

The Bramcote Park Business and Enterprise School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122853
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340232
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	709
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Launchbury
Headteacher	Kevin Dean
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed the lessons of 29 lessons teachers, representing over half the school staff. Some observations were done jointly with school leaders. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior and middle leaders, two governors including the chair, and four groups of students. Many students were informally spoken to. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of students' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. The team analysed 234 parents' and carers' questionnaire returns, as well as those from a small proportion of staff and a representative sample of Key Stage 4 students.

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

- the effectiveness of teaching and learning in lessons
- whether different groups of students make equally good progress, particularly in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of leadership and management of teaching and learning and the impact of recent strategies to raise standards
- the impact of the federation on the curriculum.

Information about the school

The school is part of the White Hills Park federation of schools that serves the Stapleford, Bramcote and Beeston areas of Nottingham. It is a smaller than average school of its type in an urban setting, surrounded by parkland. Most students are of White British origin, with a small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Asian and Caribbean origin. All speak English as their first language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above that of most schools. Most have moderate learning difficulties, or emotional and behavioural problems. A few have dyslexia or physical disability. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The school has undergone significant turbulence because of unexpected reorganisation over the past 18 months. This was due to the enforced closure of one of the federation schools because of structural faults. It resulted in a very sudden influx of around 200 Key Stage 3 students and their teaching and support staff in September 2008. The school is led by the executive headteacher of the federation and the head of school. Some of the school leadership also have federation roles. The federation has a single governing body. The school has a Business and Enterprise specialism and has recently also taken on the sports specialism of the recently closed federation school. It has a Healthy School Gold 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bramcote Park is a satisfactory school. It provides a calm and welcoming environment, where students feel safe and well supported. This creates a positive climate for their learning and personal development. The school's pastoral systems provide good levels of care and guidance, particularly for those who need the most support. Students have the opportunity to develop sound academic qualifications and good personal attributes that prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and later life.

Students' attainment is broadly in line with national figures. Their progress and achievement are satisfactory overall. The most recent GCSE results in 2009 showed good improvement in many areas over the last three years, because of the effective analysis of examination results and subsequent rigorous tracking of students' progress. There were a few pockets of underachievement remaining, which the school has been focusing on this year. Effective strategies have been put in place, resulting in all of these groups making much better progress. Current assessments show that attainment has improved further, particularly for higher attainers in mathematics and middle ability students in English and mathematics. Challenging targets have already been met or exceeded in mathematics, science and business education.

School leaders have high expectations of the achievements of all students and despite the disruptive staffing changes of the recent turbulence, they have communicated this well throughout the school and it is becoming embedded in most classrooms. All teachers have adopted the federation planning format, which indicates graded outcomes in terms of students' differing capabilities, but they are not always planning challenging enough tasks to go with them. Consequently the quality of learning varies widely across the school, although it is satisfactory overall. Because of the turbulence, and to make up for past underachievement, the school leaders' ambition for rapid improvement in attainment has been realised through the wide application of support such as master classes and coursework 'catch-up' days, in Key stage 4.

Teaching quality is improving after the disruption caused by the redundancies and restructuring of management during the sudden merger. Most staff are keen to improve their classroom practice and ambitious for students' success in their subject. Informal monitoring is done daily by senior leaders in 'climate walks', and more formal evaluation by faculty leaders, such as lesson observation and work sampling is done regularly. The teaching and learning group makes good use of paired coaching and mentoring to share good practice. This has been effective in bringing about improvements, despite significant staffing changes and the absence of some key faculty heads in the current year. The senior team hold annual 'mini-inspections', which are very formal in approach and do not give them a fully up-to date overview for the rest of the year.

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Students have high expectations of their own conduct and behaviour and that of their peers. Attendance is above average and students' positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their progress in lessons. Students know how to stay safe and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. There is a good uptake of the many sporting activities provided by the school. School leaders have worked hard to help students feel part of one community and their social and moral development is good, but their spiritual and cultural awareness is less well developed although improving through assemblies and the wider foundation curriculum.

Effective partnership arrangements within the federation and with institutions outside make a strong contribution to the school's provision and to the students' well-being. The school is able to make use of federation strengths, particularly in the increased curriculum opportunities for languages, vocational courses, sport and work placements. The school's own Business and Enterprise specialism has brought about students' good computer skills, but some staff do not seem to share them. The new sports specialism is adding much to students' enjoyment and general health and fitness.

