

# Belvidere School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123570
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	345528
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	828
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chela Anders
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Johnstone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Crowmere Road Shrewsbury SY2 5LA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team spent 75% of their time directly observing learning. They visited 41 lessons, saw 43 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work and records of their progress. They also looked at a range of documents, including governors' minutes, the school's development plan, a range of policies and the school's monitoring of its performance. The inspectors took account of 184 questionnaires from parents and carers, 154 questionnaires from pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4, and 53 questionnaires from staff.

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

- how effectively the school meets its statutory requirements
- the quality of teaching in the departments with the most and least successful examination results
- the performance of different groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and looked after children in public care
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils
- how effectively the school's monitoring and evaluation systems promote better outcomes for pupils.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average secondary school has been a specialist technology college since September 2003 and was awarded Training School Status in 2008. Almost all of the pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion eligible for free school meals.

Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher who took up post in September 2009.

**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

Belvidere School provides a good standard of education. Its specialist subject in all of its facets is a strength of the school and gives richness and meaning to many pupils' education. The quality of provision for technology is excellent. Support from industry and commerce has provided buildings and equipment that are at the cutting edge of technology. Moreover there is no doubting the school's desire to continue improving. There exists a hunger for innovation and change throughout the school, grounded in the belief that all pupils should have a passion for learning and should learn from a wide variety of experiences. This ethos is driven by the headteacher's calm and authoritative leadership. The school has a number of strengths, including:

- high standards in technology, mathematics, science, history, geography, business studies and in the proportions of pupils gaining 5 GCSEs at A\*- C
- an ethos for learning that nurtures mutual respect, motivates pupils and encourages their positive self-esteem, particularly the most vulnerable pupils
- senior leaders and teachers who complement each other well and work purposefully as a team.

The headteacher and senior leadership team are realistic and honest in their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have identified accurately the key areas for improvement and have put in place appropriate strategies to deal with them, some of which are already showing an impact. The school has maintained its high standards and the well-ordered and supportive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, such as assessment and pupils' engagement in their learning, and provision for physical education have been successfully tackled. These positive factors, when set against the on-going problems in religious education (RE) and the fact that the school has not yet met a number of the statutory requirements, including promoting community cohesion, mean that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. Although the school recognises the importance of promoting community cohesion and has appointed a member of staff to take responsibility, little has yet been done. A very broad-brush outline plan has been prepared and there is recognition that it is important for pupils to be adequately prepared for life in a multicultural and multi-faith wider community.

Senior leaders and managers are using a range of strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to identify the actions needed to accelerate pupils' progress. Currently, there are not enough checks to ensure that all staff, particularly middle leaders in some subjects, are consistently implementing these actions. This leads to inconsistencies in provision and satisfactory, rather than good or outstanding progress for some pupils.

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Governors support the headteacher and are fully committed to the continuing improvement of the school. They carefully monitor budgetary decisions, securing the best value from spending, and seek to make savings where possible. However, the governors' role in checking the quality of the school's work and in ensuring that all of the school's statutory responsibilities are met is inadequate.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve monitoring, evaluation and consistency of provision in all subjects by:
  - increasing the rigour and frequency with which all leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning so that weaker practice is eliminated
  - setting clear expectations of what the school wants to see in lessons
  - establishing robust systems to check that all staff are following these guidelines.
  - The school should provide further opportunities for pupils to appreciate the benefits of living in an ethnically and culturally diverse society by ensuring that:
    - an explicit whole-school strategy is developed for promoting community cohesion
    - all subjects carry out an audit to identify opportunities of when they can incorporate this aspect within their work
    - all pupils are taught religious education and experience a daily act of collective worship.
  - In order to meet statutory requirements, governors must adopt a unified and systematic approach to holding the school to account, and tackle the urgent outstanding requirements by September 2010 by:
    - ensuring that RE is taught according to the requirements of the Shropshire Locally Agreed Syllabus
    - checking that all statutory policies are in place
    - implementing the plans to ensure that each subject has the required amount of curriculum time.

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

Pupils really enjoy their learning; their motivation is high and their achievement outstanding. Other features of pupils' learning and performance in lessons include:

The school presents a year-on-year picture of steadily improving results. Standards in many subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 exceed the levels expected for pupils' ages. Pupils do particularly well in mathematics and science, technology and history, with attainment in English improving steadily. However, pupils' attainment in art and design, and music, lag behind those found in other subjects. Attainment and progress in RE are

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inadequate.

Most pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills support their learning well in lessons. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good and sometimes very good progress. Targets are realistic, based on sound analysis and provide good goals for individual pupils. As a result most pupils are successful in gaining the grades they need to follow their ambitions for higher education or employment.

Pupils' moral and social awareness is an important strength, with pupils acquiring a wide range of social skills that help them to develop into well-rounded individuals. The school cultivates mutual respect and cooperation and promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem effectively. As a consequence the school has successfully created a climate where good standards of behaviour predominate. However, there are fewer opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural development or extend their knowledge of other cultures and beliefs because of the weaknesses in the provision for RE and in a failure to provide a daily act of collective worship.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> 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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Important strengths in teaching are:

- teachers often display excellent knowledge of their subjects and make effective use of ICT to capture pupils' interest
- good relationships between teachers and pupils
- the effective support provided by teaching assistants for individuals and groups
- the teachers' ability to convey ideas with clarity. For example, in most lessons, teachers give clear instructions at the beginning of the lesson as to what pupils are expected to do.

