

Bridgnorth Endowed School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123586
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314643
Inspection dates	13–14 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	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1006
6th form	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Stilwell
Headteacher	Pamela Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Northgate Bridgnorth WV16 4ER
Telephone number	01746 762103
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Age group	11-18
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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

Bridgnorth Endowed is an oversubscribed specialist technology college serving an area of above average socio-economic circumstances. Students attend from the town and the surrounding rural areas. Many travel to school by bus. They are nearly all from a White British background with very few learning English as an additional language. The school has a specialist unit for students with learning and behavioural difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's accurate self-evaluation that it provides a satisfactory standard of education but also judge that many elements are good. Students receive very good pastoral care which enables them to show good personal development and well-being. Many say they feel safe in school although a few have concerns about bullying. This is an area the school identified through its comprehensive evaluation of students' attitudes and for which it has introduced effective strategies to reduce concern

Students generally enjoy school and they respond well to the many activities and good lessons. Many take up sporting opportunities to enhance their healthy lifestyles, and the school ensures there are other activities that enthuse those who are not particularly interested in sport, for example taking part in the well received production of 'Oliver' or performing drama or music in concerts. Standards are above average. Students make good progress in the majority of subjects but progress is satisfactory overall because mathematics and English have been performing weakly, particularly with regard to the more able students. The strong focus on improving the standards in these subjects is starting to have a positive impact upon results but they are still performing below others in the school. GCSE results in design and technology are well above national averages and reflect the school's strong emphasis on technology as part of its specialism. This specialism is also used well to enhance the quality of teaching, which is good, and in ensuring all classrooms have projectors to use with a computer, additionally some have electronic whiteboards. Teachers generally have good relationships with their students and challenge them with interesting lessons, so that progress is improving. Students know their targets and are regularly assessed on how well they are progressing. Form tutors often give good academic guidance but this is not consistent and students are not always suitably challenged. Marking is inconsistent and sometimes fails to inform students how to improve.

Specialist school status has facilitated good ongoing community links including working with primary and other secondary schools, a special school, local businesses and public services. It has also supported learning provision for adults, including well received information and communication technology (ICT) courses. Students make an effective contribution to the local community through strong contributions to charities and support for students with a disability at a very well organised 'D-Fest' event.

The school has an accurate assessment of its main strengths and areas to improve. These include inputs for departments' self-reviews and surveys of governors, parents and students. This evaluation has rightly identified the great improvement in the leadership of modern foreign languages since the last inspection. This improvement is also demonstrated by the much improved GCSE results and the increasing numbers of students opting for a language at Key Stage 4. Staffing issues and problems recruiting suitable staff within mathematics and English have meant that there has been a lack of continuity in the leadership of these two major areas. This is now being resolved, the quality of teaching and learning is improving and the school has a clear plan of what still needs to be done. This demonstrates leadership's good capacity to improve.

Leadership and management across the school have a good understanding of what needs to be improved and have put in place appropriate systems and procedures. However, these are not systematically checked to ensure they are being consistently implemented by all staff.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory as students make steady progress in the sixth form. A-level results were well above average in 2007 for art, geography and health and social care. The good curriculum provides appropriate pathways for students, and enhanced links with another local school enable courses for small groups to run and be cost-effective.

At the time of the inspection sixth form students were attending well organised and effective revision sessions and tutorials in preparation for their public examinations, hence it was not possible to gain sufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning. There was no evidence to suggest its quality is any different from the main school. The new systematic tracking of students' work and opportunities for them to discuss their progress with learning mentors is enhancing academic guidance. Attendance is monitored carefully in each lesson, which ensures any absences are quickly followed up. The head of sixth form provides good pastoral support for individual students.

Good relationships in the sixth form among students and between students and teachers enable students to develop well socially and to contribute effectively to the moral and community life of the school. A small group of committed students run an effective sixth form committee, which is a strong and vibrant organisation providing opportunities for students to make a real contribution to school life. It organises charity and competitive events, talent shows and social events for their own as well as other year groups. Whilst this gives very good opportunities to develop leadership and independence, other students do not have sufficient opportunities to acquire these skills. Students contribute well to the school community by providing good in-class support for younger students, particularly in English and mathematics lessons in response to the school's work to improve these subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve the learning in mathematics and English, particularly for more able students.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance so that staff support all students and marking gives students appropriate advice on how to improve.
- Ensure managers, at all levels, take greater responsibility for checking that systems and procedures are consistently implemented by all staff.

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

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students enter the school with above average standards. They make steady progress in Key Stage 3 to achieve standards that are similarly above average. In 2007, students made good progress in science to reach very high standards. In mathematics, progress was satisfactory and results above average. However, in English, students made slow progress and results were below average.

In Key Stage 4, students make steady progress and achieve results that are above national figures. The proportion gaining five or more higher level GCSE passes is above average but broadly average when English and mathematics are included. The proportion of students who gain the top two grades in English and mathematics is well below average although school records show an improvement this year in both subjects. Results in religious education are above average with all students completing a much valued half course GCSE. Students with a statement of special education need make better progress than their peers.

The school met, or was close to meeting, the majority of its challenging targets, including those for specialist status.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students generally enjoy school and show considerate behaviour, respect and positive attitudes to each other. This reflects their good social and moral development. Students' attendance is good. Behaviour overall is good and often makes a strong contribution to learning in lessons. Students and parents express concerns about poor behaviour in a small number of lessons taken by non-permanent members of staff and the school has worked effectively to reduce these incidents.

