

Brookfield Community School and Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116419
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357960
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Chris Wood

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	1744
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Rutt
Headteacher	Maria Allen
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed 57 lessons taught by 55 teachers, including two sets of joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, they observed parts of lessons, tutor periods and a house assembly to investigate specific aspects of learning and well-being. The inspectors also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, policies, action plans and documents relating to the tracking of students' progress. During the inspection, meetings were held with the school staff, three governors and two groups of students who were representative of the college's diversity. The inspectors also analysed the responses to questionnaires returned by 178 parents and carers, 133 students and 25 members of the school staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- The achievement of all students, but particularly middle-attaining boys in Key Stage 4, to ascertain whether teaching is appropriately adapted and/or sufficiently challenging.
- The extent to which the rate of progress made by students in mathematics is improving.
- The extent to which improvements made to the curriculum, including those brought about through the college's specialism, have had a positive impact on improving outcomes for all students.
- The impact of the actions of leaders at all levels on raising attainment and increasing the rates of progress made by all groups of students.

Information about the school

Brookfield Community School and Language College is much larger than the average secondary school. Most students are from White British backgrounds. Only a small number of students are known to be entitled to free school meals. There are few students from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. While the number of students with a statement of educational needs is well below average, the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that seen nationally. The college has held specialist status for languages since 2002.

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

Brookfield Community School and Language College is a good school that is on an upward journey of improvement. Under the dedicated leadership of its headteacher, supported well by other school leaders and staff, there have been wide-ranging improvements since the last inspection. The inspectors agree with one parent/carer who commented that the school 'truly embraces an ethos of inclusion, encourages effort and celebrates achievement'.

Attainment overall is high and improving. Unvalidated examination results for 2010 are the school's highest. In some areas, such as the proportion of students who attain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, the rate of improvement has been quicker than that seen nationally. This underlines the good progress that students make. The proportion of students who attain five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics at grades A* to C, while higher than average, has remained stable over the previous three years. The rate of progress made by students in mathematics, although improving, has been slower than in other subjects and there has been some underperformance among boys who join the school with average levels of attainment. The school leaders are now successfully tackling these issues. Taken together, this confirms the students' good achievement.

The students' positive relationships with the teachers and their peers are demonstrated clearly in their good behaviour and high attendance. The students feel exceptionally safe because they have an excellent understanding of personal security and trust in school staff to look after them. The curriculum has developed well and is now more flexible in meeting the needs of the students through a wider range of academic and vocational options. The quality of teaching has also improved. The proportion of good lessons has increased and the number of outstanding lessons is rising steadily. However, some inconsistency remains. The good information teachers have about students' prior learning is not always used sufficiently well to plan challenging lessons that develop the students' independence. In some cases, teachers' questioning and feedback do not enable all students to make quicker progress towards their ambitious personal targets.

A large majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school's work. Many note the improved quality of communication since the last inspection. However, a small minority of parents and carers are less positive. The headteacher and the governing body are determined to work closely with all parents and carers to ensure that concerns are resolved as swiftly as possible. The track record of improvement and the school's accurate assessment of its own strengths and weaknesses mean that there is good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress made by students in mathematics so that attainment rises further.
- Ensure that information about students' prior learning is used more consistently to plan challenging lessons, by ensuring that:
 - well-targeted questioning regularly extends students' thinking
 - oral and written feedback focuses more precisely on helping students to identify the steps they need to take to improve their work and make faster progress
 - activities are structured so that they encourage more independent approaches to learning.
- Improve the impact of the school's strategies for working with parents and carers so that students are fully supported to make even better progress in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is high across a range of subjects. This is notable in science, where attainment continues to improve rapidly. The proportion of students attaining a language GCSE at grades A* to C, which is significantly higher than average, has also risen at a much faster rate than the national trend. The students make good progress in their learning and apply themselves conscientiously in lessons. However, the school has correctly identified that progress in mathematics, although improving, is still too slow. The leaders have also focused shrewdly on monitoring the achievement of some recently underperforming groups, such as boys who join the school with average levels of attainment. Well-devised strategies have been implemented to address these areas of relative weakness. These are beginning to have a positive effect, but need time to embed further before the full impact on achievement is seen.

