

The Burton Borough School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123574
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Inspection number	340371
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Reporting inspector	Deborah James

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	1106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Broomhead
Headteacher	Mr David Hill
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The majority of the time was spent observing learning. The inspectors visited 59 lessons, observed 44 teachers and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and a small group of governors. They observed the school's work and studied a range of documentation, including the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, department monitoring evidence and records of students' progress. Inspectors also reviewed responses to questionnaires returned from students, staff and 240 parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by students in lessons and the evidence held by the school to support their evaluation that pupils are making satisfactory progress
- the effectiveness of the school's actions in improving the quality of teaching and learning
- the extent to which all middle leaders are involved in self-evaluation and school improvement
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all students.

Information about the school

This is an above-average-sized school where the large majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but the proportion of students with statements is well above average. The school gained arts specialist status in 2004. The school has gained the Artsmark Award, the International Schools Award and the Healthy Schools Standard. It also holds awards for Investors in Careers and Investors in People.

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

3

Main findings

Burton Borough is a school where students are valued and well cared for. The vast majority of students say they feel safe and know that there is always an adult who will help and deal quickly with any problem. Students participate enthusiastically in the life of the school and are particularly engaged with creative arts opportunities that arise from the school's specialist status.

Since the last inspection, the school has made tangible progress in some key areas. Students now have excellent attendance and punctuality. Well-developed basic skills and a comprehensive careers programme allow students to leave college well prepared for further education and training. Changes to the curriculum have made a marked contribution to improved attainment. In particular, effective partnerships with other providers have increased the range of vocational courses significantly, enabling Key Stage 4 students to have greater success and find relevance in their learning. The school has more actively engaged with parents using a range of 'Parent Voice' activities to enable parents to express their views; the majority feel they are listened to. These changes for the better demonstrate the school's capacity for further improvement.

Despite several key strengths, the college has been judged satisfactory overall because the progress made by students is only satisfactory. The school has put into place a number of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the positive impact of these was seen during the inspection. More teaching is now good or outstanding but too much teaching remains satisfactory. As a result, students are not consistently supported to make good progress. Students learn best when expectations are clear and they engage with challenging tasks that interest and motivate them. In other lessons, students have too few opportunities to practise and develop new skills. The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent, with a significant amount of marking that is brief and infrequent.

The recruitment of new senior leaders and the restructuring of roles and responsibilities have considerably strengthened the capacity of the leadership team. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's current strengths and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. However, actions to bring about necessary change have not always been implemented quickly enough and, accordingly, they have had limited impact on improving students' achievement. The school also recognises that there is considerable variation in the skills and approaches of leaders at all levels.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupil progress by ensuring that at least 75% of teaching is

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good or better, with 15% outstanding by December 2010 through:

- ensuring that learning activities are matched to students' different abilities
 - further developing opportunities for students to work creatively on activities that motivate and enthuse them
 - increasing the pace of learning in lessons so students remain fully engaged
 - ensuring that students know how well they are doing, and how to improve, through regular high quality marking and feedback.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management so that underperformance in students' learning and the quality of teaching is picked up quickly and appropriate interventions are introduced promptly. In particular:
- increase the rigour of both whole-school and departmental systems for monitoring and evaluating students' progress and the quality of teaching and learning
 - share the good practice of the most effective middle leaders so that all is as good as in the best departments in the school
 - support middle leaders in taking responsibility for the delivery of high quality teaching through increased monitoring, more consistent use of the school's 'teaching toolkit' and better support from senior leaders.
- 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**

In 2009, the proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics continued to rise and was above the national average. However, other attainment measures dipped and overall student attainment is broadly average. The majority of students enjoy school. When offered suitably challenging activities in lessons they engage enthusiastically, supporting one another and working well independently. Conversely, less effective lessons are characterised by teachers talking for too long or requiring pupils to undertake activities that are dull or repetitive. As a result, the pace of learning slows and a few students become restless and behave inappropriately. As a result of this considerable variation in teaching, all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, only make satisfactory progress. Students are generally positive, friendly and keen to talk about what they are doing. They know how to stay healthy and the school encourages them to participate in a range of sporting activities. However, too few students currently follow recommendations on eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Students understand right from wrong and have numerous opportunities, through the curriculum and enrichment activities, to debate moral issues. Charitable fundraising adds another dimension to students' moral development. They participate well in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including many from the school's specialist area of creative

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arts. The school's band has won national acclaim, having competed successfully in national and international competitions. Students participate enthusiastically in a well-structured school council and are given significant responsibilities. For example, they recently took part in the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.

During the inspection, the vast majority of students behaved well in lessons and around the school. However, parent and student surveys, and discussions with students, indicated that, on occasions, the poor behaviour of a small minority of students disrupts learning. The school has reviewed sanctions for poor behaviour and is making increasingly effective use of a 're-integration room' as an alternative to exclusion. There are consistently high levels of attendance for all groups of students and the school has very few persistent absentees.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and most lessons are carefully planned. Information and communication technology is used well to expand or illustrate teaching points. Teachers generally make good use of starters, plenaries and a variety of

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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structured learning activities so that students show interest in their work and make the expected progress. In more effective lessons, teachers use probing questioning that enables them to reshape the lesson in the light of students' understanding. Students are aware of their current performance and their target grades. In some lessons, these are used to ensure that students understand how they can improve their work and make further progress. Students are keen to acknowledge the extremely valuable feedback given through marking in some subject areas. However, much marking is less useful, with a focus on presentation and completion rather than prioritising the means by which learning can be improved.