Students say any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively when incidents are reported. Students are safety conscious. They respond well to the school's advice and support and take up healthy lifestyles and stay safe. They are aware of the dangers of substance abuse. When possible many students walk or cycle to school and take part in extra sports sessions.

Students respond well to the opportunities provided by the school to contribute effectively to the community and this enhances their good spiritual understanding and awareness of other cultures. There is an effective school council, and student representatives make a valuable contribution to the work of the health and safety committee as well as having a say in school developments and staff appointments. The display of some excellent artwork around the school enhances students' awareness of different cultures and also of the importance of art within their own cultural heritage.

Sixth form students make a good contribution to the life of the school and are well respected by younger students.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: Insufficient Evidence

Students make good progress in the majority of lessons. Teaching is mostly good and at times outstanding. Staff and students have positive relationships and cooperate well. Good behaviour stimulates students and helps them gain confidence and engage in lessons. Therefore, a good learning atmosphere permeates most of the school. In mathematics and English, where learning had been identified by the school as being weaker, students now make better progress because standards of teaching have improved and lessons are more challenging and interesting.

Teachers plan well and have good subject knowledge. Well prepared support materials characterise most lessons and class procedures are well established. Students are mostly aware of their targets and the level at which they are working. Assessment data are often used well to ensure a good match of work to individuals, although at times the most able students are not fully stretched. Assessment is generally used effectively but marking does not always make it clear what it is that students need to do to improve their work.

In the best lessons there is a strong emphasis on a variety of different activities and teachers make good use of electronic whiteboards. Occasionally entertaining and imaginative approaches capture students' interest. However, in some lessons there is too much teacher input and limited opportunities for students to work independently or to show their initiative when solving problems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

In Key Stage 3, effective learning opportunities are provided for students who enter the school aged 11 to help them catch up with literacy and numeracy skills. A well resourced learning support area provides individual and small group support, so that students are able to make good progress. Additional activities and events, such as the Real Game and Enterprise days involving local businesses, help students gain a good understanding of finances, the requirements of employers and the world of work.

In Key Stage 4, students follow a good range of appropriate pathways, including practical and vocational courses, work-based learning and traditional GCSE options. For example, it is possible for students to gain an NVQ in gamekeeping. Well established plans are in place for September so that more able students can follow separate sciences for GCSE and others will follow a 'study plus' option to help them gain a higher level grade in GCSE mathematics.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities are on offer including a wealth of sport, music and design experiences. Students also gain valuable experience from educational visits abroad, for example Iceland in geography and language exchanges to Spain and Canada. Students with disabilities are provided with opportunities to do well and make good progress. This is because they are given appropriate support through the specialist unit and the school places a high value on inclusion.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

A high level of commitment from staff to encourage enjoyment and promotion of learners' health and safety ensures students' good care. This is also seen in the inclusion support area, which enables many children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. The support for attendance of persistent absentees and those at risk of low attendance is robust and effective and a reason why attendance is above average. Students feel that the support they get prior to joining the school helped them make a good start to Year 7.

There is a very strong commitment to pastoral care which ensures that all students are supported effectively. Students at risk of underachieving are identified early and their progress is monitored carefully. Sixth form students provide some good support for students in mathematics and

English. Assessment data are collected regularly so that the progress of students towards their targets can be carefully checked and appropriate guidance put in place if additional support is needed. Tutors check students' progress and monitor their homework, but not consistently. Not all tutor groups are challenged effectively and checks on homework are not carried out regularly enough.

Arrangements for health and safety and the safeguarding of students are in line with current government requirements and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school has enhanced the role of subject leaders to make them more responsible for the work within their departments. Leaders now monitor the work of their departments and undertake a self-review, which is then quality assured by senior leaders. The effective headteacher provides good leadership and is supported by the senior management team. Leadership has introduced well planned systems and procedures but these are not always implemented consistently by staff who are then not held to account by middle managers. Hence, some of these innovations are not as effective as they could be.

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. At the time of the inspection the school was about to introduce a vertical pastoral system. Although parents and students had been consulted and the change had been planned for some time, some felt that their views had not been taken into consideration. The governing body regularly reviews school policies, for example race equality and disability, and monitors their impact. They support the school effectively and challenge when they feel decisions are not in the best interest of the students.

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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?	3	3
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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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?	2	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	2	
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?	2	IE ²
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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	2
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	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

15 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Bridgnorth Endowed School, Bridgnorth, WV16 4ER

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 particularly impressed with your friendliness and helpfulness. We agree with your school that it provides a satisfactory education. Many of you achieve high standards and you make steady progress, both in the main school and the sixth form. We have asked the school to improve the results in English and mathematics because they are not as good as results in other subjects.

We think the quality of care, guidance and support provided for you is good and you generally receive good academic guidance. However, we have also asked your school to make sure tutors are consistent in the way in which they help you and also that marking tells you clearly what it is you need to do to improve your work. Teaching is good and some lessons are outstanding. When lessons are not as good your school has worked well to improve their quality. The curriculum is good and allows you to follow a variety of courses. It also helps you develop good skills which you will need when you start work.

We were very impressed with your good behaviour and the way in which you concentrate in class, although we feel that you could behave better when you have teachers who are not permanent within the school. We also feel that you get on really well together because of the mutual respect you have for each other and for your teachers. Many of you have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and it was interesting to see how many of you walk or cycle to school.

Your headteacher works hard to ensure the school gets better, and the school obtains the views of yourselves and your parents to see how it can improve further, although at the moment there are a few concerns about the change to vertical tutor groups. We have asked your school to make sure they check that all staff follow school procedures consistently.

We wish you well in this supportive school. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith Her Majesty's Inspector