

Babington Community College

Strasbourg Drive, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 0SZ

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students make outstanding progress from their low starting points. They are keen to do well and show great enjoyment in their learning, developing resilience and independence. Attainment is rising.
- The school provides outstanding support to promote literacy, particularly for those students newly arrived in the country, who are at an early stage of learning English.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because teachers plan appropriate tasks that are well matched to students' abilities, enabling them to build their skills, knowledge and understanding step by step. There is some slight inconsistency in the quality of feedback on students' work.
- Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and attendance rates have risen. Students say that they feel safe and greatly value the care and support they receive that enables them to achieve.
- Students newly arrived at the school are sometimes too slow in adapting to the school's high expectations for accepted behaviour.
- The outstanding range of subjects students follow is closely matched to the needs and interests of each individual student. This enables all to achieve exceptionally well, and provides experiences that will excite and inspire.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are a model of good practice.
- The inspirational Principal is very well supported by her senior leadership team and by the outstanding governing body. She has been relentless in driving improvements in the quality of teaching and providing high quality care that has resulted in raised achievement and ensured students' well-being.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, approximately half of which were seen together with senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, governors, a representative from the local authority, and with staff, including subject leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about students’ progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students’ work.
- The views of the 21 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account in addition to the school’s own survey of parents’ views, and 67 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection took place during ‘aspirations week’ when a large part of the normal timetable was suspended.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
Bob Roberts	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is high, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is well above the national average; the largest groups are from Black African, Indian and Other White backgrounds, the latter being mainly of Roma origin. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is high. A quarter of the school's population arrived in the country within the last two years and are at early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for some students including those in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school is a specialist sports college and has the International School, and EQualities awards.
- Fourteen students follow a variety of full- and part-time off-site alternative courses provided by Leicester Secondary Behaviour Services, Community Giants and Leicester College.
- The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs for five students with speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The proportion of students arriving or leaving the school at other than the normal time is very high; nearly 100 students have joined the school during this academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers quickly establish their high expectations of students' behaviour for those newly arrived at the school.
- Move even more teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that teachers' feedback on students' learning consistently provides clear information about how to improve and that written marking consistently provides students with opportunities to respond to advice by practising skills, correcting mistakes or undertaking a new challenge
 - fully establishing teachers' use of challenging questioning to make sure that all students develop their thinking skills and are fully involved in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the school with very low levels in the basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics. By the end of Year 11, since the previous inspection, standards have steadily risen. Although the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics remains below average, it is rising strongly. The school has ensured that all students are able to gain a wide range of appropriate qualifications that have resulted in other performance measures being above average.
- Students make outstanding progress from their low starting points, as do those who join the school at other times. Those at an early stage of learning English make rapid progress in their acquisition of the language and in their literacy skills so that they are quickly fully included. Students were keen to tell inspectors how much the school encourages them, raising their expectations of what they can achieve. There is no significant difference between the rates of progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make exceptional progress as a result of the outstanding teaching and support that they receive. There is a relentless focus on the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects, where students are frequently encouraged to read out loud. Systematic support for promoting reading throughout the school results in students making rapid progress and developing confidence. The Year 7 catch-up funding is very effectively used to provide additional support for slower readers in this year group.
- Students were observed in catch-up literacy classes showing great enjoyment and pride in their achievements, as they were skilfully encouraged to write in extended sentences through a variety of fun activities, such as remembering and repeating funny sentences shown for a few seconds on the screen. Students were observed gaining in self-confidence and showing high levels of concentration as they were engrossed in their work.
- Likewise in high ability groups, students develop independent learning skills through having a clear understanding of what is required of a high grade answer. Students know their target grades and are constantly encouraged to 'have a go' and try something more difficult.
- Early entry for GCSE mathematics is used effectively to enable students to improve their grades. Students speak of their determination to achieve their targets and of the individual support they receive to help them to do so.
- Students in the resource unit for students with speech, language and communication difficulties are very well supported and nurtured and are fully integrated into mainstream classes where they achieve well, as a result of the targeted support and the outstanding teaching they receive.
- Students for whom the pupil premium provides additional funding make significantly better progress than this group nationally. In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals made better progress than their classmates in English. Students known to be eligible for free school meals attained half a grade below their classmates while looked-after students attained a grade below. The school's close tracking of attainment and progress indicates that the gap between this group and other students in the school is closing rapidly.
- The progress of students following alternative off-site courses is frequently checked and the school ensures that these students also achieve well. The proportion of students who leave the

school not in education, employment or training is low.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Leaders' rigorous checks on teaching show that a large proportion of teaching is outstanding and almost all is consistently at least good. Teachers new to the profession are very well supported and have been able to make rapid improvement.
- Despite the disrupted timetable during the inspection, when teachers were observed teaching unfamiliar groups or classes were combined, inspectors observed a high degree of consistent practice and a large proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Teachers know their students well and their planning for the range of abilities and individual needs in their classes is very effective. They have high expectations of what each student can achieve and resources are very well prepared so that the least able or those at an early stage of learning English receive the support they need to be able to meet these expectations.
- Key to this support is the pairing of students with someone who can translate questions into their home language and provide encouragement and a role model to show them that they can achieve.
- Lessons are often divided into sections, enabling students to practise skills, re-cap on their learning and then to apply it to a new situation or to an examination question. This building of learning step-by-step is a common feature throughout the school, instilling confidence because students understand how to build their learning power to develop resilience and independence.
- For example, in an outstanding English lesson, the teacher provided a variety of active tasks that enabled students to share ideas and generated a great sense of fun. Here, it was evident that the strategies for presenting similarities and differences were well established. All students produced well-organised work, and showed an understanding of how they would be assessed and what they needed to do to achieve a high grade.
- A very few teachers miss opportunities to ensure that students have a detailed enough understanding of how to improve when they provide feedback during lessons. Although the marking of students' work is usually detailed with clear targets for development, some teachers miss opportunities to enable students to respond to advice, by practising skills, correcting mistakes or being set an additional challenge.
- Most teachers use questioning very skilfully to promote students' thinking. Here, they promote literacy by requiring full sentence answers or challenge students to justify their response. For example in an outstanding Year 7 lesson, the teacher provided time to think before answering and then asked other students to add to the response given, enabling them to develop the ability to discuss their ideas with each other. Very occasionally, however, opportunities are missed to ask follow-up questions that will probe thinking further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In the large majority of lessons observed, behaviour was good or outstanding, despite students being excited by the changes to their normal time-table. In a small minority of lessons, low-level disruption was observed but this was generally because the students were new to the school or were being taught by an unfamiliar teacher.

