

# Bartley Green School A Specialist Technology and Sports College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103491
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	308336
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Rzeznik HMI

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>	Comprehensive
<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	880
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pam Zaccheo
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Owen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Adams Hill Birmingham B32 3QJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4769246
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 4781585

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

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, particularly in Years 7 to 9; personal development and well-being; teaching and learning, especially in specialist subjects and science; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and the scrutiny of their work, assessment data and school documentation. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire and interviews with staff also informed the inspector's judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Bartley Green is smaller than average and has specialist technology and sports status. There are significantly more boys than girls, primarily because there is a girls' school in the locality. The numbers eligible for free school meals is well above average because the school is located in an area of social and economic disadvantage. Most students are of White British origin. A small number are Black, of mixed heritage or are looked after by the local authority. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. One of the main reasons why the special educational need percentage is higher than normal is because the school has a unit for 55 statemented students with speech and language difficulties, including autism and Asperger syndrome. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is broadly average. However, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are significantly below average on entry. The school has gained an impressive range of awards, including Arts Mark Silver, Sports and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) marks, Investor in People and Healthy Schools accreditation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

'I am very pleased and proud of the work my child is producing and the results he is attaining. I am proud to give this school my support. The head and her staff should be congratulated.' This sentiment from one parent echoes the views of the vast majority of parents. They hold the school in high regard and are very pleased with the education provided. Anyone associated with Bartley Green should be proud, because it is an outstanding school that is extremely well placed to improve further. Very effective leadership at all levels, consistently good or better teaching and a rich and varied curriculum enable pupils to thrive both personally and academically. As you walk through the door, you are struck by the very positive ethos and 'can-do' culture expressed in the displays, trophy and award cabinets. There is a real sense that staff and pupils enjoy each other's company and that pupils of different backgrounds get on very well together.

Pupils make exceptional progress as they move up through the school and achieve above average standards by the end of Year 11. One very well informed pupil said, 'this school is one of the best schools in the country'. When asked why, he responded by saying the school's value-added score was 'in the top 1% of schools nationally'. He is right. He must have read one of the national newspapers that placed the school in its top 10 list of high performers. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make exceptional progress over time and achieve extremely well. Standards in specialist subjects, such as design and technology (DT), physical education (PE) and ICT, are above average or better. Standards in all three subjects have risen markedly since 2000. For example, attainment in DT and PE has risen by 35% and 37% respectively. Pupils make generally good progress in English and mathematics between Years 7 and 9. In 2007, science standards dipped and were too low at the end of Year 9. Nevertheless, pupils' progress in the subject was satisfactory. Staffing difficulties and some less effective teaching within the department contributed to the fall in standards. Staffing problems have been resolved and improved teaching has led to rising standards. Leaders recognise that pupils' performance in science is not yet high enough at the end of Year 9 and the numbers gaining five or more A\* to C grades in the subject is below that seen in English and mathematics. The percentage gaining the higher grades, including English and mathematics, is slightly above average. Pupils' listening skills are well developed, but a significant number of pupils lack confidence and fluency when speaking.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school turns out confident, well-adjusted, reflective and caring individuals who are equipped effectively with the necessary skills for adult life. A key strength is the international dimension of the school's work. It helps pupils understand cultural and religious diversity. For example, the link with a Dublin school enables pupils to evaluate a religious conflict and understand why social cohesion is important if communities are to prosper. Pupils really enjoy their learning, display a strong desire to succeed and take full advantage of the wide range of excellent enrichment opportunities. Their behaviour is exemplary and pupils say they are free from harassment or racism. The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle and has received an award for its work. There has been a significant uptake in the numbers engaged in sports-related activities, and levels of fitness are much higher than in 2000. The numbers choosing healthy options at lunchtime has increased by a quarter, indicating pupils are adopting a much healthier diet.

Pupils are making a real difference to the school and wider community. They have designed the summer uniform and have successfully organised an anti-bullying campaign to ensure pupils are free from intimidation. The excellent Junior Sports Leadership programme means pupils not only go into local schools but also into South African townships to teach a diverse range of sports to others. In doing so, pupils' organisational, decision-making and team-building skills are enhanced very effectively. The strong vocational programme and the school's involvement in innovative ICT projects such as e-mentoring and e-learning days provide pupils with excellent opportunities to develop workplace skills. Attendance is satisfactory. Successful intervention has seen attendance rise. The school is taking effective action with the small minority who do not attend regularly enough.

The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding, although during the inspection, some teaching which was only satisfactory was observed. There is an excellent ethos in classrooms, largely because relationships are so good and pupils arrive in class wanting to learn. A real strength is the grouping of pupils by their stage of development rather than their age. Staff make very good use of assessment information to identify those most likely to make rapid progress. They are grouped together, receive specialist teaching and, if they do well, take their examinations one or two years early. Such organisation ensures the more able are stretched effectively. The results speak for themselves, with high proportions gaining higher grade GCSEs in a range of subjects. Where teaching was judged only satisfactory during the inspection, it was mainly because starter activities lacked challenge and teachers spent too much time talking about what was to be done rather than pupils doing the task set. A scrutiny of books revealed that the presentation of work is inconsistent.

Curriculum provision is outstanding. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is carefully matched to pupils' individual needs. For example, those likely to make good progress follow a broad and balanced curriculum based on the National Curriculum programmes of study. Those with underdeveloped literacy skills and learning difficulties and/or disabilities are regularly withdrawn for intensive support and the provision is highly effective in developing pupils' basic skills. In Years 10 and 11, a range of pathways offers breadth and flexibility, including a mix of traditional academic and vocational courses. The take-up of vocational provision is good and pupils value work experience as it gives them a taste of adult life. Specialist status has had a very positive impact by increasing the breadth of provision and levels of resources. For example, there has been heavy investment in ICT technology, which is used very well in other subjects. All pupils can log onto the school network from home via terminal services. Staff and pupils make very good use of this facility to access their work, e-mail and school-based software. The range of trips, clubs and residential activities that take place is impressive, enabling pupils to achieve in ways that go well beyond the taught curriculum.

The school rightly prides itself on the excellent care and support it provides. Robust procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils' welfare and well-being. Pupils receive the right advice to ensure that they choose the courses that best suit their needs and aspirations. They are well informed about the progress they are making. Pupils know the level at which they are working and what they must do to improve. Data are used well to monitor and track pupils' progress. The academic support and guidance provided is extensive and very effective in moving pupils' learning forwards. The work of mentors and counsellors is second to none. Every child matters in this school. Individual needs are assessed and support is targeted to where it is most needed. For example, those who are bereaved or have experienced their parents' marital break-up receive counselling to ease them through the trauma. Those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties get specific help to improve their self-control and self-confidence.

Pupils attending anger-management sessions judged that the provision was effective because they now have a wider range of coping strategies in the event of an incident occurring.

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. The headteacher provides a very high calibre of leadership that has resulted in a sustained history of continuous improvement in all areas of the school's work. She is ably supported by senior staff, governors and other staff. The headteacher is right when she says leadership is 'tough on itself'. No air of complacency exists amongst this senior leadership team. There is simply a desire to improve on their previous best and remove the barriers that hinder pupils' success. The school knows itself well because its self-evaluation procedures are robust and securely based on evidence. There is an extensive and thorough programme of monitoring which pinpoints the key strengths and any shortcomings in provision. When practice is not as good as it should be, action is quickly taken to bring about improvement. For example, less effective teaching and staffing difficulties in science were effectively resolved and last year's dip in attendance was quickly reversed. One of the keys to success is empowering staff to take risks and to 'give them their head' to experiment and improve things where they see fit. The innovations that have taken place, particularly in the specialist subjects, have markedly raised standards and increased pupils' enjoyment of learning. The school is outward-looking. It has entered into a wide range of very productive partnerships with local employers, neighbouring schools and international organisations. It wants to learn from the best and give of its best to benefit those in school and in the community at large.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in science, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and increase the numbers gaining the higher A\* to C grades in the subject.
- Improve pupils' speaking skills and presentation of work.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.



## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

28 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Bartley Green School A Specialist Technology and Sports College, Birmingham B32 3QJ

I would like to thank you for the warm, friendly welcome you gave me on my visit to your school. I appreciated your openness and honesty in answering my questions. I agree with the school's own view that your school is outstanding in every respect.

- These are the things I liked about your school.
- You make exceptional progress and attain above average standards because teaching is very effective and the curriculum meets your individual needs and aspirations very well.
- As I walked through the door I was struck by the very positive ethos and the 'can-do' culture expressed in the displays, trophy and award cabinets.
- You are confident, well-adjusted, reflective and caring individuals who are equipped very effectively with the necessary skills for adult life.
- I especially liked the international dimension to the school's work. In the assembly I attended, I was pleased to see that you were studying first-hand the religious conflict in Ireland and the importance of community cohesion. The Junior Sports Leadership programme is first rate. I am sure that the local primary children and those in the South Africa townships appreciated learning new skills from you.
- Your behaviour is exemplary. There is a real sense that staff and pupils enjoy each other's company and that pupils of different backgrounds get on very well together.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It was good to see so many of you enjoying the mix of traditional academic and vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. I was also pleased to see so many of you taking exams early with great success.
- The mentors are doing a fantastic job. They provide individuals with the right support and guidance at the right time.
- The headteacher provides a very high calibre of leadership. She is ably supported by senior staff, governors and other staff. Leaders do not let the 'grass grow under their feet'. They work very well in teams to improve on the school's previous best.
- The school must do two things to improve further.
- Raise standards and accelerate progress in science, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and increase the numbers gaining the higher A\* –C grades in the subject.
- Improve your speaking skills and the presentation of work.

Best Wishes David Rzeznik Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools