

# The Broxbourne School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117529
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312645
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Raymond Jardine

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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1262
6th form	224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Margot Shawyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Martin Titchmarsh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	High Road Broxbourne Hertfordshire EN10 7DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 411060
<b>Fax number</b>	01992 411061

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: students' use of their targets to learn independently; how well the 14-19 curriculum meets students' needs and aspirations; the influence of specialist school status, and the quality of self-review. Inspectors analysed data and gathered evidence from discussions with the chair of governors, senior and middle managers, students from every year group, parents' views and observations in lessons. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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 this report.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average community comprehensive school that serves Broxbourne and surrounding areas. It is over-subscribed. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is low. Almost all are from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. The proportion who have learning difficulties or disabilities is a little below average. The school makes specific provision for students who have physical or neurological impairment. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is above average. The school has been designated as a specialist Business and Enterprise School since 2002 and has International School status. In addition, it has become a specialist Languages School from September 2007.

The school has gained national recognition for the quality of many aspects of its work, including ArtsMark and SportsMark Gold awards, Investors in People and Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The Broxbourne School provides an outstanding education for its students. They achieve very high standards by Year 11 and in the sixth form, both academically and in their personal development and well-being. Parents are very pleased with the education that their children receive: 'A wonderful school', 'We feel privileged to have our daughter at this school' and 'Our children are receiving the best possible education and social training at this school'. Students are equally fulsome in their praise. One said: 'Everyone here wants to learn'. The headteacher leads this school with distinction. Governors, parents, staff and students hold him in high esteem. He has skilfully instilled a culture of accountability that permeates the school and unites the staff and governors in pursuit of continuous improvement. The reason that the school is so successful is that such accountability operates within an atmosphere of openness and trust throughout so that all feel that they can contribute and support each other. The impact is seen in the school's exceptionally high standards and the richness of students' experiences.

Standards at GCSE have improved consistently since the last inspection. They were exceptionally high in all of the last three years and the pace of improvement was faster than that nationally. In 2007, for example, virtually all Year 11 students achieved five or more GCSEs and 95% of them achieved these at grade C or better. When English and mathematics are included, almost three quarters attained five or more good GCSEs. The pace of students' progress from Year 7 has also increased and is outstanding, with particular strengths in Years 10 and 11 where the curriculum is matched so well to students' abilities and aspirations. Achievement is especially strong among lower attaining students and those who have learning difficulties. Able students achieve very well and in 2007 very high proportions of students attained A/A\* grades in several subjects, including science, art and design, religious education, drama and English. Business and Enterprise status has made a substantial impact, for example, mathematics, business studies and information and communication technology (ICT) standards have all risen considerably in recent years. In Year 9, standards are well above average, particularly in mathematics and science, but students' overall progress from Year 7 to Year 9 is not quite as strong as it is in later years.

Such excellence is the result of outstanding leadership and management. The school's 'Every Child Achieves' project illustrates the high order of its self-review systems. Spurred on by a desire to raise the proportion achieving five good GCSEs further when they seemed to have reached a plateau a few years ago, senior leaders researched which key academic and social indicators might give early warnings of potential underachievement among any individual students. As a result, measures such as organisational skills, attendance and homework are analysed alongside other measures of progress towards academic targets. These accurately identify such students so that mentoring and support are focused early and sharply on raising their standards. Rigorous analyses of examination and test results undertaken by governors, senior leaders and subject leaders form part of a broad and very well structured self-review process that underpins developments at every level. The aim is to iron out uneven progress across subjects, groups and stages and to raise achievement to that of the best.

Senior leaders provide excellent role models to other staff, especially subject leaders with whom they work closely. With governors, they evaluate and grade the success of past school priorities and monitor its work rigorously. Governance is excellent. Governors bring much valuable expertise to the school and are led very well. Their monitoring and the challenge that they

provide form an integral part of the school's management. For example, governors followed up a major investment in vocational business studies and ICT courses by working with school leaders to evaluate and report on the impact of their spending, quality of provision and next steps in this area. Financial management and value for money are excellent and reflected in the achievement of National Financial Management Standards in Schools standard.

Students say that they very much enjoy school life, particularly their participation in the excellent range of additional activities, sports and cultural events and visits, for example, their house plays and musical events. In recent years, the girls' netball team has been national champion in all age groups. Visits to other countries, often with sporting or cultural themes, include France, Italy, Canada, Germany and Holland. These do much to enrich students' spiritual, social, moral and particularly their cultural development. The strong international dimension, students' well-developed skills in learning independently, and their growing confidence prepares them very well for their economic well-being and adult life. Even so, the school is ambitious to develop such skills further, particularly students' workplace and social enterprise skills and their language abilities, for example, by introducing Italian through the school's recently acquired Language School status.