Lessons in the school's specialist subject of technology are often very exciting. For example, in a robotics session, pupils had programmed Lego robots that they had made. An impressive 'dancethon', was held, where all the robots danced together and their designers modified and kept their robot-dancers going for as long as they could. This typifies the approach that the school's specialist status engenders. Relevance, excitement and enjoyment can be seen in lesson after lesson.

Notwithstanding all of the above, shortcomings do occur, as witnessed in lessons where teaching was satisfactory and in the small number observed that were inadequate. It is in these lessons that pupils become passive learners and opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills are therefore missed. This happens when teachers talk for too long or, when the use of assessment to support learning is not as effective as it should be in ensuring activities meet the needs of different ability groups, particularly the most able. The quality of marking in such lessons is variable and in a few instances not completed at all. Consequently not all pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and the pace of learning slows down.

Richness is added to school life for very many pupils by the extra-curricular activities. There is a very good range of sporting activities which are well attended and the school participates at a high level in team sports. Extra-curricular music has been a long standing part of the school's life and there is a wide range of clubs that many pupils enjoy. Links with neighbouring schools, and with local further education colleges and training providers, have helped to extend the options available in Key Stage 4, and enable pupils to follow vocational courses or other programmes. Further developments are in place for the introduction of diploma courses from September 2010.

The curriculum is broad but is not as balanced as it could be. There is excellent provision for the school's specialism with every pupil studying technology all through the school and good provision for the core subjects. However, the reduced time allocations for other subjects such as art and design, music and drama curtail how much of required programmes of study can be provided. Other subjects suffer, most notably RE in Key Stage 4 where it has not been taught for over six years. More importantly, where RE is taught in Key Stage 3 the provision is inadequate.

Through strong links with parents and effective partnerships with a range of agencies, the school provides good support for pupils with specific needs and the most vulnerable. This is reflected in the progress and increasing confidence of several who are in public care. Effective guidance is provided for pupils on transferring from primary schools and in making options choices at the end of Year 9. The school is successful in supporting

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pupils at risk of disengagement from education and re-integrating those returning to school after extended absence. There is a clear belief in the importance of expecting the best from all pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

One of the most important qualities of the headteacher's leadership has been the ability to further enhance the effectiveness of the senior leadership by insisting on core values and creating a sense of individual worth, responsibility and accountability within a good team ethos. Furthermore, he has the confidence of the staff and knows their strengths and areas for development.

Much good work has gone into building a system that reliably tracks pupils' progress and attainment, and this is central to the school's success in delivering high standards. However, across departments the use of this system to identify and respond to trends in attainment and progress over time is inconsistent. In some departments the school's procedures to measure progress are not applied effectively. As a result, some of the targets set for pupils' attainment are not sufficiently challenging. Most of the middle leaders make a sound contribution to bringing about improvements to their departments and generally play a satisfactory role in monitoring aspects of teaching and learning. The school recognises that there is more to do to develop greater capacity at this level.

There is much very good teaching to see. The coaching and mentoring programme provides a good basis for enhancing teachers' professional development. However, the school recognises that there has been greater success in some subjects than in others in securing consistently good learning.

Through its broad curriculum and the valuable support provided for those pupils who are most vulnerable, the school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity. It has adopted relevant policies on promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. However, the school has not yet undertaken an evaluation of the impact of its other policies on equal opportunities, as required. Similarly, there is more work to do relating to community cohesion because the school has not adopted an explicit strategy for preparing all pupils for life in an ethnically and culturally diverse society.

Safeguarding procedures are given appropriate emphasis. At the time of the inspection, they met statutory requirements. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps to keep their child safe.



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Governors are ardent supporters of the school but their role in holding the school to account and in making sure all statutory requirements are met is not upheld.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire hold very positive views about the school. Inspectors agree with their positive comments, particularly about care, guidance and support. A number of parents and carers referred to the valuable support they had received from the school. One parent wrote, 'We most appreciate the friendly and positive atmosphere which is created by the staff.'

A few parents and carers raised concerns about some aspects. They were most concerned with behaviour. Inspectors are satisfied that the school has in place a range of suitable strategies to deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and promote good conduct. Pupils told inspectors that staff are fair and deal promptly with any concerns they may have.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Belvidere 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 185 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 828 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	30	120	65	9	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	74	40	108	58	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	73	39	109	59	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	39	104	56	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	35	115	62	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	22	128	69	15	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	16	130	70	18	10	0	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)	49	26	120	65	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	29	120	65	8	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	29	111	60	15	8	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	20	119	65	11	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	34	111	60	4	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	43	99	54	5	3	0	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belvidere School, Shrewsbury, SY2 5LA

We really enjoyed the time we spent in your school and many of you spoke to us and gave us your views about the school. We found this very helpful and it helped us build a clear picture of how good the school is and how well you learn in it.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

Your school is good. The headteacher and other staff work hard to make sure it stays this way and becomes even better.

Your tests and examination results are very good and nearly all of you make good progress.

Teaching is good and has some excellent features.

There is a wide range of subjects for you to choose from in Years 10 and 11, preparing you well for when you leave school.

Most of you behave well and are interested in your work.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to do the following things.

Increase opportunities for you to learn about and understand some of the diverse cultures within Britain. This is part of the responsibility which the school now has to promote community cohesion, and I hope that you, possibly through the school council, will be able to contribute to its development.

The staff in charge of departments should regularly check how well you are doing in every subject.

The governors have to make sure that the school provides you with what it is required by law to do. This includes making sure that everyone is taught religious education, and that the correct amount of time is allocated to each subject. We have also asked them to ensure that there is an assembly every day and that the school checks that all of its policies and procedures are as good as they can be.

Once again, thank you for talking with us and making us feel welcome.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

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