



The Florence Brown Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109392
Local Authority Bristol, City of
Inspection number 288361
Inspection date 6 February 2007
Reporting inspector Sarah Mascall

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Leinster Avenue
School category	Community		Knowle
Age range of pupils	5-16		Bristol BS4 1NN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 3532011
Number on roll (school)	139	Fax number	0117 3532012
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	G Cameron
		Headteacher	Peter Evans
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is going through a period of change. At present it is designated as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties although nearly a quarter of the pupils have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Unit E has been established within the school for those pupils with the most challenging behaviours. There is also a unit for pupils with physical impairment within the school. Thirteen pupils attend a local secondary school (Brislington Enterprise College) full time and are supported by staff from Florence Brown based at the college.

All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and their attainment on entry is well below national expectations. Most pupils come from south Bristol and their socio-economic background is mixed. Nearly all are White British. A small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. A very small number of pupils are over the age of 16 and are educated with pupils in Year 11.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Florence Brown is a good school. It is keen to develop further and much has been achieved over the last two years in moving the school forward. This is because of good leadership and management which has enabled the school to effectively begin to change in order to meet the needs of a growing population of pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBS). Senior staff are enthusiastic and committed to doing the best for pupils. They have put in place a number of systems that are helping pupils to manage their behaviour more effectively. As a result, behaviour across the school is now good. Several parents raised concerns about behaviour and bullying but because of the effective care, guidance and support provided by the school incidents of bullying have been reduced and pupils feel safe.

Pupils clearly like school and are very positive about what it has done for them, especially in gaining confidence. As a result, their personal development is good. They commented that they like all the different activities they can do. This is because the curriculum is good and provides a wide range of activities which are well matched to pupils' needs, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The focus on vocational and life skills courses prepares pupils extremely well for life when they leave school. Pupils benefit from opportunities to attend mainstream schools and those based at Brislington Enterprise College (BEC) clearly enjoy their experiences. This is reflected in the fact that they rarely miss a day of school and have very good attendance. At Florence Brown, attendance is satisfactory. However, for several of those pupils who have the most challenging behaviours, it is unsatisfactory and this limits their achievements to satisfactory rather than good.

As a result of the special needs of the pupils standards are well below average but pupils make good progress and achieve well overall. Pupils benefit from good teaching which is well planned and focused on making lessons practical and interesting. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and use this information successfully in supporting those pupils who do not reach their targets, but there is not the same emphasis for ensuring that those making satisfactory or better academic progress are extended to achieve even more. Parents consider that their children do well in school but several commented that they did not feel their views were listened to or that they were sufficiently well informed about what was going on in school.

The school is developing its systems so that it has better understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. It has established a new system for recording the progress pupils are making but is not yet checking effectively what progress pupils make from when they start school to when they leave, or on the progress of the different groups of pupils within the school. As a result, it is unable to accurately evaluate what value the school is adding to pupils' achievements.

What the school should do to improve further

- make better use of the information it has to set more challenging targets and to have a better understanding of the progress all pupils are making while they are in school
- improve attendance for those pupils with the most challenging behaviours to ensure that they make the same progress as their peers
- improve communication with parents so that they feel better informed and that their views are valued.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although standards are generally well below those expected nationally, pupils achieve well. The majority of those pupils who attend full time at BEC have moderate learning difficulties and make very good progress, achieving standards similar to their mainstream peers. This is because of the effective support they receive from the Florence Brown staff based at the college. Overall, pupils, regardless of their special needs, make good progress in their learning because teachers ensure that they are well supported in lessons. The majority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties respond well to the school's strategies and achieve as well as their peers. However, several of those with more challenging behaviours are not making the same progress because they do not attend school regularly and this prevents them from doing as well as they should.

When pupils do not meet their targets, they respond well to the extra help they are given, for example in reading and, as a result, catch up very quickly with their peers. More able pupils often exceed the targets they are set, but are not always sufficiently challenged to do better and achieve to their full potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and to be active members of the school community. The school council is an effective group which has had an influence in bringing about change. In the past, it has raised concerns about bullying in school and pupils comment that this has reduced a great deal, that they feel safe and that behaviour is better. There are still incidents of poor behaviour but these are decreasing because pupils are responding well to the newly established rewards systems.