- Students say that behaviour has improved and is typically good. Staff, parents and carers agree. Students have a very good understanding of the 'Babington way' in terms of what the school expects in term of behaviour and express their approval that their lessons are not disrupted and that behaviour is well managed. Those new to the school take a while to understand these high expectations and to respond appropriately.
- Students told inspectors that they feel very safe and well cared for. They value the fact that they are treated as individuals and that the school will listen to their views. One student said that the school was 'a place where I feel free to be who I want to be.' Another, newly arrived, said that 'teachers welcome you each morning and ask how you are and genuinely want to know.'
- A strong anti-bullying culture has been created. Students say that there is now virtually no bullying and that they are very well supported and informed so that they know about different forms of bullying and other aspects of safety, enabling them to keep themselves safe and provide support for younger students.
- The relentless drive to improve the attendance of all groups of students is proving successful. Attendance is steadily rising and is now above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Senior leaders describe the inspirational Principal as 'phenomenal' for her relentless drive for improvement since the previous inspection. She has established a very strong team that has ensured that the 'Babington way' of teaching is established, including a high level of consistency in the way that teachers plan lessons to meet the individual needs of all groups of students.
- A wide variety of training is provided that is closely matched to teachers' needs. For example, the individual strengths of teachers, identified through lesson observation, are matched to teachers who need to further develop that skill, so that good practice can be shared. Weekly opportunities are provided for teachers to demonstrate successful techniques.
- Rigorous procedures for managing teachers' performance are well established and links between salary progression for teachers and their students' progress are clearly and consistently applied. Teachers are closely held to account for meeting their targets and for the progress of their students.
- Subject leaders value the support of their line managers through regular meetings that have helped them to establish clear and consistent procedures across the school and to drive improvement.
- Leaders are rigorous in their tracking and analysis of students' progress, so that under-achievement is quickly identified and a very wide range of support put in place funded by the pupil premium. This is very well used to provide support that includes holiday classes and one-to-one tuition. Individual mentoring and regular progress sessions after school are also provided.
- Self-evaluation is detailed and appropriate priorities are identified for improvement that strongly focus on raising the aspirations and achievement of all groups of students. Leaders' constant drive to ensure that students from all backgrounds and of all abilities can achieve means that there is no discrimination and that good relationships are promoted between different groups of students. This has been recognised by the EQualities award, and the school is one of only two schools in the country to gain this recognition.

- The resource unit for students with speech, language and communication difficulties is very well led and managed. The teaching and care provided is outstanding and enables these students to achieve and to be fully included.
- Highly personalised learning opportunities very effectively meet the needs of all students. The Key Stage 3 pathways: 'nurture', 'championship' and 'premiership', meet the needs of each individual and focus on raising aspirations. Promotion to the next level encourages students to strive for success. Likewise, Key Stage 4 pathways are geared to attaining goals that will equip students with appropriate qualifications for their next steps. A wide range of other activities, including a large variety of sport and leadership opportunities provided through the sports college, enrich students' experiences and promote teamwork.
- Close partnerships with a locally based multi-national business, with local colleges and other providers enrich students' experience and support vocational courses. There is a high level of collaboration with the school, ensuring that all are attending, behaving and making progress. Alternative provision for the most vulnerable students is well matched to their needs.
- The school strives to engage parents from all backgrounds; a special forum for Somali parents enables them to express their views, and parents of students in Year 9 are encouraged to be fully involved in option choices by providing fish and chips at options evening, presented as 'success on a plate'.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The diverse cultural background of the school population is celebrated and opportunities are frequently provided to promote teamwork and to reflect on issues that face the students. The school is a harmonious community based on mutual respect. Partnership with schools in Denmark and the Czech Republic enable the sharing of good practice, for example in the support of students from the Roma community, the school being regarded as a model of good practice.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school on its journey of improvement and recognises the strength of the leaders and governors, identifying the school as a beacon of good practice. The sports faculty is used frequently to share its work with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed and equipped to challenge and support the school and to compare its performance with schools nationally. It is very well organised so that every aspect of the school's work is scrutinised. Governors regularly undertake additional training in order to further develop their effectiveness. They are fully aware of the spending of pupil premium funding and check its impact on raising the achievement of this group of students. They take an active part in performance management and tackling under-performance. Governors have expertly carried out an independent inspection of the school's work including lesson observations, so have a thorough knowledge of the quality of teaching. They ensure that safeguarding procedures and practice are exemplary.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120294
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	401928

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	684
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Machon
Headteacher	Denise Newsome
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2009
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