

Broad Oak High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105364
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	308843
Inspection dates	12–13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Patrick Geraghty HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	599
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Arnall
Headteacher	Mr N O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
School address	Hazel Avenue Bury Lancashire BL9 7QT
Telephone number	0161 797 6543
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Broad Oak High School is a small comprehensive serving an area of high social and economic deprivation. The percentages of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with statements of special educational need are above the national average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above national average. About 27% of students in the school are from minority ethnic backgrounds. In 2003 the school achieved specialist status as a Sports College. In 2005 the school was scheduled by the local authority for closure but this was rescinded in July 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is now a satisfactory and improving school. In 2005 the school was scheduled for closure by the local authority and entered into a period characterised by high staff turnover: between 2005 and June 2007, 30% of staff left. Achievement and standards declined. The headteacher has been the driving force for providing stability, embedding a culture of improvement and tackling the school's past pattern of underachievement. Students' behaviour has improved greatly. A Year 11 student summed up the transformation in the school: 'The threat of closure pulled us all together as a community and we are now working for each other. it's a better place.' There is strong evidence to demonstrate that improvement strategies are having an impact on achievement and standards. The standards of students' work examined by inspectors were at least satisfactory and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils are making satisfactory progress. The monitoring and tracking of students' progress has been strengthened. The school recognises the need to raise standards further, especially in English.

Students make good progress in their personal development and enjoy school. Behaviour in lessons and around the site is good. Attendance has improved and is now at the national average. The specialist Sports College status has brought about a stronger focus on healthy lifestyles. There are many enrichment activities and students have a strong sense of their responsibilities to others. Teaching is satisfactory and improving through an effective programme of staff development and external consultation. The school recognises that the currently satisfactory teaching needs to become more varied and lively through the effective sharing of good practice. The marking of students' work is not consistent, frequent or rigorous enough to help them all to improve.

The curriculum is good and is now matching the interests and needs of students. The vocational provision is improving and this is exemplified by the provision of outstanding resources in hairdressing. Students enjoy and appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Good links have been established with post-16 providers; these have enriched students' opportunities. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some good aspects. However, academic guidance is less well developed.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The school has dealt effectively with a number of issues raised in the last inspection report and with an unsettled period relating to its future viability. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. The headteacher is laying firm foundations for the future and giving the school increased capacity to improve further. Senior leaders and middle managers share a strong commitment to continuing improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in English.
- Share good practice more effectively to raise the quality of teaching and learning.
- Ensure that marking gives a clear indication to students about how to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The majority of students enter the school in Year 7 having achieved standards below the national average. 2006 test results show that the rate of progress between Years 7 to 9 was below average with underachievement in English and science. However, there is evidence that initiatives to tackle underachievement are having an impact. In lessons visited in Years 7 to 9, inspectors judged that students made at least satisfactory progress. Tracking of students' progress and tests in Year 7 and 8 indicate improvement and inspectors observed good standards of work in drama, physical education and mathematics and improving standards in English.

In Year 10 and 11 in 2006 and 2007, students progressed well in mathematics but less well in English. In science the percentage of students gaining A*-C has increased from 19% in 2004 to 34.2% in 2007. However, students achieved significantly below the national averages of five A*-C GCSEs, including English and mathematics. The percentage achieving five or more A*-C grades increased by 13%. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given appropriate support and make satisfactory progress. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds progress in line with their peers. All students in Year 11 take the adult literacy and adult numeracy (ALAN) tests at Level 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, 43% had achieved a Level 2 in mathematics and 24% in English. The standards of Year 10 and 11 students' work examined by inspectors were at least satisfactory. In lessons visited, inspectors judged that learners made at least satisfactory progress. The school's tracking of students' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science, indicates that it is on course to meet the challenging targets it has set for 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Behaviour is good because pastoral staff adopt a consistent approach towards managing day-to-day issues. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is committed to the principles of inclusion and every student is treated with respect and as an individual. Relationships at all levels are strong and students learn to develop a strong sense of care and concern for others. Students and parents say that there are few instances of bullying and that, where they do arise, they are dealt with appropriately. The introduction of effective monitoring and follow-up procedures has improved levels of attendance and punctuality. Students enjoy their time in school and say that they feel safe and secure. This is shown by their high levels of participation in productions, sporting events and homework clubs. Recently, students benefited from taking part in an exchange programme with schools in Siberia. Students adopt healthy lifestyles because sports college status ensures that physical activity has a high profile in the school. They make good contributions to the school community by taking part in many charity and fundraising activities. Students' future economic well-being benefits from the successful enterprise and work experience programmes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching is improving. Effective staff development, close work with the local authority and the use of external consultants has developed a culture of improvement. However, the sharing of good practice is not fully embedded. There are positive relationships between students and their teachers. In most lessons, teachers outline lesson objectives, use their subject knowledge to explain topics and manage classes well. Students demonstrate high standards of behaviour. Where teaching is good, challenging questioning ensures that students achieve well. For example, in a Year 11 geography lesson students made good progress in developing their understanding of the factors influencing population density in Japan. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used confidently to motivate students.