The developing maturity of pupils is evident in those who are involved in work-related projects such as building a paved area in the school. They work well together and independently, making decisions and carrying out their tasks sensibly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show care and concern for each other and are generally tolerant of each other's differences. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and many choose salads and fruit to have with their lunch. Parents commented on the increased confidence of their children since

starting school. One mother commented on how her daughter, who is physically impaired, used to be extremely shy but now speaks her mind and does not hesitate to ask for help when it is needed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that resources are used well to make activities interesting and fun. The interactive whiteboards are used effectively to involve pupils in making choices and enable them to share their knowledge with their classmates. The quality of planning varies but is good overall. In some subjects such as design and technology, it is very detailed and has clear expectations for what each child will achieve by the end of the lesson. Teachers make good use of support staff, who are fully involved in lessons and support pupils' learning well. They are helped further by the strong support provided by the learning mentors. The management of behaviour is good overall and is particularly effective for those pupils in Unit E. Teaching challenges these pupils and extends their ability to understand different points of view, such as when discussing the rights and wrongs of switching off a life support machine. Teachers annotate pupils' work well, clearly showing how much support they have been given. They do not, however, always indicate to the pupils what they could do to improve their work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school is continually looking at ways to develop its curriculum. It has ensured that activities are matched well to the different needs of pupils and that their successes can be recognised through a range of accreditation. The work-related opportunities are excellent and prepare pupils extremely well to meet the challenges that they will encounter as they grow older. Pupils are enthusiastic about all the different activities and clubs they are offered and this contributes well to their enjoyment of school.

Personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development well and the introduction of critical thinking skills and support activities each morning is a positive move. However, not all staff use this time effectively and the school recognises the need for better monitoring of these sessions. The increase in teaching time on Fridays is intended to develop pupils' literacy skills further although it is too early to judge the impact of this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are a number of strengths in the provision for pupils' care and welfare. The school works hard to ensure pupils are safe and well cared for and has put in place many effective strategies to support them. Child protection procedures are secure and

there is good vetting of staff. The systems for rewarding good behaviour and hard work have had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and good processes for following through incidents mean that these are dealt with quickly. The school is proactive in working with a wide range of outside agencies and professionals to support pupils and their families. The re-introduction of the family support group in school contributes to this and is encouraging more parents into school.

The school is aware that its assessment processes are not fully developed. This has resulted in pupils being set targets that are not challenging enough to make sure they make as much progress as possible academically. Targets for personal development are good and nearly all pupils know their behaviour targets, although few could recall their literacy or numeracy targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The key strength of leadership and management lies in the hard work and commitment of the senior team. They are full of enthusiasm and keen to get it right. Many of the systems that have been put in place, such as those for checking the quality of teaching, are already having a positive impact, particularly with regard to improving behaviour across the school. As a result, the capacity for the school to improve further is good.

Although the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths, it has not established sufficiently robust processes to ensure it has a good understanding of what it needs to improve. Senior staff are aware of the need to have a better idea of how the different groups of pupils are doing and how well pupils progress over time. The new system for recording and analysing pupils' achievements is beginning to be used well and staff are developing the skills to use it effectively. The governing body is well informed about what goes on in school and regular visits and discussions with subject leaders ensure they have a good understanding of the strengths in the school. Parents are well represented on the governing body but several parents commented that they do not feel that their views are listened to by the school and that they are not well informed about all the activities that go on in school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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
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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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 Richard and me so welcome in your school and giving up your time to talk to us. We enjoyed meeting you and looking at all the work you have done.

Florence Brown is a good school. This is because senior teachers make sure that there are lots of systems that keep you safe and the care and support you get are good. We were particularly impressed with your behaviour and how you care for each other. You said that you liked school because of all the different things that you can do. This is because the school has made sure you have a good curriculum.

Whilst most of you come to school regularly, a few of the pupils with the most challenging behaviours are not so good at attending and this means that they do not learn as much as the rest of you. Because of good teaching, you make good progress and achieve well while in school. Most of your parents and carers thought you did well but they felt that they did not know enough about what goes on in school. The school sets targets for you but these targets are not always challenging enough to make sure you make the best possible progress in your work. Your senior teachers run the school well and know what the school is good at. They do not yet use all the information they have, however, to check that you are making enough progress from when you start school to when you leave.

We have asked the school to do three things:

- make better use of the information it has to set more challenging targets and to have a better understanding of the progress all of you are making while you are in school
- make sure that pupils with the most challenging behaviours come to school more regularly
- make sure your parents know what is going on in school and that their views are taken into account

We also liked the way you made good choices at lunch times. We saw a lot of you choosing salad and fruit and we hope you continue to look after yourselves and keep healthy.