can make sure that you do not fall behind. All of this happens because your co-principals and other staff are determined that the college will continue to improve.

To make your college even better we have asked your college to:

- Improve the progress that you make by working with you and your parents to raise levels of attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it stimulates and motivates you and encourages you to take a more active part in your learning.

You, too, can play your part by helping the college to achieve these aims. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We wish you success for the future.

With best wishes,

John Kennedy
Her Majesty's Inspector