Although the school is large, it is a welcoming community where individuals feel exceptionally safe and are confident to support others who are in need. For example, one student in Key Stage 3 reflected proudly that he had 'helped two other students to become happier.' The students have trust in their teachers and get on well with each other. They are polite, courteous and curious about the world. This was seen, for example, in their thoughtful response to an assembly on the theme of responsibility and based on the experiences of the recently rescued Chilean miners. The students also value learning about people from other societies and religions, often considering how such knowledge links to their own identity and aspirations. Thus, one student commented that she had enjoyed learning about different cultural traditions because it would help her to achieve her ambition of working as a fashion designer.

Attendance has improved and is now high. The students contribute keenly through their roles on the school council, by raising money for charity or organising events for members of the local community. They celebrate their peers' achievements enthusiastically, be it the editing of the school magazine or success as a synchronised swimmer. The students have lots of ideas to help the school to improve. However the inspectors agree with those students who felt that some of their best ideas were not always fully utilised. The students participate actively in sporting activities. The inspectors were impressed by the very high level of engagement seen in physical education (PE) lessons. The students have

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a good knowledge of how to stay fit and most want to do so. The teachers, students and parents and carers all agree, however, that a small minority of students find it more difficult to make the healthiest choices. The students are well prepared for the next stage in their lives and there are very few who do not go on to some form of education, employment or training.

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	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

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

How effective is the provision?

The inspectors observed the majority of teachers at work and found that the quality of teaching was consistently good across the range of subjects. About 10% of the teaching observed was outstanding. In the best lessons, the features that were ensuring good progress included:

- very positive relationships between the staff and students
- confident subject knowledge and interesting activities that led to a good pace of learning
- careful adaptation of tasks, with some risk taking, that met the needs of students working at different levels and encouraged independence
- effective use of questioning and peer evaluation which helped the students to reflect on the progress they had made and prompted the setting of future targets.

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However, informed by accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, the school recognises that some inconsistencies remain. At times, information about students' prior attainment is not being used to plan lessons that are sufficiently challenging. The students are also sometimes unsure about how to achieve their personal targets. This is because feedback does not always provide sufficient guidance about what they need to do to improve their work and the teachers' questioning does not always extend their thinking fully.

The curriculum now offers a broader range of options which allow the students to pursue both academic and vocational routes. The school has used its strong partnerships successfully to introduce new qualifications, such as the Diploma. In Key Stage 3, the students benefit from innovative cross-curricular approaches. These opportunities have proved particularly stimulating for more-able students. There are good systems in place to support literacy and numeracy, but their impact needs to be monitored more closely. The specialist subjects enhance the experience of the students in the school and in its partner primaries. Notably, the number of students taking language qualifications in French and German is much higher than the national average and above the proportions seen in other language colleges. Participation in languages has been increased further by the successful introduction of the national vocational qualification (NVQ). Extra-curricular provision is excellent and students enjoy many opportunities to develop their talents in sport, music and the performing arts.

The school tracks the progress of students closely, implementing effective arrangements for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, they also make good progress in their learning. The students receive regular guidance about their future education or employment. Provision for more-able students is well organised. Successful partnerships with external agencies and the school's increased flexibility also mean that individuals who need additional support or are at risk of exclusion have been successfully supported to remain in education. The recent reorganisation of tutor groups into mixed-year houses is beginning to embed. Judiciously, the school plans to evaluate these new arrangements as the year progresses. Parents and carers praised highly the arrangements the school makes to help children move from primary to secondary school. Thus, one parent of a boy in Year 7 spoke for many when saying, 'The transition has been fantastic. He is happy, settled already and feels safe and encouraged by all year groups.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The staff are proud to be members of the school and understand clearly what it is trying to achieve. Concerted efforts to strengthen the quality of leadership at all levels are now paying off. For example, timely action by the headteacher has ensured that successful recruitment or changes to leadership responsibilities have improved the quality of teaching and learning. The governing body provides the school with a good level of challenge and carries out its statutory duties well. It has detailed knowledge of the school's priorities and is actively involved in those areas that need to improve most urgently. The chair of the governing body, for example, has recently introduced a coaching programme for underachieving boys in Year 11.