The curriculum has undergone significant change over the last year to better meet the needs of all learners. At Key Stage 3, the school has prioritised a number of initiatives to support students in developing better learning and study skills. At Key Stage 4, the focus has been on increasing the range of academic and vocational courses to motivate and engage all students. Vocational courses are offered to suit all abilities; many are delivered in partnership with other schools and colleges in the area. The school has been keen to increase the impact of its creative arts specialist focus. As a result, younger students have improved provision for dance. In addition, almost half of the students in Year 9 have opted to participate next year in an additional after-school GCSE within creative arts specialism. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is its outstanding programme of extra-curricular, enrichment and enhancement activities. Whole year groups participate in activities that add to students' enjoyment and contribute to other aspects of their personal development and well-being.

Students are known as individuals and a strong pastoral structure sustains a variety of support and intervention strategies. The school has good links with a number of outside agencies. Evidence was seen of the excellent provision made for students with diverse and challenging needs and the strong inclusive culture that exists within the school. The school has established coherent and highly effective systems to promote high attendance. Very effective transition arrangements, considerably enhanced by well-established partnerships with feeder primary schools, ensure that students who join Year 7 settle into their new school quickly and smoothly. Parents are particularly appreciative of this transition support noting that the school has been 'exceptionally welcoming' and has developed their children's confidence and self-esteem.

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?

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The headteacher and senior leaders are committed to raising achievement for all students through improved teaching, a more appropriate curriculum and high quality individual support and intervention. Recently appointed staff at middle and senior levels have further reinforced and accelerated changes at the school. There has been a considerable drive from senior leaders to develop a 'teaching toolkit' that provides teachers with a range of strategies to enhance teaching and learning. Subject leaders track the progress of students and lead curriculum change. They have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in their departments but they have not all adopted a rigorous enough approach to improving it. Whole-school self-evaluation has identified appropriate areas for development and suitable plans have been put in place. However, the lack of detail in the development plan makes it difficult for leaders, including governors, to monitor the success of the school's actions. Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors know the school very well and are closely involved in departmental monitoring.

All requirements for the safeguarding of students were in place at the time of the inspection. The school has thorough and robust systems for assessing risk and ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. Strong partnerships with a wide range of local agencies and volunteer groups are having a good impact on the care and support of students, especially, those who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Equality policies are in place and a number of initiatives have been introduced to broaden students' understanding of other cultures. Senior leaders analyse the academic performance of different groups of students. However, the school has less information about how different groups of students participate in extra-curricular activities and the broader life of the school. The school has a good understanding of its ethnic, religious and socio-economic context. Students from different backgrounds get on well together but the school is still in the process of developing its outreach work in the local community.

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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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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

Just under a quarter of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Of these parents and carers, the great majority are happy with their children's experiences in the school. They agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe. There were a number of concerns raised about poor behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour around the school and in lessons was satisfactory and, although there was some evidence of disruptive behaviour, the school was taking appropriate actions to deal with it.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Burton Borough 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 240 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1106 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	26	156	65	13	5	5	2
The school keeps my child safe	67	28	157	65	13	5	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	79	33	141	59	15	6	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	26	143	60	26	11	6	3
The teaching is good at this school	49	20	163	68	23	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	18	151	63	33	14	6	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	13	155	65	43	18	2	1
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)	48	20	149	62	16	7	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	19	160	67	23	10	7	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	15	143	60	41	17	11	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	13	148	62	32	13	8	3
The school is led and managed effectively	56	23	147	61	26	11	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	28	149	62	14	6	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 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.



19 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Burton Borough School, Newport, TF10 7DS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and talking to you and were impressed with the maturity with which you answered our questions. Yours is an improving school and you are rightly proud of it.

These are the main findings of the inspection.

Burton Borough is a satisfactory school overall. This is because you make satisfactory progress in your lessons.

The school values you and looks after you well.

Your excellent attendance, punctuality and understanding of basic skills prepare you well to move onto further education or training.

Much teaching is good but too many lessons lack pace and do not allow you sufficient opportunities to develop and practise new skills.

Marking does not always give you clear information on what you have achieved and how you can improve.

Your headteacher and other senior leaders have made significant progress in improving your school since the last inspection. However, some changes have not taken place quickly enough and further changes are needed to improve your achievement.

We have asked the school to make the following improvements.

Improve the progress you make by making sure that more of your lessons are good or outstanding, with better marking and a greater range of effective learning activities.

Improve the quality of leadership and management so that all departments are as well run as the best, underperformance is picked up quickly, and appropriate interventions are introduced promptly.

We would like you to help your school by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection of your college. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah James

Lead inspector

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