

Belmont Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131697
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	293817
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Malcolm Meredith
Headteacher	Ms Julia Mainwaring (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001
School address	Leyton Green Road Leyton London E10 6DB
Telephone number	020 8556 0006
Fax number	020 8556 5680

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school caters for young people with extremely challenging behaviour whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream school. A third of students have been permanently excluded from their school and most students have statements of special educational needs for their challenging behaviour. Most students are known to the Youth Offending Team and a small number are currently on Supervision Orders with tags and are subject to a curfew. Over two thirds of students are entitled to free school meals. Over half of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group coming from Black British or Caribbean families. There are around four times as many boys as girls and, currently, six students are looked after by the local authority. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are currently in an acting position.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good education and continually strives to improve the learning opportunities for all its students. Good leadership and management promote good quality care and education, and student achievement is at the heart of all decision making. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work effectively together and have a clear strategic vision for improvement. Clear roles and responsibilities and consistent practices ensure the smooth running of the school. This enables all students to make the best of their learning opportunities. Monitoring and evaluation are well focused on improving provision and expectations of teachers are made very clear through observations, feedback and support. All staff are dedicated to improving the life chances for all students and this is clearly recognized by the students themselves. A parent wrote: 'I am pleased with my son's progress and the attitude of the school'. The capacity for the school to improve is good.

Students' attainment on entry is usually below the national average as a result of poor attendance and the various consequences of their poor behaviour. By the end of Year 9 students are attaining national average results in English, mathematics and science. When students leave the school, standards are broadly average to below and many do well in their GCSE examinations and other vocationally accredited courses at college. Given their low starting points, the achievement and progress of the students are good. They develop confidence through their successes, appreciate being valued by staff and, in turn, begin to value themselves. This helps to support their social and emotional development, and encourages them to manage their own behaviour and learning. Individual targets are monitored daily and students make good progress in meeting the challenge offered. Achievement and effort are duly rewarded via an incentive points scheme. Older students are not as involved as they should be in monitoring and evaluating their own improvements.

Students' good progress and positive attitudes are due to the excellent relationships, teamwork, effective teaching, and care, support and guidance they receive for their individual needs. Students are carefully assessed on entry to identify their learning and behavioural needs. In this way, students' needs are well planned for and relevant strategies ensure their specific needs are well supported. School leaders have high expectations of teachers and there is a clear understanding of the value of sharing the best classroom practice. Some teachers are not using student assessments consistently to inform their planning, and this weakness is being addressed successfully. There is also insufficient emphasis on encouraging students to work independently without support. The good curriculum offers a range of relevant learning opportunities that promote good academic progress and personal development. Visiting specialists offer good support for students' learning and there are well-planned and progressive opportunities for students to study at college in a range of vocational and work-related subjects. Activities support students' personal skills and confidence while preparing them for further education or the world of work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are encouraged to have positive attitudes and empathy towards each other and to others less fortunate than themselves. Attitudes to learning are good and most students engage enthusiastically in all activities. Attendance is satisfactory although many students improve their own rate of attendance because they are encouraged and rewarded. One student said: 'My attendance is good now because I like it here and teachers understand the way I work'. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Procedures for assessing and recording students' progress have developed well and students have access to relevant

