



The Bramcote Park Business and Enterprise School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122853
Local Authority NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number 292530
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Bob Roberts HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Bramcote
School category	Community		Beeston, Beeston
Age range of pupils	11–16		Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG9 3GD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 9130013
Number on roll (school)	632	Fax number	0115 9130012
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr J Cockcroft
		Headteacher	Mr J C Teal
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002		

Age group 11–16	Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007	Inspection number 292530
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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

The Bramcote Park Business and Enterprise School is a smaller than average secondary school on the outskirts of the city of Nottingham. The school's roll has been falling recently as a result of demographic change and, at the time of the inspection, proposals for a federation with two other local secondary schools were subject to public consultation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties. Almost 20% of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the range of ethnic backgrounds is increasing. The school has been a specialist Business and Enterprise school since September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bramcote Park is providing a satisfactory standard of education. Several aspects of its work are good. The school has been and is going through a difficult period. Rolls have been falling, and this, combined with other factors, has meant the school facing challenging budget problems. A programme of redundancies and a management restructuring has taken place, and there are proposals in the public domain for federation with two other local secondaries. This background of uncertainty has been at a time when the school has undertaken its specialist role as a business and enterprise school.

Considering this background, the achievements of the acting head, his leadership team, and the school as a whole are significant and they provide good leadership and management. Academic achievement, although below the national average, has been rising steadily and pupils have been making satisfactory progress. The development of the business and enterprise specialism has been successful. Targets have largely been met. The curriculum has developed well, reflecting both the emphasis on business and enterprise and a commitment to meet the needs of individual pupils. Staff morale is high, despite the many changes. Teaching is satisfactory, and much of it is good. The staff demonstrate a commitment to the pupils and to the school itself. A new management structure has been successfully implemented, although it is too soon to assess its impact. Its effectiveness requires careful monitoring. Care, guidance and support are good. There are excellent systems for the care and support of highly vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties. Guidance and the monitoring of progress are also good.

The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory and behaviour is generally good although some younger pupils do not feel completely safe. More work is needed to develop those aspects of the provision that particularly influence personal development. Too few pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. Although most seem to enjoy coming to school, many are sometimes passive in lessons, lacking motivation and self-confidence. Teaching needs to improve both to engage and motivate these pupils and to assess their learning. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community but the impact of these opportunities is limited. Too many pupils are not prepared well enough for life after compulsory schooling.

Well over a hundred parents responded to the questionnaire that accompanied this inspection. Three quarters were positive in their views about the school. The school has a satisfactory awareness of its strengths and weaknesses although it tends to over-rate its strengths. Plans for improvement have identified appropriate priorities. The school offers satisfactory value for money and there is good capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor and support staff in the new management structure to enable them to become fully effective in their new roles.
- Improve the quality of teaching by developing strategies for active engagement and by checking learning more effectively.
- Improve those elements of the provision, in particular the PSHE programme, assemblies and tutor time, which could contribute to pupils' personal development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations. Some year groups enter the school with below average attainment. Pupils make satisfactory progress between Years 7 to 11 and their achievements at the end of Year 11 are satisfactory.

In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, standards are below the national average but are broadly satisfactory. In the 2005 tests, the standards in science were exceptionally low, but in 2006 science results had recovered and were satisfactory.

At GCSE in 2006, the results were the best that the school had ever obtained. For example, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more good passes had reached 49%. Indeed, the school's results have been improving steadily since the last inspection. The attainment of girls, in particular, has improved substantially since that time. The results do, however, remain below the national average. Progress in mathematics has been poor, in contrast to English, in which progress has been good and attainment is far higher. The school has addressed this issue since last summer and the progress being made in maths lessons now is at least satisfactory.

Pupils with learning difficulties are supported very well and make satisfactory progress. The school monitors the achievement of pupils from different ethnic groups carefully. Vigorous action was taken following concerns about the achievement of a small group of Pakistani pupils in 2004. In 2006, the progress and attainment of all groups was satisfactory. Most of the more significant targets have been met or exceeded, although the school has not been able to meet all the targets related to its specialist school status.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The caring ethos of the school and the range of opportunities open to pupils help their social and moral development. However, the provision for their cultural development is limited and there is very little at all that encourages their spiritual growth. The school does not meet the requirement to hold an act of collective worship, and assemblies and tutor time are wasted opportunities for moral, social and spiritual experience. The

behaviour of pupils is good. There is strong evidence that behaviour was a significant concern in the recent past, but that it is now much improved. In lessons, and within the buildings, pupils generally behave well and are friendly and welcoming. Some younger pupils, however, do not feel that the school is an entirely safe environment: there is too much smoking as well as a litter problem in the grounds. Attendance is satisfactory and improving gradually. Despite the efforts of the school, through its school meals provision and an emphasis in lessons, many pupils are reluctant to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy coming to school to a satisfactory degree, although many are passive in lessons. There are growing opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to the school and the community but the take-up and overall impact of these opportunities is unclear. Year councils and a school council are established but do not yet, in the eyes of the pupils at least, have much influence. The business and enterprise specialism of the school has led to some excellent initiatives, such as the Enterprise Publications project, but with the proportion of pupils leaving school with a level two qualification (including English and maths) well under the national average, the school still needs to do better in preparing its pupils for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The school's own view that the overall quality of teaching is good is not one that inspectors support, although much of the teaching seen was good.