In the weaker lessons, the pace is slower and questioning is not extensive enough to involve students. These lessons were too teacher-centred with few opportunities for students' involvement. Students' marked work does not always indicate clearly enough how they can improve. A programme of classroom monitoring is well planned but has not yet ensured a consistency of practice between subject departments. The teaching and learning of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The school's use of assessment information to set targets and monitor how well students are progressing has improved and now allows for greater intervention to help those students who are underachieving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school judges the curriculum to be good and the inspectors agree. In Years 7 to 9 the curriculum meets statutory requirements and is matched to the needs of all students. In Years 10 and 11 a range of traditional and vocational courses ensures that students' diverse needs and interests are met. For example, a new hairdressing salon provides excellent opportunities for students to develop skills within a professional ambiance.

The provision for ICT in support of teaching and learning is impressive and all subject areas have interactive whiteboards and projectors. Students are given many opportunities to develop and use their ICT skills in lessons. The school's work-related learning, work experience and careers education and guidance programmes prepare students well to make informed choices about their future. As a specialist Sports College, the school is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and successfully encourages a high level of participation in extra-curricular sport. In addition, the wide range of other enrichment activities make a strong contribution to students' personal development, self-esteem and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for students overall is satisfactory. There is good pastoral support for students. There are strong links with outside agencies ensuring that all students, including those most at risk, are well supported. The transition arrangements for new entrants to the school are well planned and enable students to settle in quickly. The comprehensive programme of careers education and guidance is enhanced by good links with Connexions

advisers. Academic guidance is less well developed. For example, marking does not indicate how students can improve their work. While tracking and monitoring of students' progress have improved, they are not consistently applied across all areas of the school. Members of staff liaise with multi-agency professionals to provide well for vulnerable students and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Arrangements for safeguarding students' welfare and safety are secure and procedures are in place and understood by staff. The school's health and safety and risk assessment systems are fully in place and monitored.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The headteacher is providing good and effective leadership in tackling the school's pattern of underachievement so that the standards and progress of students are improving. The headteacher, together with senior staff, has worked hard to steer the school in the right direction during an unsettled period. There is a clear sense of teamwork among all managers in focusing on an improvement agenda. Middle management has been strengthened. The school runs smoothly on a daily basis and a secure and safe environment for students has been created.

Students are proud of their school and parents are overwhelmingly supportive. The school has established a thorough process for self-evaluation, which is accurately identifying areas for development. As a result, a clear focus on teaching and learning and students' target setting has been established and accounts for the improvements in students' achievement and standards evidenced during the inspection. A robust system for performance management for teaching staff has been established. The school has developed strong external links, especially with post-16 providers, and students' progression rates to further education and employment are good. Governors are keen, committed and well informed. They work in close partnership with the school and provide appropriate challenge and support. The school provides satisfactory capacity for further improvement and satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
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

Inspection of Broad Oak High School, Bury, BL9 7QT

Thank you for your very warm welcome to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days at your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to so many of you about your work, interests and how much you enjoy and give to the school. We appreciated your very good behaviour.

Your school is now making satisfactory progress. Your headteacher provides good leadership. The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard because they want you to do the very best you can.

Achievement and standards have been poor but are now beginning to improve. We found on our visit that they were satisfactory. You demonstrate enjoyment in your lessons, particularly when you know that you are improving and learning. We would encourage you to continue along this path of improvement. You can play an important part in this by working with your teachers and helping them to improve your work even further.

Teaching and learning is improving. In the better lessons you respond well to the teachers' high expectations and you make good progress. However, in a number of lessons you are not being given work which actively engages you in learning.

Your curriculum options are good, serve your abilities and offer you a wider range of opportunities for the future. You enjoy a good range of extra activities. The teachers and support staff care for you and give you satisfactory care and guidance.

Your school needs to:

- raise standards, especially in English
- share good teaching practice more effectively to raise the quality of teaching and learning
- ensure that marking gives a clear indication to students about how to improve.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you well for your future education.