

Buxton Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112970
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	338062
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	David Muir HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1289
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roger Horne
Headteacher	Deb Hill
Date of previous school inspection	0 September 2006
School address	College Road Buxton Derbyshire
Telephone number	01298 23122
Fax number	01298 27578
Email address	headteacher@buxton.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 33 lessons and part lessons, seeing 32 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, four groups of students, a parent and the school improvement partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school development plan, the school's data and analysis of the data, the school's self-evaluation form and 303 parental questionnaires. The inspection team spent 15 hours observing learning.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the accuracy of the school's monitoring of students' progress in all key stages of the school
- how the school's management raises expectations and aspirations across the school
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of all students
- how well the teaching meets the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

This is the main secondary school for the town. The school has two specialisms: sports and applied learning and has been identified as a high performing specialist school. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school is part of a soft federation with other schools in the High Peak district and the Derbyshire Dales. The school's sports facilities are used by the wider community and the local authority runs adult education courses on the site. Almost all the students are from White British backgrounds and none are at the early stages of learning English.

The school has gained a number of awards including Investors in People, Sports Mark and Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Buxton Community School is a good school. It has several outstanding areas of performance and plays a significant and valuable role at the heart of the local community. The school has established an outstanding array of partnerships with many high profile local events and organisations such as the annual Buxton Fringe Festival and well-dressings as well as the Buxton Opera House.

The school meets the needs of all students well and the Inclusive Education Centre (IEC) supports students with special educational needs, and those who are at risk of becoming disaffected, very effectively. There is a shared sense of purpose throughout the school community and a very large majority of staff are proud to work in the school. The school closely monitors the progress of all individual students and of different groups of students. The evidence provided by the school during the inspection, shows that overall, students make good progress in all three key stages, including the sixth form.

Students have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Most students interviewed during the inspection or who completed the Ofsted questionnaire confirmed that they feel safe and that the school helps to prepare them well for the future. The findings of the inspection confirm these views. In meetings, some students stated that they found it difficult to make their views known through the school council, although other avenues are available for their views to be put forward. A particular strength of the school is the outstanding contribution which students make to the local community. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and staff have increasingly high expectations of what students can learn. There are some inconsistencies in how effectively teachers explain learning objectives and how they provide feedback to students. There is also a variable picture as to how well work is modified to meet the needs of all individual learners in the class. The curriculum is improving and increasingly meets the needs of students well in all key stages. The recent changes to the curriculum in all three key stages are embryonic, but have already impacted on the quality of learning across the school. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support is a particular strength of the school, due to the high quality information, advice and guidance provided to students about their future options and the range of partnerships with external agencies to support all students, including those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

The leadership knows the school's strengths and areas for development well and its procedures for monitoring performance are well founded. Due to this and the improvements since the previous inspection, the school has demonstrated that it has a good capacity to make sustained improvement. The senior leadership team has

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sensitively engaged the school community in raising aspirations and expectations. The leadership is aware that there needs to be work done to ensure that recent developments will further impact on progress. A very large majority of students, staff and parents believe that their views are valued by the school. The governors provide outstanding support and challenge to the school and contribute extremely effectively to its work and direction. The excellent range of partnerships extends across all aspects of the school's work and supports students' academic and personal development extremely effectively. Safeguarding is outstanding, due to the meticulous and detailed procedures in place, the rigour of record keeping and monitoring and the links the school has developed with external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching so that more lessons in the school are good or better by:
 - ensuring that learning objectives are consistently shared in all lessons
 - ensuring that all lessons have tasks and activities matched to the learning needs of all students
 - providing feedback to all students to ensure that they know how to improve their work in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of the student voice by ensuring that the school council is more inclusive.
 - Develop the recent initiatives to improve the quality of learning and progress for individuals and groups of students across the school by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum at the three key stages is regularly reviewed and modified to meet the needs of the students in the school
 - assessment for learning strategies are used consistently across all key stages and subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The attainment of students at the end of Year 11 is broadly in line with the national average. In 2009, 68% of students gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, with 50% gaining this level inclusive of English and mathematics. Ninety-five percent of students gained at least one GCSE at grades A* to G. The school's detailed analysis of the learning and progress of individuals and groups across all key stages shows that a very large majority met or exceeded the challenging targets which are set for them by the school. The number of students achieving these targets has increased across most subjects since 2008. This demonstrates that overall students achieve well during their time in the school. There were a small number of students who did not achieve well, due to a variety of significant external circumstances, which were beyond the school's control. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the effective support which they receive during their time in the school.

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Overall the good progress made by students is supported well by the good learning and progress observed in lessons during the inspection. This is also evidenced by the school's own analysis of learning and progress in lessons and over time. The quality of learning and progress for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also good. Similar progress is made in the sixth form.

Overall behaviour is good. This view was supported by most parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and by students themselves. They also say that when bullying happens, it is dealt with effectively by staff. Students are involved in, and take responsibility for, working in a wide range of activities involving the local community, primary schools, sports events and prestigious arts events. The quality of the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development in the school is good as students take appropriate responsibility for their actions. They are also provided with exceptionally good opportunities to understand differences between cultures and learn to think about such issues as globalisation through the curriculum. Students raise large amounts of money for charity every year. There is a high level of participation in sports and other outdoor activities to promote healthy lifestyles. Students are prepared well for their future economic well-being, particularly due to the high standard of information, advice and guidance provided to students and well established links with local employers.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

The school's own monitoring shows that progress made in lessons is good, which matches the generally good teaching seen during the inspection. The variety of activities in the best lessons and their pace are good. This engages students well and, as a result, most are able to participate and take their learning seriously. There are good relationships between students and their teachers, who use their knowledge of students well to plan for the next stage of learning. In the less effective lessons, tasks are not sufficiently well matched to what students are learning and questioning is not used effectively enough to gauge how much is being learnt by all students in the lesson. In a small minority of cases, some incidents of poor behaviour are not dealt with effectively and planning lacks sufficient focus on matching work to individual students' abilities. Students are aware of their target grades and the levels that they are currently working at.

