

Brookvale High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120269
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313574
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	646
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hubbert
Headteacher	Katie Rush
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
School address	Ratby Road Groby Leicester LE6 0FP
Telephone number	0844 4771762
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Age group	11–14
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Brookvale High School is a specialist language college jointly with the upper school that shares the same site. The school takes students from areas which have more favourable socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average, as are the proportions of students identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are learning English as an additional language. The school has achieved the International School award, Healthy Schools award, Sportsmark and Eco-school status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brookvale is a good school which has made excellent progress since its previous inspection. The highly effective headteacher and senior leadership team have worked well with middle managers so that they are successful in monitoring the quality of their department's work and bringing about sustained improvements. Students achieve well. The quality of the provision is good, which means that students make good progress in the school and reach high standards in end of Year 9 tests and other assessments. The school focuses on all subjects so that departments are able to show how effective they have been. Results in science and French are outstanding when compared with national figures.

Students clearly enjoy school. They know how to be healthy. They enjoy a wide variety of sports activities after school and at lunchtime, many walk or cycle to school and they understand the risk associated with substance abuse. Teaching is good, and often outstanding. Relationships between staff and students are good. Attendance is excellent and shows how much students appreciate the good lessons. Behaviour has improved significantly since the previous inspection and shows the school's strong commitment to creating an environment where all students take responsibility for their own actions. Behaviour in the vast majority of lessons is good but is satisfactory overall because in a few instances, when teaching is less challenging and engaging, students need to be reminded of the school's expectations.

Students feel safe in school. They report that staff deal well with any instances of bullying. Students say that teachers care for them and they receive very good pastoral support. They are particularly pleased with the work the school does when they arrive in Year 7 and the way in which the good curriculum is adapted to help the induction of some students who benefit from extra support. They are very well prepared for the next phase of their education, including starting some courses in Year 9 prior to their transfer to the local upper school. This shows greatly improved collaboration since the time of the last inspection. Students know their challenging targets for all subjects and in lessons, staff utilise these well to ensure students make good progress. Students are usually given good, and often outstanding, advice on how to improve their work but this is inconsistent. At times, advice is not specific enough to enable students to know exactly what they need to do to improve.

The school makes very good use of its specialist language status to enhance the curriculum, improve the quality for teaching and give very good support to partner primary schools within the local area. The well-planned international days contribute to students' excellent cultural development. They also make a positive contribution to help students have a better understanding of their local community, area and the world. Governance is good and the governing body holds the school to account well. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory commitments for race equality and disability.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Ensure all lessons challenge and engage students fully to reduce incidents of weaker behaviour.
- Ensure advice on how students can improve their work is consistent with the best practice, and focused on specific actions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the school with standards that are just above average. They make good progress and reach standards that are well above average. The results in science are exceptionally high, and those in mathematics and English are well above average. The school ensures accurate assessments in all subjects and students have challenging targets, which are used well to ensure they make good progress across the curriculum and not just in the core subjects. The results in French are also exceptionally high at the end of Year 9 and, along with above average German results, show the impact of specialist language status in preparing students very well to follow a modern foreign language course at GCSE.

The school analyses performance carefully in all subjects to identify how to improve, and to ensure subject leaders take responsibility for the work of their departments. Analysis shows that students from different ethnic backgrounds, those in the care of the local authority (LA) or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students show good social skills through their participation in group and paired activities in lessons, the 'supportive friends' scheme and the very good relations they have with each other. The school has been successful in improving students' spiritual development. This is good, with students regularly given opportunities to consider wider issues, for example, the implications for environmental sustainability or the wonder of pattern within mathematics. This also helps students' good moral understanding, especially when linked to the international day work. Students' excellent cultural development is a strength that is shown throughout the curriculum. For example, by the examination of Islamic patterning in mathematics, the charity links with Uganda, school trips abroad and activities as a result of the International School award.

Students have a good awareness of how to keep healthy, and they participate in many sporting activities and many cycle or walk to school. Students feel very safe and are aware of safety rules. They clearly enjoy their education and they talk enthusiastically about their school. They enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including performing and creative arts, chess and an eco club. Attendance is extremely high. Behaviour has improved greatly since the last inspection and is generally good in lessons but satisfactory overall because of the actions of a minority of students.

Students make an outstanding contribution to the community. Within school, they are able to contribute to decisions through the highly effective school council, student leadership team and supportive friends scheme. Good literacy, numeracy and improving information and communication technology (ICT) skills, along with very high language skills and the ability of students to take responsibility for their own learning, prepare them very well for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding features and lessons. Students generally make good progress in lessons because they are actively involved in a variety of stimulating tasks. These tasks are well matched to their levels and challenging so that students are fully engaged with their work and behave well. Teachers plan well and include high quality learning resources to make lessons interesting and interactive. They make good use of interactive whiteboards, for example, to show pictures of artists' work, clips of the opening scenes of two Macbeth films or examples of stereotypes in French. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for example, by providing writing frames for those with weaker literacy skills in a science lesson.