Self-evaluation is good and areas for development have been accurately identified, as shown by the rising standards and improvements in personal development.

Improvements in teaching are a major priority, but have been adversely affected by many staffing and leadership changes. Recent evaluations show that attainment has improved rapidly in the current year, and challenging targets have already been met or exceeded through coursework and modular examinations. Teaching is improving, and good use is made of subject expertise in Year 11. This track record of effective improvements in attainment and personal development since the previous inspection, and highly effective integration of students and staff from the closed school, indicates good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in English and mathematics to meet or exceed the national average, by:
 - making literacy targets a focus in every subject, and numeracy where applicable
 - making sure that all students receive sufficient challenge so that they progress well and attain standards commensurate with their ability in all subjects, but particularly in English and mathematics
- Improve the standard of teaching to overall good, so that students make consistently good progress, by:
 - ensuring work is planned to challenge the ability range in every class, including ability sets, so that all students are purposefully working all of the time
 - making sure that lessons are interesting and motivating, by making more use of stimulating methods such as the use of interactive whiteboards, rather than the over-use of worksheets

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- involving students more in assessing and evaluating their own learning
- ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is monitored at more frequent intervals by senior managers.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students make satisfactory progress from below average starting points, to reach standards of five A*-C in GCSE that are broadly in line with those seen nationally. The school prides itself on its inclusiveness, and enters all students for GCSE. Almost all regularly achieve five A*-G grades, which is above average. Too many average students have in the recent past failed to gain the expected grade C in both English and mathematics, but the school's evidence points to a much larger increase in the current Year 11. High standards in science have been retained, and Business Studies have returned to previous high levels, after a dip last year due to staffing difficulties.

In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, students in the top set made excellent progress in a lesson tailored precisely to their individual needs, and virtually all were seen to be attaining at the highest GCSE grades. Students learn best when given a wide variety of challenging tasks, as seen in a science lesson where they were inspired by an imaginative carousel of practical activities, using helpful revision booklets to assess their own progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons where the role of teaching assistant is clear and work is tailored to their particular needs. When students make less progress, there is too much teacher talk which centres around one particular task. Although different outcomes are expected from students with different capabilities, this generally results in less progress, particularly from more able students who coast.

The students' positive attitudes are reflected in the school's low levels of absence and the settled climate for learning in lessons. Students behave well and are able to concentrate for long periods of time when well motivated. They feel safe and well cared for and respond positively to the opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. This is exemplified by the high take-up of clubs and activities, students being particularly enthused by the extra sporting activities that have arisen from the school's recently adopted sports specialism. Several older students undertake work in primary schools as sports leaders and act as mentors to younger students. They also enjoy federation activity days and taking part in federation productions and house competitions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Within the satisfactory teaching there are variations from outstanding to inadequate. Inspectors' judgements agreed closely with those of the school, indicating accurate self-assessment. The best lessons occur when teachers have high expectations and enable students to learn for themselves by sampling a range of motivating activities. In these lessons, plans take individual assessments into account and provide work to challenge all capabilities, even in ability sets. All teachers use the federation lesson planning format, but tasks are too often of the 'one size fits all' variety, instead of being tailored to match the wide range of ability in the class. Students in Key Stage 3 in particular, said that some lessons did not offer enough challenge and were sometimes dull and 'boring'. Despite the impact of the specialism on the use of computers, teachers rarely use them in lessons, but use too many worksheets. This is not helpful in developing extended writing.

Students' good behaviour frequently contributes positively to their progress, even when not sufficiently challenged, but their opinions about their learning are not often sought. Day-to-day assessment, like teaching, is variable in its effectiveness. Although students know what level they should achieve, marking, does not always guide improvement because it does not consistently make clear what students need to do to improve.

A broad and balanced curriculum throughout the federation delivers the National Curriculum and Religious Education with extended activity in specialisms in each school. This has increased the range of accreditation in addition to GCSE, including vocational courses in sport, performing arts, information and communication technology, and construction, to provide appropriate choices for all students. The diploma in

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manufacturing has proved highly successful and is now attracting students from outside the federation. Adult literacy and numeracy work with Year 11 have contributed well to increasing standards in English and mathematics. Business partnerships make a significant contribution to improving students' outcomes and preparation for life beyond school.

