

# Braunton School and Community College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113508
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311302
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Looney 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	732
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stan Dibble
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Sharratt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Barton Lane Braunton EX33 2BP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 812221
<b>Fax number</b>	01271 817145

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

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection.

## Description of the school

Braunton School and Community College is smaller than average and serves the village of Braunton and the surrounding coastal and rural area. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is low and the percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. A significant number of students join the school as late admissions, particularly in Years 7 to 9. The school has specialist school status in maths and computing and received redesignation earlier this year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Braunton School and Community College is a satisfactory and improving school. The leadership of the principal is good and, since his arrival at the school in September 2006, he has identified clear focuses for improvement. Aply supported by the senior leadership team, the principal is working hard to improve not just the quality of teaching but also that of learning. The senior leaders are also striving to empower all middle managers to play a stronger and more accountable role in the drive for improvement. This major cultural change is being well managed, with the senior leadership team being strengthened by the appointment of a director of teaching and learning. Plans and actions are well considered but improvement in practice is not equally strong in all subjects and provision is not yet having a consistent impact on how well students achieve or on their attitudes to their studies. The senior team has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve and this, coupled with significant progress already made in some key areas, shows that the school has good capacity to improve. Students' achievement is satisfactory but inconsistent; it is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Standards at the end of Year 9 in English, maths and science are generally above average and this represents satisfactory progress. The high number of students who join the school in Years 8 and 9 is having a negative impact on standards, particularly in English. In Years 10 and 11, GCSE results were already above average and improved in 2007 following a successful focus on the achievement of boys. Progress in these year groups is now good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities consistently achieve well. Their progress is carefully tracked and their specific needs are well met. For other groups of pupils, the way the school sets targets and monitors progress towards those targets has been inconsistent, and parents and carers have said that they found the reporting arrangements difficult to understand. A new system, which was introduced this year in response to parental feedback, is establishing more coherence but has not yet had an impact on standards. Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They receive good pastoral care from all staff. Induction into the school is good, as is the preparation for post-16 transition. Students made it clear to inspectors that they feel safe and that they enjoy school, but a significant number are not aiming high enough or taking enough responsibility for their learning. The school is addressing this well by working on the development of independent learning skills and by encouraging students to aspire for higher education. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. There is little bullying and the school deals with it well when it does happen, but behaviour in lessons is an issue to both parents and students, who are rightly concerned that learning is sometimes disrupted by some students. Attendance is satisfactory overall but unauthorised absence is too high because too many families take holidays in term time without the school's agreement. In spite of the school's small size, it manages to provide a good curriculum with a broad range of extra-curricular activities which are valued by the students. The needs of students are being increasingly well met and the vocational courses offered in Years 10 and 11 are now attracting higher attainers. The specialist school status has had a big impact on provision and outcomes in information and communication technology (ICT). The school has been a victim of its own success as computer capacity strains to meet the raised expectations and demand. The impact of maths on the curriculum is less evident, although students participate in the National Maths Challenge and a pilot of Functional Mathematics in Years 10 and 11 is under way. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The development of teaching and learning styles has been well supported by professional development for teachers and a planned observation programme. This programme has helpfully led to the school identifying some outstanding practice, but there is still too much inconsistency.

As a result, students' progress in lessons is often satisfactory rather than good because they are passive rather than active learners and the pace is slow. Working relationships in lessons are often good, but there is too much variability in the way teachers manage low-level disruption.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that behaviour is consistently well managed, and by developing students as positive, active and aspiring learners in all subjects.
- Raise achievement by improving the consistency and use of target setting and the monitoring of progress.
- Work closely with parents to raise attendance and reduce unauthorised absence. 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 is satisfactory. From 2004 to 2006, standards attained at the end of Year 11 were above average. Students entered the school with slightly aboveaverage attainment and made satisfactory progress over their time at the school. In the 2007 GCSE examinations there was an improvement and students made better progress than expected, given their starting points. The school had paid particular attention to how boys were achieving and their results showed a marked improvement on disappointing outcomes in 2006. Overall, however, students make better progress in Years 10 and 11 than they do in Years 7 to 9. Standards at the end of Year 9 in English, maths and science have been above average overall but results in the national tests in English dipped significantly in 2006, with the percentage of students performing at the higher levels, in particular, being below average. An analysis of the 2007 results shows that although English test results were better, students did not make the progress needed for the school to meet its appropriately challenging targets. The late admissions to the school are having an impact on outcomes but, although their overall progress is less than expected by the school, a significant number of those students are making the expected progress in maths if not in English. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well at the school.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Students say they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They are responding well to the healthy options in their new canteen. The house system contributes towards students' understanding of working as part of a group and contributing towards a common goal. Many students involve themselves in fund raising and other community activities and older students act as peer mentors to younger students. Students are well prepared for their future lives through work experience, Enterprise Days and work-related learning opportunities in their studies. The above-average standards they achieve in English, maths and ICT at the end of their schooling give them a good foundation for further education. However, there is a culture of low aspirations amongst students which affects their attitudes to learning. The school is aware of this and is promoting a range of strategies to raise aspirations. Behaviour in lessons is of concern to both parents and students, who are concerned about the disruption to their learning. Attendance is satisfactory but unauthorised absence is high. As a result, there are too many students whose attendance falls below 90% and this does have a negative impact on their learning. The figure