In nearly all lessons, teachers effectively share learning objectives and success criteria with students, although in a few cases these are about activities rather than what students are expected to learn. These are particularly effective when students suggest their own criteria and use them to review the quality of their work at stages during the lesson. In some lessons, peer assessment is used well to help students assign levels to their work and to set targets for improvement. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Learning is less effective in a small number of lessons because tasks are not sufficiently varied or challenging, pace is slower and expectations lower. In these lessons, there is often too much input from the teacher, which means students become disengaged with their learning and progress is slower.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it offers a wide variety of courses that are enhanced by a number of additional events and extra-curricular opportunities. Students study French in Year 7 and the majority study two languages in Years 8 and 9. Language college status has also enhanced the curriculum through the international dimension. This includes effective links with schools in a variety of countries, a focus on international influences on subject areas and a very well received international day event each summer. This also greatly enhances students' understanding of a wide variety of cultures, including those from their local community and worldwide. Students also follow an effective course which helps them understand how they learn.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to match students' needs and interests. A group of Year 9 students are studying for GCSE art and the school has enabled a small group attend a local college which better meet their needs. Citizenship, which was identified as a weakness in the last inspection, has improved and is now effectively taught by a team of specialist teachers. Improvements in ICT are starting to have a greater impact in other subjects across the curriculum. A group of students follow an alternative curriculum when they start at the school which greatly helps with their transition. Close curriculum links with the neighbouring upper school mean students start some of their GCSE courses before they leave at the end of Year 9.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities includes sporting clubs, chess, art, graphics, ICT, Christian Union and Celtic clubs. Many students play musical instruments and participate in the school chamber ensemble, production and talent show. The school organizes a number of well-received educational visits, including those to France and others to local theatres.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for learners are good. Pastoral care is very good and a major reason why attendance is so high and the standard of behaviour within the school has improved. There is very good, focused support for individuals who are in danger of underachieving or who are having difficulties adapting to school life. The school ensures that students are very well inducted for the start of Year 7, if a student joins after this time or has had an extended absence. Students are also well supported prior to leaving at the end of Year 9. They receive good guidance for choosing their optional subjects and the career implications of making these choices. As yet, these do not include advice regarding the introduction of diplomas.

The school's good analysis of attendance, behaviour and achievement identifies vulnerable groups and ensures that all learners make good progress. There is a comprehensive overview of the progress and support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those in the care of the LA. All procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding and health and safety of students.

Academic guidance is good and often gives excellent advice on how students can improve. However, it is inconsistent and in some cases, marking fails to give specific advice on what students need to do to improve their work or to reach the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school has worked well to enhance the role of subject leaders. They now monitor the work of their departments effectively, undertake a self-review which includes students' views, and bring about improvements to the quality of teaching to raise achievement. The good senior management team supports middle managers and holds them to account for their work. Good analysis of results means that senior staff are able to challenge any areas which perform less well than others. The strong drive to ensure good teaching has meant a process of support for teachers who need additional help to raise the quality of lessons. The school uses challenging targets effectively, at student and department level, to raise standards and to ensure all students achieve well.

Parents, governors and students are regularly surveyed for their opinions and these are used to support the school's accurate self-evaluation. This information is then used to formulate a comprehensive school improvement plan. The school has made many improvements since the last inspection. For example, behaviour has improved markedly, citizenship is an integral part of the school curriculum, and ICT is used more effectively in lessons and to support other subjects. These improvements, along with raised standards and achievement, show a good capacity to improve further.

The governing body regularly reviews school policies and monitors their impact. They support the school effectively and challenge when they feel decisions are not in the best interest of

the students. Because of the close working relationship between the school and governors, any issues are usually resolved at a very early stage.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	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	1
The behaviour of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
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

2 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Brookvale High School, Groby, Leicestershire, LE6 0FP

My colleagues and I visited your school recently, met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. We were very pleased with your friendliness and helpfulness. We were very impressed with how proud you are of your school, especially the very good work you do as part of a language college and your excellent international links and work with the community.

We feel that you attend a good school which has improved greatly since its previous inspection. You are well supported by a very good pastoral system. You achieve high standards and make good progress. Your school has a good understanding of how well you do in all subjects. You do particularly well in science and French. You have good opportunities with your work because the curriculum includes a variety of subjects, special activities, like the international day, and plenty of extra-curricular activities, which you enjoy. Your lessons are usually good and often excellent. You seem to enjoy lessons when teachers make good use of the electronic boards.

We were very impressed with how much the behaviour in the school has improved but some of you let yourselves and the school down by not concentrating in lessons. This is particularly the case in a few lessons which are less engaging and do not challenge you enough. This is an area we have asked the school to improve and is where you can help by making sure you concentrate better and do not spoil it for your classmates.

Many of you have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and it was nice to see how well you play at break and lunchtimes. You enjoy school and this is seen by your extremely high attendance. You receive very good support before you arrive at the school in Year 7 and for when you go on to the upper school. In most lessons, you are shown how to improve your work but this is not true for all lessons. We have asked the school to make sure this advice is consistent so you know exactly what you have to do to get even better.

Your school is well led and managed and it obtains the views of yourselves and your parents to see how it can improve further. We wish you well in this good and supportive school. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith Her Majesty's Inspector