

Belvue School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101965
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	307861
Inspection dates	3–4 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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	110
6th form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Pat Read
Headteacher	Ms Shelagh O'Shea
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	Rowdell Road Northolt UB5 6AG
Telephone number	020 8841 3616
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Age group	11-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school provides for students who have statements of special educational needs for a range of difficulties. They include, moderate and severe learning difficulties, global developmental delay, speech and language difficulties, emotional and social communication difficulties and autistic syndrome disorders (ASD). Students come from a range of backgrounds and currently over a half are eligible for free school meals. Around two thirds of the students are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being from Asian families the majority of whom are of Indian heritage. There are almost twice as many boys as girls and currently there are two students looked after by the local authority. The school has achieved the Gold Arts Mark, Sports Mark, Basic skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Standard and Investors in People. Outreach support is also given to mainstream schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where leadership and management put students' well-being and achievement at the heart of everything it does. The inspirational and dedicated headteacher has a clear strategic vision for improvement, which is positively supported by the whole school community. She is extremely well supported by a highly competent and well-organised deputy and a clearly focused and motivated leadership team. With a dedicated staff and well-informed governors, they continue to improve the provision and learning opportunities for all students. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'The school provides an excellent learning environment for my child. The management team and staff do an outstanding job of ensuring the special needs of my child are fully addressed.' The school has very effective partnerships with support agencies, schools, colleges and the community, that ensure students' needs and well being are very well met. Monitoring is systematic and reviews involve the whole school community. Self-evaluation strategies are very effective and development planning emanates from the outcomes of these systematic reviews of the school's performance. In this way, the school has a very clear understanding of what needs to be improved and what strategies are required to achieve success.

Standards vary widely, but overall are well below average. Given their starting points, and the nature of their learning difficulties, the achievement and progress of the great majority of students is outstanding. Equal emphasis is given to academic and vocational accreditation, as well as work related learning, which offers valuable experiences to older students. There is a 'can do' culture in the school and students' success helps their confidence and very effectively supports them in their next stage of learning and in their social interactions. There is a very effective emphasis on independent learning, making choices and working towards success in their individual challenging targets, which most students successfully achieve. Students' outstanding academic and personal progress is due to the excellent relationships, outstanding care, and guidance provided by the staff, as well as the good teaching and excellent support they receive for their individual needs. Procedures for assessing and tracking students' progress are effective, and any underachievement is quickly spotted and addressed with well-coordinated support strategies and learning programmes. The school is aware of the need to further analyse students' progress data and offer teachers an additional perspective to use in their planning. High expectations are made of teachers and there is a clear understanding of the value of sharing the best classroom practice. The staff are not always using assessments of the students to inform their planning, and this is a relative weakness that is being addressed.

The curriculum is outstanding. It offers a creative, interesting and challenging range of relevant learning activities that effectively meets the personal needs of students and contributes towards their outstanding achievement. The curriculum is continually evolving to ensure it continues to meet the ever increasingly complex needs of all students. The programme of work related learning is excellent. An outstanding feature of this is the development of the breakfast club, tuck shop and coffee shop which develops students' vocational and enterprise skills extremely well. Visits into the community and the use of visiting specialists, very effectively support students' learning. There is an excellent range of high quality after school activities that greatly contribute to students' learning experiences and to their overall achievement. Residential trips are progressive in terms of challenge and are greatly valued by students and staff. Students are enthusiastic learners, have positive attitudes towards others and their behaviour is good. Parents consistently praise the school. One wrote, 'Our daughter loves school and has made

massive progress over the past six years. We get lots of support from the school and are always involved in setting her targets so we can help at home.' Exceptional improvement has been made since the last inspection and all the issues highlighted at that time have been effectively addressed through thorough development planning and subsequent action. Well informed governors take an active part in monitoring, self-evaluation and in the strategic management of the school. They clearly know their school well. Leadership and management are undoubtedly having a very positive impact on the learning provision, which is enabling students to achieve and make continued excellent progress. The capacity to continually improve is excellent.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Post-16 students build on their previous learning and continue to achieve well as a result of an excellent range of relevant learning experiences that are carefully planned to meet their individual needs. Students successfully complete both academic and vocational accredited courses and greatly benefit from work-related learning and activities that helps to prepare them for their transition to college and life after school. They make excellent progress in their personal development, gaining confidence and self-esteem through their successes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teachers' planning so that it takes more account of the assessments of students' progress and performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Standards are well below average due to the nature and complexity of students' learning difficulties. However, in relation to their low starting points, their progress throughout the school is outstanding. They achieve a wide range of accredited courses available to them that meet their individual needs and enables them to leave school with a range of relevant qualifications. Despite their learning difficulties, the rate of progress of the great majority of students is outstanding in relation to their challenging individual targets. Students make excellent progress in their communication and core skills and outstanding progress in their personal development. They learn important vocational skills, particularly through the excellent provision for Enterprise activities and work related opportunities. As a result, students are extremely well prepared for life after school. All students continue their education in local colleges when they leave school having gained a range of accredited academic and vocational qualifications. A parent reported, 'My son has matured over the last year, his speech is clearer and his vocabulary and understanding is much improved.'