for unauthorised absence has increased in the last three years as parents have removed their children for holidays in term time despite the fact that the school has not agreed these absences. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Spiritual development is good and promoted well. Students benefit from opportunities to reflect philosophically about life in religious studies and in assemblies. Opportunities to develop an awareness of life in a culturally diverse society are more limited but students in Year 10 do take part in an Enterprise Day on 'difference'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers have good subject knowledge, but not all lessons have clear learning objectives and the standard of lesson planning varies between subjects. Where good or outstanding teaching occurs, it is characterised by the use of challenging questions, activities which call for independent and collaborative working, a brisk pace and the tight use of time in order to concentrate thinking. During these lessons the students demonstrate a clear interest in the subject and the teachers actively engage students in assessing their own learning. In satisfactory lessons, work is not always well matched to the needs of all the students and some find it too easy or too difficult. There is an inconsistency in the way teachers manage students' behaviour. When behaviour is not well managed, the pace of the lesson drops and progress is impeded. Support for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties is good and based on good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. Students who are identified as gifted and talented are increasingly challenged with suitable extension work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which largely meets the needs and aspirations of its students well. The school monitors the effect of the curriculum on its students and makes changes when appropriate. The curriculum is mainly traditional, and in recent years some new subjects have been introduced. About 17% of students in Years 10 and 11 spend part of their time on an alternative curriculum, with most of these students following vocational courses at North Devon College and a small number taking a life skills course. The nature of the take-up for the vocational courses has changed. Originally seen as a course for only lower-attaining students, the group now has students who are aiming for C grades in other GCSE subjects. The take-up of modern foreign languages at GCSE is low but the school is aware of the need to set targets in line with the national benchmarks. The curriculum is enhanced by a diverse programme of extra-curricular activities, including the extended schools initiative, which students and their parents value and support. Sporting activities are particularly well supported.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Students receive good pastoral support from tutors, heads of house, senior leaders and support staff. Although induction into the school is good, as is the preparation for post-16 transition, older students feel less well prepared for the rigours of their GCSE study. Support for the reintegration of students who have had a long term of absence is good. Vulnerable students

are supported and monitored well. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Good use is made of external agencies to provide specialist support. The school successfully ensures that these students complete their studies and gain externally validated qualifications at the end of Year 11. Risk assessments are firmly in place and arrangements for safeguarding students are secure. Academic support and guidance are not so strong. There has been inconsistent practice in the way departments set predicted levels and grades and in the way heads of house and departmental heads have monitored students' progress. The new system which has started this term is much easier to understand for all users. It evaluates clearly the progress students are making in individual subjects by comparing teachers' grades and the expectations for that subject. It also supports the school in targeting support more precisely for students who are underachieving.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The principal has shown good leadership of initiatives to improve learning and to develop consistent accountability at middle management level. The senior leadership team is aware that, although there is good practice in some departments in the way work is being monitored and outcomes tracked, for some middle managers this is still 'work in progress'. Achievement is improving in Years 10 and 11 but the initiatives have yet to produce consistently good achievement throughout the school or a commitment to their studies by all students. Appropriately challenging targets are being set by the school but these are not yet being consistently met. New heads of department are well inducted and the senior leadership team monitors and supports all middle managers well. The school has made judicious use of the local authority advisory service to support departments in the development of their self-evaluation. The school has effectively addressed the issues from the previous inspection and senior leaders supported the maths department well to bring about improvements in practice following a subject inspection. The school has strong partnerships with external agencies, such as the Braunton Learning community, the North Devon Academic Board, independent schools, and its international Comenius links. Tailored intervention work in maths in feeder primaries is an essential element in the re-designation for specialist school status. All schools benefit from two hours' onsite work per week designed to raise attainment at Level 5. Leadership and management of the specialist status are good, with a clear vision for improvement and a tight integration into overall school development priorities. The school is working hard to rebuild the adult education community links, which had fallen off in recent years. Although space is at a premium, the senior leaders and the governing body have used resources well to improve the environment. The whole school is benefiting from the recently opened new buildings. The senior leadership and the governing body have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, in spite of the fact that their formal self-evaluation has a more optimistic view of its performance than that of the inspectors. Actions taken to remedy the weaknesses are already beginning to have an effect, and that bodes well for the future.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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

<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>	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 19 November 2007 Dear Students Inspection of Braunton School and Community College, Braunton, Devon EX33 2BP I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we made about your school. Thank you for making us welcome and for taking the time to talk to us.
- We believe that your school is satisfactory and is improving.
- You make satisfactory progress and achievement in Years 10 and 11 is better than in earlier years.
- Since his arrival at the school, your principal has encouraged teachers to involve you more actively in lessons.
- The principal is leading the school well and he and the other senior leaders are asking all heads of subject and house to take on more responsibility for checking on your progress.
- Your all-round development is satisfactory but a few of you do not behave as well as you might in lessons and some of you do not attend regularly enough.
- You are prepared well for the next stage of your lives.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some is much better. Some teachers do not manage your behaviour as well as others.
- You have benefited from your school being a specialist school, particularly in ICT. We think your school needs to:
  - ensure all teachers involve you fully in lessons and manage your behaviour well
  - check on your progress more regularly and take action when you are falling behind
  - work closely with your parents and carers to improve your attendance. You can help the school improve by behaving well and getting involved in all your lessons, aiming high for the future and attending regularly. With best wishes Anne Looney HMI Lead inspector