Both teachers' knowledge of their subjects and their relationships with pupils are good. As a result, students behave well. In the best lessons, pupils share the teacher's enthusiasm for the topic, learn to work independently and are eager to succeed. These lessons are well planned with varied activities and challenges which match the needs of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and students learn well. Incisive questioning develops students' thinking skills, although this strategy is not widely enough used. For more able pupils the level of challenge is not always high enough. In some lessons, when teachers spend too long giving complicated explanations, pupils' concentration lapses, and opportunities for learning are lost. Opportunities for the active participation of pupils in learning are also missed. At times, activities are not systematically planned and what pupils are meant to learn is not clear to them. Pupils are then unable to engage in their work with sufficient determination. Teaching needs more effective checking and reinforcing of learning.

The quality of marking is variable. Diagnostic assessment is not used with sufficient consistency, and students are not involved in assessing their own work against examination criteria often enough. Homework is used regularly to reinforce and extend learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. There are withdrawal and booster classes for Year 7 students of lower ability which ensure that they can more fully access the curriculum. Reflecting its Business and Enterprise status, the school has introduced business education for Year 9 students, who go on to take the GCSE examination in Year 10. More able students in Year 10 take a GCSE course in information and communication technology (ICT), completing the course in one year. At Key Stage 4, students' choices include a range of vocational subjects and for lower attaining students there are work-related courses in addition to English and mathematics. These students recently designed and produced an excellent work-book for younger pupils which was subsequently put into print.

Work experience, citizenship and careers lessons make some contribution towards preparing students for the next stage of their education. The personal development programme is in the early stages of re-development, and the time allocated is too low to be able to cover all aspects adequately. As a result, provision for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Daily tutor time is not well used.

Regular visits to places of local interest and trips further afield enrich the curriculum. Business education students have made very successful links with institutions in Italy and Hungary. The curriculum is further enhanced by a number of sports clubs and other activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school itself judged its provision as outstanding and inspectors agree that there are some outstanding features. What is particularly striking is the quality of care and support for the very vulnerable pupils, such as those who are looked after by the local authority and those who are refugees or asylum seekers. These pupils, albeit small in number, are provided for exceptionally well, something to which they happily attest. Another strength is the willingness of the school to take challenging pupils from elsewhere and the commitment the staff show in managing these young people and helping them develop. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported exceptionally well. Besides the booster classes described above, their progress is monitored effectively through various types of mentor and teaching assistant support. A new staffing structure which integrates academic monitoring with care and support systems is proving very effective. Unusually, pupils across the school are aware of the good support that is provided for those that need it, and this, together with the care and support of teachers, creates a positive ethos. Pupils are provided with targets and guidance on their progress from when they enter the school, although some are not particularly motivated by this. The school is meeting the current requirements for child protection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher sets a clear direction for the school's future development. He and his senior team have managed challenging situations well. They found creative solutions to a large budget deficit and managed staff redundancies sensitively. They took highly effective action to integrate and support a group of disaffected ethnic minority pupils. They have ensured rising standards, improved behaviour and high staff morale. Improvement since the last inspection is clear to see in the higher attainment levels, of girls in particular, and the better provision for ICT across the curriculum.

The new management structure places much of the responsibility for school improvement upon middle managers, who are beginning to develop the skills for their new roles. It has the backing of staff and has already enhanced the quality of pastoral care. It is too early to judge its impact on the quality of teaching, learning and achievement. To ensure its success, the leadership team must support and monitor closely and effectively the work of middle managers.

The senior team is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However its self-evaluation overrates the effectiveness of some areas of the school's work. Governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. They are well informed and support the senior team well, but need to develop further their function of challenging the work of the school.

The school has good resources and is staffed well by specialist teachers.

The school's specialist status is well led and managed. It has had a beneficial impact on the curriculum and standards and has provided good opportunities for personal development. It has enhanced and developed the school's strong links with its family schools, with outside providers and local business, to the benefit of pupils.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3
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
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

19 January 2007

Dear Pupils

The Bramcote Park Business and Enterprise School, Bramcote, Beeston, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG9 3GD

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all, however, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your friendliness and cooperation during our visit.

The inspection found many things that the school can be pleased about. The school has faced a number of difficulties recently but it has coped with these very well. Not only that but it has been able to improve. One important improvement has been becoming a specialist business and enterprise school. This has had real benefits for you as pupils. The standards of achievement have risen steadily as well. Another strength is the way the school cares for and supports pupils who really need it. All the staff deserve a great deal of credit for these improvements. Most of the parents who responded to our questionnaire have a good opinion of the school. Most of you are happy to come to school. Your attendance is satisfactory and you behave well in lessons and in the buildings. There is a friendly, positive atmosphere. Pupils we spoke to said that all the staff care about the pupils and help you as much as they can. The curriculum you receive provides you with the opportunities you need, and many of you take part in the range of activities outside lessons.

We do think, however, that there are certain things that need to be improved. There is too much litter outside and too much smoking. You can all play your part in creating a better environment for everybody. The teaching, although a lot of it is good, needs to improve by finding ways of encouraging more of you to participate actively in lessons. There are some things, such as tutor time, assemblies, and PSHE lessons, that we think need improvement to help your personal development, and the new management structure in the school needs to be checked carefully to see that it works as well as planned.

You are at a school that is providing you with an effective education. We are sure that the school will continue to improve, but your contribution is vital. We wish you all well for the future.

Bob Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector