



# The Bicknell School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 130390  
**Local Authority** Bournemouth  
**Inspection number** 293643  
**Inspection date** 21 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Terry Elston

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Petersfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Bournemouth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-16		BH7 6QP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 424361
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	62	<b>Fax number</b>	01202 435520
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Brian Hooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school makes provision for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and autism and is part of the Bournemouth Alternative Needs Federation. Most pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. It provides support to other nearby schools that have pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has recently gained the Investors in People and Healthy Schools awards.

## **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 a good school with many important strengths that justify its high reputation in the local authority, where it gives very effective support to other schools. Pupils enter the school with a history of poor behaviour, erratic attendance and low achievement. Standards are broadly average.

The school's strengths include a good curriculum, good teaching, effective leadership and management and outstanding care, guidance and support. As a result, pupils' achievement is good and their personal development is outstanding. They work hard, start to enjoy school (often for the first time), and attend regularly. Their behaviour is outstanding and they speak highly of the way in which teachers help them make good progress.

Teachers' excellent awareness of pupils' difficulties enables them to teach in calm and orderly classrooms where pupils want to learn. They generally plan lessons well to get the best out of pupils but sometimes expect all groups to do the same work. On these occasions, this restricts pupils' progress, particularly that of the more able groups.

Pupils and teachers feel very well supported by the good leadership and management. In particular, the very strong leadership of the executive headteacher makes all members of the school feel part of a successful team. His high expectations and constant drive for improvements have helped the school make good progress since the last inspection. It is well placed to do even better. However, the leaders recognise that they need to use the data they collect on pupils' progress more effectively to focus on where improvement is needed.

Parents think the world of the school, particularly in the way it supports all areas of their children's development and prepares them so well for the future. This was summed up very well by one pupil who had recently moved on to another school. She explained with great maturity, 'This school was like a building brick to me, without which I would never have coped'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- make better use of data to show where different groups of pupils could make even better progress and where provision could be improved
- ensure that teachers' planning meets the needs of all the different abilities in the class.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in relation to their challenging targets. Their attainment on entry to the school is below national expectations but by the time they leave, standards are broadly average. This is good progress and shows the value of good teaching and

excellent care, support and guidance. These give pupils very positive attitudes to school, often for the first time.

Pupils in the primary class make particularly good progress in their basic literacy, numeracy and scientific skills, and their standards by Year 6 are close to those expected of pupils nationally. The good progress in developing these skills continues in Years 7 to 9, and standards by Year 9, as shown in recent national tests, are broadly average. Pupils also make good progress in other subjects. Older pupils do well in courses provided by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance and show a great pride in gaining their certificates. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are prepared very well for the future by their successes in college preparation courses and those leading to employment. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress and benefit from high quality support in class. However, more able pupils do not always produce the high standards of work of which they are capable.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' attendance is good, and improving year by year. They enjoy school and try hard to do their best. They are helpful to visitors and show great pride in their school. All those interviewed said how much they value teachers' help, both in their work and in the way they learn to cope with their frustrations. They have a very good understanding of the need to live healthy lives and avoid the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils think deeply about a wide range of issues and have a highly developed sense of right and wrong. As a result, behaviour is excellent, exclusions are rare (none for over three years) and pupils feel safe at school. This is a spectacular improvement since the last inspection and helps to explain why pupils' achievements in all areas are better. Pupils feel very well prepared for the future by their successes in employment-related courses and work experience opportunities. These all give them confidence and help them develop very good levels of independence. The school council is a very good means of enabling all pupils to contribute towards the improvement of their community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and is the key factor in explaining why pupils make such good progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they respond well by trying hard to succeed. They manage pupils' behaviour very well, using their excellent knowledge of pupils' difficulties. They apply the rules fairly and consistently. As a result, lessons are calm and pupils behave impeccably. Teachers work hard at making lessons interesting so that pupils enjoy learning. For example,

they use large computer whiteboards to illustrate much of the work and pupils delight in being involved in moving numbers, pictures and words around the screen.

Teachers generally plan lessons well to meet the wide range of abilities in the class. However, on the few occasions that some pupils' learning is slow, teachers expect all groups, whatever their ability, to do similar work. This sometimes means that more able pupils find the work too easy and they mark time. The outstanding partnership between teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants ensures that pupils who need help are supported very well in their learning to enable them to become confident learners. Assessment is good and teachers always make sure that pupils know what to do to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all groups of pupils well. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. In particular, it makes a vital contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development because they learn how to understand their feelings and see how their actions affect others. The youngest pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that has a valuable emphasis on developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills. This works well and, as a result of this provision combined with good teaching, they make good progress in reading, writing and number. The school has done much to improve the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11 since the last inspection and this now provides an excellent balance of academic work and work-related skills. For example, for a large part of their week, older pupils benefit from a wide range of college courses and work experience placements that give them excellent preparation for leaving school. The curriculum is enriched well through visitors into school and visits into the community. There are a limited range of activities at lunchtime or after school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care, support and guidance are excellent. Adults have very detailed knowledge of pupils' learning and personal needs and use this very well to support and guide them. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and they are given very good guidance on how to improve their work. The annual reviews of pupils' progress are thorough and provide a very good basis for the next year's work. Older pupils are given excellent guidance on the best courses and work experience placements to make the best of their talents. This explains why nearly all move on to successful college courses or employment when leaving school. There are very good procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils with rigorous systems for risk assessments and child protection.

Parents speak very highly of the quality of the school's care of their children. Working relationships between the school and other professionals are excellent and contribute much to pupils' well-being. Pupils are given outstanding guidance to help them improve their behaviour and attendance. They appreciate this in a mature way, and one pupil's

views were typical of many when he explained, 'Teachers are brilliant here. They are strict, but in a nice sort of way'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management are the keys to the school's success. The executive headteacher makes his vision for the school's future clear to all staff and he supports them very well in their own training. He has high expectations of what everyone can achieve but at the same time considers the workload of staff very carefully. This has helped create a very good team spirit. A skilled leadership team share this commitment to high standards and support the executive headteacher very well. The leaders, including subject leaders, regularly evaluate teaching and learning and produce detailed analyses of individual pupils' progress. This has helped the school to make good progress since the last inspection, particularly in pupils' achievements and behaviour.

However, the leaders recognise that their analysis of data about the whole school's performance gives them too little information about the achievements of different groups of pupils or how this school compares with others. As a result, the school's current assessment of its own strengths and weaknesses does not provide a sharp enough focus on areas for improvement. The school is supported and guided well by a good governing body. Governors know their school very well and are not afraid to hold it to account.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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
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 letting us visit your school. We both really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so energetically in the playground. We saw you cooking some delicious food, taking good care of your animals and thinking hard about your experiments in science. Those who were kind enough to speak to us told us a lot about your school.

What we liked most about your school

- you make good progress in what is a good programme of work
- you enjoy lessons and your behaviour is excellent
- your headteacher runs the school very well and knows how to improve things
- your teachers are doing a good job. They work hard and are helping you make good progress
- the staff at the school look after you exceptionally well and as a result, your personal development is outstanding
- your parents are very pleased with the school
- you are very friendly and helpful to visitors.

What we have asked your school to do now

- your teachers need to use all the information they have on your progress to see if the school could do even better.
- in some lessons, teachers set the same work for the whole class that is too easy for some pupils. We have asked them to make sure that all of you have work that is just right for you.

I hope you find the report interesting. We certainly enjoyed writing such a good one!