Students receive very good advice and guidance, both academic and for their personal development. Arrangements for safeguarding their welfare are thorough and very well managed. Behaviour and relationships are excellent and the incidence of exclusions very low. Students report that they feel confident that any bullying is dealt with promptly. Meals and snacks available are very appetising and help promote students' health and well-being. Their take up is high and improved with the healthier options now available. Students are much involved in helping each other and the wider community through, for example, very successful fund-raising, Action Aid, involving a variety of countries and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Students who have learning difficulties and those with physical and neurological impairment receive very good support from well-trained learning support assistants and are much involved in school life and learning. They achieve particularly well at this school.

Students acquire very good skills in learning independently by using their targets to help them improve. Teachers and support staff guide and mentor them very well. Students enjoy reviewing each other's work and suggesting improvements to help their peers. Teaching quality is outstanding. Questioning is used very effectively and students discuss and explain their reasoning, eager to learn more. A key driving force underpinning teaching quality is the staff's own teaching and learning group, comprising many staff members and reflecting the culture of teamwork that pervades the school. This group undertakes research projects to explore teaching methods and disseminate innovative and effective practice to colleagues. Teaching is monitored rigorously and staff value opportunities for their continuous professional development.

The school has used its expertise in business and enterprise very well to help extend opportunities to everyone to achieve success. Students value the guidance that they receive when making choices for their studies. The five guided pathways to GCSE and equivalent qualifications from Year 9 meet their needs very well; there is little or no disaffection in later years and students achieve a wide range of qualifications by Year 11. Provision for those who find learning more difficult is outstanding and guided by very good partnerships with outside expertise.

Students have a strong voice through their school council representatives. They have changed the pattern of homework for the better and are currently in discussions with governors, who

attend all of their meetings, on how best to improve rewards for achievement. Students' very good attendance reflects their enjoyment in learning, rich and varied experiences and their mature relationships with others. They are proud of their school. As one Year 10 boy put it so well, 'this school lives up to its motto: Achievement and Opportunity for All'.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Sixth form students achieve extremely well, not only in their academic standards but also in their personal development. They relish the independence they have and the responsibility they are given for their learning. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very strong. Students are unambiguous about the high quality of support they are given by teachers when it is needed. They are clear about what grade they are aiming for and what they need to do to improve. The recent mock examinations were an important learning experience that has helped students understand what they need to do. A wide ability range of students enters the sixth form and some require considerable coaching to succeed. It is a real strength that very few leave without completing their courses successfully. A very good range of courses builds on earlier provision very well. Standards by Year 13 have risen year-on-year and are very high compared to maintained schools nationally.

Students have a strong belief in their own duty of care towards those younger than themselves and what they can do to support the life of the school. Consequently, the vast majority are very involved in school life, some as prefects and house captains. In addition, students help run Year 7 reading clubs and Key Stage 3 sports clubs as well as leading assemblies when promoting charity fund raising events. They cite the very wide range of subjects and extra-curricular activities as one of the reasons they enjoy the sixth form and believe they achieve so well.

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

- Develop students' language, workplace and social enterprise skills still further through the school's specialist International School and the specialist Language School status.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	1
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	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
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	1
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

<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	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	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	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

7 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The Broxbourne School, Broxbourne, EN10 7DD

Thank you for the warm welcome that we received when we visited your school. We spoke with many students and what you told us helped to confirm our findings about the quality of education that you receive. I write to tell you what we have learned.

You are rightly very proud of your school; it is outstanding. Students attain very high standards at GCSE, for example, almost all Year 11 students achieved five or more GCSEs at grade C or better this past summer. Year 13 also collectively gained results that were much higher than the average. The wonderful range of additional activities, such as drama and musical events, many sports and visits to other countries that you enjoy contribute much to your spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Relationships are excellent and we are not surprised at your very good attendance. We are impressed by how well you work together in lessons and support each other, for example, by reviewing each other's work and suggesting how it could be better. The very good key skills that you acquire in English, mathematics and ICT, and your very good skills in learning independently, are preparing you very well for adult life. You show initiative and empathy for others less fortunate through the charitable and other community work that many of you undertake. We agree with the headteacher that the school's next steps should be to develop such skills further, particularly your enterprise skills in both workplace and social contexts. The school's newly acquired status as a Languages School will help develop further your language skills and confidence in working in different environments and cultures.

These achievements come about through the combined efforts of the staff and governors and the outstanding leadership qualities of your headteacher. He is supported very well by his senior leaders, heads of department and heads of year. The staff work very hard in your interests and, with your very knowledgeable governors, are constantly looking at how your education can be improved. We learned that teachers share their best practice to help maintain high standards of teaching and to provide you with such a varied range of learning opportunities. Staff also work very hard to guide you, check how well you are doing and to ensure that the school's aim of 'Achievement and Opportunity for All' is a reality. You have the skills to help them by regularly reviewing your work and using your targets to see how you can make it even better.

With all good wishes for your future at The Broxbourne School,

Ray Jardine

Lead inspector