The school provides a wide range of positive enrichment activities to support the good curriculum. These range across a variety of sports and arts activities. The curriculum at all key stages is regularly reviewed and modified so that it increasingly meets the needs of all students. There are an increasing number of applied learning opportunities, such as Business, Technology and Education Council (BTEC) and Young Apprenticeship (YA) courses and diplomas at Key Stage 4 to complement the academic courses available. The wide range of partnerships, with the University of Derby and the local high school federation amongst others, has supported the curriculum changes successfully. At Key Stage 3, the 'learning to learn' curriculum has recently been introduced. This is an integrated course based on the humanities and expressive arts subjects to provide more effective opportunities for cross-curricular learning. The school's specialisms have contributed very effectively to the developments at all key stages and have a strong influence on all areas of the curriculum. Several students have personalised learning pathways to meet their needs.

The school works closely with external agencies, including the local authority's educational welfare service, educational psychology service and the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) amongst others. The effectiveness of these links and other support, including that in-class and in the IEC, ensures that the support needs of all students are met to the highest level in all three key stages. Transition arrangements into the school at the start of Year 7 and at the end of key stages show an exemplary level of information, advice and guidance. The visits by the school's students to primary schools to organise and lead events such as dance sessions support transition very effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>2</p>

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, with very effective support from the senior leadership team and the outstanding governing body, has created a clear vision for the school and ensures that all staff have high expectations for students and understand their role in promoting improvement throughout the school. Robust action has been taken to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. In actively seeking the views of all members of the school community about how the school can improve further, the headteacher has been able to carry staff with her in implementing new initiatives such as the curriculum changes at all key stages. There is a clear focus on students being at the centre of all that the school does and their outcomes are improving as a result. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and how it can improve further. Systems to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of students are robust and accurate. Equality of opportunity is promoted well across all areas of the school and this is seen by the positive outcomes for individuals and groups of students. In its specialist roles, the school has established highly productive partnerships with its feeder primary schools, including students teaching dance sessions. Governors provide outstanding support in all areas of the school and have an acute awareness of the strengths and areas for improvement. There is a well established committee structure, with a clear timetable for the review of policies and procedures. The governors actively seek out information on the performance of the school and provide exacting challenge and support to the headteacher. Safeguarding is outstanding and the procedures in place to support this are very detailed and exemplary. The school promotes community cohesion well and also has effective procedures in place to monitor the impact of its work in this area and to plan the next steps to build on this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The achievement of students in the sixth form is good as they meet and often exceed the challenging targets set for them. Attainment is broadly average across the range of qualifications and progress is good. There is an increasingly wide choice of courses in the sixth form, including GCE A2 and AS level courses and specialist BTEC (Level 2 and 3) qualifications. There are good personal outcomes due to students' high participation in an impressive range of enrichment activities. These include: young enterprise, volunteering in the local community, Community Sports Leadership Awards and Higher Sports Leadership Awards and support for younger students, for example, supporting Year 8 students on residential camps. Tutors play an important role in monitoring progress and providing pastoral support for students.

The leadership of the school and the sixth form have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in the sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers responded positively to the Ofsted questionnaire, which confirms their strong commitment to the school. Their judgements and comments generally reflect the issues identified in the inspection and by the school beforehand. Although some areas of concern were raised, the vast majority of responses were very supportive of the school's work, especially with respect to transition from primary school, the quality of guidance and the quality of teaching in the school. The findings of the inspectors support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buxton Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 307 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1289 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	30	188	62	21	7	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	99	33	190	63	10	3	4	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	126	41	164	54	14	5	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	116	38	166	55	20	7	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	87	29	196	66	10	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	20	200	66	35	12	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	18	207	69	33	11	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	99	33	173	58	12	4	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	89	29	182	60	23	8	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	75	25	183	61	25	8	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	71	24	182	61	22	7	8	3
The school is led and managed effectively	92	31	188	62	11	4	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	130	43	161	53	10	3	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Buxton Community School, Buxton, SK17 9EA

I am writing to you on behalf of all of the inspectors who visited your school recently. Thank you very much for making our visit very interesting and enjoyable.

We found that Buxton Community School is a good school and is outstanding in several areas. The headteacher and staff all work hard to make your time in school very happy and successful. Your parents are very pleased with how well the school educates and looks after you all. A large majority of you and your parents agreed that you enjoy coming to school. Your personal development is a strength of the school, in particular the work that you do within the local community. It was very impressive to see how you all had the chance to participate in local high profile events such as the fringe festival and the well-dressings. Those of you who need extra support also improve your attitudes significantly during your time in the school due to the support you receive, especially from the IEC. Overall, the care, guidance and support which you receive are outstanding and you receive excellent advice about your future options. Your behaviour is good and you have good attitudes to learning. We judged that you make good progress during your time in the school, including in the sixth form. You should all be very proud of yourselves. I know that the staff and your parents are proud of you.

I have asked the school to improve some things to make the school even better than it is now:

Improve the overall quality of teaching by:

- ensuring that learning objectives are consistently shared in all lessons
- ensuring that all lessons have tasks which meet all of your learning needs
- providing feedback so that you can improve your work in all subjects.

Improve the quality of the student voice by ensuring that the school council is more inclusive of all students.

Develop the recent initiatives to improve quality of learning and progress for all individuals and groups of students across the school by:

- ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all of you
- making sure assessment is used consistently across all key stages and subjects.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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