accredited courses. Although the governors have a clear view of the work of the school, and are fully involved in strategic management, the school does not maximize their support sufficiently or encourage systematic and focused monitoring. Partnerships with external support agencies are good, although communication with the Youth Offending Team is not always as efficient as it could be.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teacher's planning so that it takes more account of the assessments of students' progress and performance and the importance of independent learning.
- Encourage governors to take a more proactive part in focused monitoring visits to the school.
- Develop closer links and joint procedures for communication with the Youth Offending Team for the benefit of the students involved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All students make good gains in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and in their social and personal skills. Observations agree with students when they say they make better progress in the small groups, as they are less distracted and can concentrate more. A parent said: 'My son has made good progress in his reading and maths and is doing well at college. His behaviour has improved and he is more mature and thoughtful of others'. Each student has challenging targets for improvement, which most successfully achieve. They are given clear advice and support about what they need to do to advance although the marking of work lacks consistency in offering suggestions for improvement. All students have the opportunity to achieve a range of relevant accreditation by the time they leave the school and are well prepared to take on the challenges of further education or the world of work. Procedures for assessing and tracking students' progress are developing well and the school can produce detailed reports and make confident judgements about levels of attainment and predicted results in examinations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Excellent relationships and mutual respect between staff and students are clearly evident and result in a very positive and supportive environment. Students have positive attitudes in lessons and appreciate the individual support they receive. One student said, 'I am treated like an adult and I am not shouted at'. The very good programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education enables students to reflect on the lives of others and consider their own place in society. Students enjoy taking responsibility whenever they are able, for example, being a school council member. Students understand their rights and responsibilities and increasingly understand the importance of managing their own learning and behaviour. As they mature students are able to consider their own resolutions to difficulties. They know how to keep themselves healthy and safe, and understand the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating. Students benefit from breakfast breaks each day in tutorial groups and the excellent quality school lunches. Students learn very useful skills through their training opportunities at college, although other links with the community outside of school are currently limited. Their increasing confidence and self-belief is helping to create a much more optimistic future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good which results in students making good progress. Excellent teamwork and good knowledge of students' working styles ensure the management of their behaviour and attitudes is consistent and effective in and out of the classroom. This enables students to make the best out of their learning opportunities. Senior managers closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning and have high expectations of classroom practice. However, the very best practice, particularly in terms of using assessment information about student's progress in planning, is not consistent. The excellent relationships between staff and students ensure students gain confidence and are encouraged to 'have a go' at challenging activities. A parent said, 'My son is making good progress and he is always encouraged to do his best'. Ongoing feedback and support in lessons by teachers and very effective learning support assistants make it clear to students how they might improve. There are insufficient opportunities for students to work independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is pertinent to the learning needs of students and is constantly under review to ensure it meets their ever-changing needs. The curriculum fully supports students' personal development and encourages them to become more responsible for managing their own behaviour. Activities are generally motivating and there is a good emphasis on students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across all subjects. There is an appropriate emphasis on the importance of keeping healthy and taking exercise and sporting activities support teamwork and other essential skills in their personal development. The school works closely with a Community Programme that provides support for music technology and a range of sporting activities. Students can study accredited vocational courses at college in a range of work related areas including food technology, construction, plumbing, painting, sports management and childcare. There are good partnerships with mainstream schools that can offer opportunities for students to study alongside their mainstream peers when it is seen to be appropriate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The combination of efficient procedures and practice keeps students safe and secure while helping them to acquire the skills of self-management. Clear measures for safeguarding students are clearly understood and practiced by all staff. Very effective teamwork ensures that there are consistent approaches and support for all students, and personal respect and trust is emphasised at all times. Students receive effective individual guidance that ensures that they make good progress with their personal and academic development. Effective partnerships with most of the support agencies enables the specific needs of students to be well met. The school maintains effective communication with students' homes, which the majority of parents greatly appreciate. A parent commented, 'Communication is very good. There are 'good news' letters, telephone calls and teachers are very approachable and supportive'. Another parent said, 'We can relax knowing the school understands our son's needs'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are effectively improving provision and the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide encouragement to all students and staff. Consistent practices support students' confidence and trust in all the school does. All staff are fully committed to fulfilling their responsibilities and the impact of their work is clearly reflected in the effective care, guidance and support for students and the good personal and academic progress they make. The work of all staff is valued and morale is high. Staff have high expectations of students, and mutual respect and trust is clearly evident. Through self-evaluation and the effective support from the school's adviser, areas for improvement are clearly identified resulting in appropriate development planning and action. Performance management for all staff leads to relevant training and professional development, and is clearly based upon school improvement. Parents and students know the school has their best interests at heart.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

01 April 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Belmont Park School, London, E10 6DB

Thank you for making me feel welcome during my visit to your school. A special thanks to the group I had breakfast with and to the members of the school council who told me how they felt about the school. I agree with you and your parents: your school is good and it does all it can to support your academic needs and personal development. The school knows how it can improve further and you can help by keeping a close eye on your personal targets and working as independently as you can to reach your goals. The following are more of the strengths.

- All staff ensure the smooth running of the school and your care and support is central to all their planning and actions.
- You are treated with respect and you show respect back in return.
- You get on really well with each other and all adults.
- You understand the school rules, which help to keep you safe and secure.
- You have positive attitudes and learn to improve your behaviour.
- You enjoy your lessons and make good progress in your learning.
- The curriculum effectively meets your needs and you enjoy attending college and learning useful skills that will help you when you leave school.
- The school works well with other people to help support your needs.
- The school is always thinking how to improve and help you make even better progress.

I have asked the school to consider the following areas for improvement.

- To improve the way teachers use assessment information about your progress and performance to ensure that all lessons are planned to help you always make the best possible progress.
- To encourage the school governors to become more involved in checking how well the school is doing in supporting your progress.
- To develop closer links and communication with the Youth Offending Team to ensure your needs are most effectively met.

I had an enjoyable two days and I wish you all every future success.

Yours faithfully

Mike Smith

Lead Inspector