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Excellent relationships and mutual respect between staff and students result in a very positive learning environment. Students say they really enjoy their lessons and they particularly like the interesting trips out of school. One Student said, 'Lessons

are fun and I really like the teachers.' Learners are encouraged to think of others and trips into the community make them reflect on the lives of others and consider their own place in society. Students delight in taking responsibility whenever they are able. For example, serving on the school council or helping to run the school breakfast club and coffee shop. Attendance is good. Students are rigorously encouraged to voice their opinions and make reasoned choices. Students show their understanding of their rights and responsibilities when asking relevant questions and considering their own solutions to problems. They know how to be healthy and safe and recognise the importance of regular exercise. Useful skills are learned through taking part in enterprise, recycling and fund raising events. Older students take part in community and work experience placements and learn practical skills that will help them when they leave school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, with examples of outstanding practice where the wide and varied learning needs of the students are met very effectively. This results in students making consistently good and often outstanding progress. 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 students' progress in planning, is not consistent. The excellent relationships between staff and students ensure there is a very positive learning environment, where students gain confidence and are encouraged to 'have a go' at challenging activities. A parent said, 'My daughter is making good progress and she is always encouraged to do her very best.' Ongoing assessment, feedback and support in lessons by teachers and very effective learning support assistants make it very clear to students how they might improve. Excellent teamwork, a developing understanding of different learning styles and very good use of resources, ensure that all students get the best out of their learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is relevant to students' needs and contributes exceptionally well towards their outstanding academic and personal progress. There is an emphasis on creativity, team building and the development of self-esteem and confidence. The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education effectively supports students' personal development. Curriculum planning is thorough and ensures that skills are built up progressively from year-to-year as students move through the school. Excellent links with other schools, colleges and external providers make an outstanding contribution to students' academic and personal development. Students' different abilities are very well catered for through the wide-ranging opportunities for accreditation that include opportunities for higher attainers to follow GCSE courses in a mainstream school. Students' learning is enriched by an excellent range of activities provided at lunchtime, after school and at weekends. Residential trips are a highlight experience for students where they improve their independent skills, teamwork, and confidence and enthusiastically engage in a range of challenging activities. These all very effectively promote students' enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for students are outstanding. The combination of efficient and consistent school procedures and practice keeps students safe and secure while helping them to acquire the skills of independence. There are clear measures for safeguarding students, which are understood by all staff. The coordinated planning and teamwork between educational social worker, therapists, nurse, educational psychologist, support staff and teachers ensures the academic and personal support and care for learners are of the highest order. Students receive specific individual guidance that helps them make excellent progress with their personal and academic development. The very effective partnerships with support agencies ensure the specific needs of all students are well met. The partnership and communication with parents is excellent. A parent wrote, 'Communication between school and parents is very clear and parent participation and access to school is encouraged. The professionalism of all staff is notable and attendance at this school is maximising our daughters opportunities in adult life.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher gives excellent strategic guidance and encouragement to all staff who are consistent in their dedication to the students. The impact of everyone's work is clearly reflected in the outstanding care, guidance and support for students and in their excellent academic and personal progress. Through wide and effective consultation and self-evaluation, areas for improvement and strategies for action are clearly identified. There are high expectations made of staff, their work is valued and morale is high. A governor commented, 'I like being associated with this school, things get done.' Performance management for all staff leads to relevant training and professional development is clearly based upon school improvement, personal skills and the changing needs of the students. A parent summed up the feelings of many when she said, 'The school is very well run and all the staff care about the students' education and well being. It is a very good school.'

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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	16-19
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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?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

17 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Belvue School, Northolt, UB5 6AG

Thank you for welcoming me into your brilliant school. I had an extremely enjoyable two days. A special thank you to those students who spoke to me and told me all about the school and to the students who managed the breakfast club and coffee shop. I agree with you and your parents: your school is outstanding. It supports your needs and ensures that you make the best possible progress in your learning and personal development. The school is always trying to improve and you can help by keeping a close watch on your targets and working as independently as possible.

These are some of the many strong features of your school:

- all staff care, guide and support you exceptionally well
- you get on really well with each other and all adults
- you learn to do things for yourself and you are friendly and polite to everyone
- you really enjoy your lessons and make excellent progress
- the curriculum offers you interesting and creative learning opportunities
- you really appreciate the clubs, after school activities and residential trips
- you learn useful skills that will help you when you leave school
- you think of others less fortunate than yourselves
- there is excellent communication between the school and your home
- the school ensures that you all learn as well as you can and works extremely well with other people to ensure you receive the support you need
- the school is led and managed extremely well to ensure you achieve as well as you possibly can.

Your headteacher, governors and all staff are always thinking how they can improve the school even further. I have asked them to improve the way they use assessment information about your progress and performance to ensure that all lessons are planned to help you always make the best possible progress.

It was a delight seeing such an excellent school and I wish you all every future success.

Yours faithfully

Mike Smith

Lead Inspector