

# Belvidere School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123570
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	302309
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ted Wheatley

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	814
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chela Anders
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mel Bamford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Crowmere Road Shrewsbury SY2 5LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 235073
<b>Fax number</b>	01743 234090

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Belvidere School is a small school and has been a specialist technology college since September 2003. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and even fewer do not speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, though it has fallen in recent years, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Belvidere School is a justifiably popular school that provides an outstanding quality of education. Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is excellent and rarely less than good. This is because teaching is good with exceptional features, especially in how it is planned to meet the needs of boys, girls, the most and least able pupils and, where necessary, the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. However, just occasionally, a very small minority of pupils do not do quite as well as they should and they slip quietly into the background in lessons because they are not interested.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher provides an exceptionally clear focus on providing the right kind of education for its pupils. The style of management is a little informal when it comes to monitoring the work of departments. This leads to occasional inconsistencies, but, nevertheless, senior leaders and those in other management positions are highly committed and mostly very effective in pursuing high standards. The school has a very clear view of its own strengths and weaknesses, has effective means to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and is well placed to sustain its improvement.

There is no doubt that becoming a specialist technology college has had a real impact on standards. Pupils have ready access to computers. This involves them effectively in their learning, and teaching has improved as a result of shared experience and skills.

The curriculum is good and provides an excellent range of choices to meet the academic and vocational needs of pupils. There are many activities to enhance the curriculum and an outstanding range of out of school activities with a high level of participation by pupils. However, in Key Stage 4 statutory requirements for religious education and physical education are not met, although the school has made suitable arrangements for all pupils to experience physical education from September 2007.

Pupils' personal development is good and pupils make excellent contributions to the local and wider community. They make considerable efforts to support charities and have strong links with business, commerce and other schools. The behaviour of most pupils is exemplary, and the very small minority who behave poorly are dealt with well by the school. The great majority of pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, but despite the school's efforts, and the efforts of the school council, not all pupils take up the opportunities for healthy eating. The quality of care, guidance and support is good with excellent pastoral care and thorough procedures to ensure pupils are safe and secure. Academic guidance is generally good and sometimes excellent, although the approaches to identifying relative underachievement and guiding pupils in how to improve their work are inconsistent.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment procedures are consistently used so that relative underachievement is quickly identified and dealt with.
- Further improve achievement by making sure all pupils are fully engaged in their learning.
- Make sure that statutory requirements for physical education and religious education are met.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Standards in Key Stage 3 are above average and have been maintained at this level over recent years. Attainment in English is well above average and in mathematics and science is above average. Pupils' achievement, whatever their background, is good and often very good or excellent. At Key Stage 4, standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is excellent. GCSE results are particularly good and have improved over recent years.

Achievement in English at Key Stage 4 has been relatively lower than in other subjects in recent years. However, the school's efforts to improve engagement of pupils in their learning have been particularly successful. Standards in English have improved rapidly and pupils' achievement matches their achievement elsewhere. The increased use of computers, provided through specialist technology college status, has had a positive effect, especially on boys' learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make exceptional progress as a result of outstanding support from teachers and learning support assistants.

Despite excellent achievement overall, a very small minority of pupils do not make the same level of progress as others. This is because they are not sufficiently engaged in their work and teachers do not always catch their attention or interest.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' social and moral development is exceptionally good. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe, knowing that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Behaviour is good overall, spoiled by a very small minority of pupils who fail to respond to the school's intensive efforts to improve their behaviour.

Attitudes to learning are good, attendance is satisfactory and relationships are excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils value the regular assemblies which celebrate both academic and personal achievement. Although pupils do not always make healthy eating choices, many participate in extra-curricular physical activities.

The school council is very active. For example, it challenges school personnel and visiting specialists with their concerns, showing high levels of commitment to environmental protection and safety outside the school gates. Pupils make excellent contributions to the community through fund raising and to school life generally.

Literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good, providing secure foundations for the next phase of education. Pupils are increasingly well prepared for working life through improving education about enterprise and business.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

There are some outstanding features to teaching. In particular, lessons are extremely well planned with activities that engage and match the different abilities and interests of pupils. In many lessons, a rapid pace ensures pupils make good progress. For example, in a French lesson,

pupils learned new skills at an incredibly fast pace and those who started to fall behind were quickly brought back on track. There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking but there are examples of very effective marking. For example, in English and geography, pupils know what they need to do to improve because teachers provide regular, clear targets for improvement.

Teachers have high expectations of all their pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress because of the outstanding support they receive. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. Resources, especially computers, are used effectively, ensuring both boys and girls progress equally well. Nevertheless, a very small minority of pupils make slower progress than might be expected because work does not catch their imagination and they remain passive, do not draw attention to themselves, but do little work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

There is an outstanding range of courses, including GCSE, Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), and literacy and numeracy courses, that very effectively meets the needs of all pupils, and prepares them well for future studies and employment. As a result, pupils make good progress.

An excellent range of extra-curricular activities effectively supports pupils' learning. The sports facilities have significantly improved since the last inspection and are now outstanding. Provision for French and ICT has also noticeably improved. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is popular amongst pupils and enhances pupils' independent learning skills and encourages a greater involvement in community work.

Outstanding partnerships with outside agencies, businesses and other schools, many forged as a result of specialist technology college status, contribute significantly to the curriculum and pupils' learning.

Despite its significant strengths, there are some statutory omissions in the curriculum: in Key Stage 4, there is no religious education and physical education is not provided for all pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school shows an exceptionally strong commitment to pastoral care, reflected in strong relationships with a wide range of external agencies that are readily used when needed. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are thorough and extensive.

Potentially vulnerable pupils are identified early and measures to support them rapidly implemented. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is exemplary, enabling them to achieve outstandingly well. All pupils receive good advice about Key Stage 4 subject choices and follow suitable courses to match their needs. Guidance for careers and subject choices after they leave school is very good.

Policies and procedures to deal with racism, bullying and poor behaviour are very good. Exclusion rates from school are high because of a recent 'zero tolerance' approach to unacceptable behaviour but plans for a new internal exclusions unit are a positive attempt to reduce this.

Academic guidance is good overall, with some excellent advice to pupils on how to improve work. However, teachers do not always use information available consistently well to identify potential underachievement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The headteacher provides strong and vigorous leadership and is supported by a highly effective senior team. Staff morale is strikingly high and the strong camaraderie at all levels contributes to the good relationships within the school. Lesson observations are rigorous and are exceptionally closely allied to continuous improvement through the dissemination of good practice and advice by colleagues. Leaders at all levels understand their roles and have to account for standards in their subject. However, a temporary organisational problem has led to inconsistency in the use of assessment information to identify potential underachievement. The governing body is extremely supportive of the school's work, very well-informed but does not always ask the searching questions that hold the school to account.

The school has developed the role of specialist technology college outstandingly well under very able direction. The ethos for learning and exceptional use of ICT in the technology department is spreading throughout the school and into the wider community.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### 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>	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belvidere School, Shrewsbury, SY2 5LA

We really enjoyed the time we spent in your school and many of you spoke to us and gave us your views about the school. We found this very helpful and it helped us build a clear picture of how good the school is and how well you learn in it.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- Your school is outstandingly good. The headteacher and other staff work really hard to make sure it stays this way and becomes even better.
- Your tests and examination results are very good and nearly all of you make excellent progress.
- Teaching is good and has some excellent features, especially in making sure work is interesting and planned well to meet all of your learning needs.
- There is a very wide range of subjects for you to choose from in Years 10 and 11, preparing you well for when you leave school.
- Most of you behave extremely well and are interested in your work. The way you take part in community activities, like raising money for charities, is excellent.
- The school is safe and you learn a lot about healthy lifestyles.
- You enjoy the wide range of out of school activities.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- make sure that teachers make prompt use of information they have on your progress to identify any underachievement and to tell you how you can improve your work
- improve how well you do by making sure work is interesting enough for everyone
- make sure that physical education and religious education are taught to everyone.

With best wishes

T Wheatley Lead inspector