Well-organised arrangements for the care of all students contribute positively to their well-being and personal development. Staff know students well, and students are confident that there is always an adult to whom they can turn. The school can point to striking examples of where it has helped individual students overcome significant barriers to their education. Good guidance is given to students on admission and also when they leave for the next stage of education or apprenticeships.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Improving students' attainment and the all-round raising of standards is central to the federation improvement plan and leadership is effectively distributed at whole school and federation level. Self-evaluation provides an accurate appraisal of the school's effectiveness and identifies what it needs to do to consolidate success and secure improvement. Senior leaders and governors are very ambitious for success and are steadily embedding this ambition across the school. Suitable plans have been implemented by the federation teaching and learning group. These have been most successful where individual staff members have been coached and mentored. The overall quality of teaching is improving, but senior leaders do not have a clear overview of how lessons are improving as the months pass. The governing body is committed to the school's improvement within the federation and fully support the drive to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics.

Essential systems are embedded sufficiently to enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis under the able leadership of the head of school, enabling the executive headteacher to maintain a well-informed over-view of the whole federation.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough and effective. They are regularly updated to take account of developments in modern technology such as the internet. In the two years since the merging of students and staff from the two schools, the school has developed into a unified and cohesive community. Links with the wider community are growing through the business and sports specialisms and the school is starting to develop a

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wider national and global role.

Inclusion is at the heart of all the school's work and it does its best to make sure that all are given equal opportunity to succeed. The school goes out of its way to support students, including potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, enabling them to stay in education and achieve worthwhile qualifications. School leaders make good use of data from the very thorough system for tracking students' progress to monitor the performance of different groups and individuals. This has been used successfully in the last two years to put in extra support and guidance to improve attainment of, for example, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, girls in mathematics, boys in English. The current emphasis on average attaining students in English and mathematics can already be shown to have brought about significant improvement this year and higher attainers have done much better in mathematics.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaires expressed positive views about the school. Most felt that the school keeps their children safe and that they enjoy school. A small minority expressed disquiet about the school's communication about progress and the taking of parents' views into account. A similar percentage felt the school did not help their children have a healthy lifestyle. There was some disquiet about meeting of the needs of students with special educational needs and /or disabilities. Inspectors saw a high percentage of parents attending parents' meetings who said they were pleased with opportunities to discuss their children's progress.

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Inspectors found that the school often goes out of its way to communicate with even hard to reach parents. They also judged that the school does a lot to help students have a healthy lifestyle. Some parents also felt the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, but inspectors found evidence to show that unacceptable behaviour was dealt with effectively, and this view was endorsed by students.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Bramcote Park Business and Enterprise 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 inspection team received 234 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 709 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	21	148	69	17	8	5	2
The school keeps my child safe	40	19	154	72	14	7	4	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	34	116	54	21	10	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	27	124	58	26	12	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	41	19	131	61	30	14	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	15	124	58	45	21	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	11	133	62	49	23	5	2
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)	40	19	139	65	19	9	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	13	146	68	24	11	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	20	121	56	29	13	15	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	13	138	64	21	10	11	5
The school is led and managed effectively	31	14	144	67	19	9	5	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	23	130	60	24	11	5	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



29 April 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Bramcote Park Business and Enterprise School, Bramcote, NG9 3GD

Thank you for being so welcoming to us and the contribution you made to our recent inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and were impressed by your good manners, maturity and confidence when speaking to us about your school. Your opinions in discussion and on your questionnaires were very helpful in helping us confirm our own observations of the school.

We were particularly impressed with:

- your good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning
- your good attendance and the way you have become one community since the two schools suddenly merged last year
- the good quality of care, guidance and support the school provides, which enables you to feel safe and know how to lead a healthy lifestyle
- the many opportunities you have in the Key Stage 4 curriculum in particular, and the extra activities as a result of the federation.

In some lessons you achieve really well and make excellent progress, but in others not nearly so much is achieved. Some of you said lessons were sometimes dull. We agree that your learning is too variable, particularly in lessons where the work lacks challenge or activities lack variety.

We have asked the school to make these changes:

- improve the quality of some of your lessons by making sure you are all interested and challenged to do your best
- improve your attainment in English and mathematics
- make more use of your opinions on your learning.

You can see you have an important role to play. We wish you every success in the future

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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