The school understands its immediate community well and evaluates the impact of its actions carefully. There are strong affiliations with a range of local community groups. The global voice music project promotes good links with young people in South Africa. Its positive impact is recognised by the staff, students and parents and carers alike. The school, rightly, plans to develop its contacts with other schools in Britain to enhance the students' understanding of young people from more diverse backgrounds. The school's ethos encourages mutual respect and understanding of rights and responsibilities. An increased focus on the achievement of students with particular needs and a firm tackling of the rare incidences of intolerance underpin the school's successful commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. The school's good systems for keeping students safe are effective. The staff are well trained and take their responsibilities seriously. The school has dealt very successfully with the historic deficit budget and provides good value for money.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire was lower than the national average. There were many written responses. Parents and carers identified several areas where they feel the school is successful. These included:

- the commitment of the staff and the good level of care they give the students
- the strong sense of community and the school's ethos of inclusion
- the wide range of opportunities that students enjoy
- the very effective transition arrangements that help the students settle
- the availability of up-to-date information about progress, attendance and school work provided by the virtual learning environment (VLE).

Parents and carers also expressed a number of concerns in their comments. Mostly, these related to the speed of communication and the extent to which concerns are acted on. Significantly, other parents and carers thought that these areas had improved since the last inspection. Although the questionnaire indicated a concern with the way the school deals with discipline, there were relatively few written comments about this issue. Indeed, the inspectors found that behaviour was good, both in lessons and around the school. Parents and carers were also worried about variations in the quality of teaching and the impact this has on progress in lessons. The inspectors judged that the quality of teaching was good but agree that some inconsistencies persist. Some parents were also concerned about the impact of recent changes to the pastoral system and timings of the school day.

During the inspection, the effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers was discussed at length with the headteacher and the governing body. The school has good systems in place and is committed to finding even better ways to work closely with parents and carers so that outcomes for young people improve further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brookfield Community School and Language College 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 178 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,744 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	33	100	56	16	9	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	40	22	125	70	8	4	3	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	28	94	53	23	13	8	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	19	103	58	23	13	12	7
The teaching is good at this school	20	11	112	63	25	14	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	25	84	47	33	19	9	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	8	103	58	37	21	14	8
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)	46	26	86	48	22	12	5	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	13	106	60	21	12	9	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	12	90	51	32	18	22	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	9	86	48	33	19	18	10
The school is led and managed effectively	30	17	97	54	34	19	10	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	26	93	52	27	15	7	4

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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



25 October 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Brookfield Community School and Language College,
Southampton, SO31 7DU**

Recently, I visited your school with a team of inspectors to look at how well you were doing. Thank you very much for your help. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, in meetings and around the school site. I am pleased to say that you go to a good school which has improved greatly since the last inspection. Here are some of the main things that we found out.

You enjoy learning and do exceptionally well in your GCSEs. Your results have got better in recent years and your attendance is now high. You are polite, friendly and well behaved. You feel really secure at school because you have an excellent understanding of personal safety. You trust your teachers to sort out problems and are always willing to help each other. You contribute well to the community around you and have great ideas to help the school improve. You also participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting and artistic activities. Almost all of you know how to stay healthy and try to do so. However, some of you do not always make the healthiest choices. The teaching at your school is generally good and some lessons are outstanding. The curriculum now offers you a wider range of opportunities to do both academic and vocational courses. The large majority of your parents and carers agree that this is a good school. The school is really committed to working with all parents and carers to ensure that you have the best of experiences while at the school.

Your headteacher and I have agreed that there are some things that could be even better. These included ensuring that:

- you make quicker progress in mathematics so that your grades rise further
- all teachers use the information they have about what you can do to plan lessons that are challenging, help you become more independent and show you how to improve your work
- the school and your parents and carers have regular opportunities to work even more closely together.

All of your teachers want you to do well. You can also play your part. By working with your teachers and participating fully in the engaging lessons they plan, your current good level of achievement can improve even further.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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