



Brigshaw High School and Language College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108090
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 288023
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Honoree Gordon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Brigshaw Lane
School category	Community		Allerton Bywater, Castleford
Age range of pupils	11–18		West Yorkshire WF10 2HR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 3668100
Number on roll (school)	1405	Fax number	0113 2864105
Number on roll (6th form)	180		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Dove
		Headteacher	Mr P Laurence
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	1–2 November 2006	288023

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brigshaw High School is a larger than average comprehensive school situated on the outskirts of Leeds. It is a specialist language college and offers a full range of extended services. There is a close partnership and shared teaching with the sixth form at Temple Moor High. The background of pupils is typical of that found nationally, but a number of pupils come from significantly under-privileged backgrounds and there are a higher number of looked-after children than is usually found. The school has specialist facilities for pupils with physical and learning difficulties and holds Advanced Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brigshaw High School is a good school. It is particularly successful in integrating a wide range of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with physical difficulties, into the school, allowing them to participate and achieve as well as other pupils. The provision for these pupils is impressive. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, speak highly of the school and what it has done for them. The school is over-subscribed. It serves its community well: facilities are open in the evening, there is further education provision adjacent and there are excellent links with other schools and outside agencies which support pupils well in their learning.

The school occupies new buildings, which offer a superb range of resources and facilities, such as extensive sports facilities, and a suite of rooms for modern foreign languages. Although it is a big school it does not feel crowded because the accommodation is spacious, light and bright. These factors contribute considerably towards the good attitudes pupils have to learning. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around school. Some parents expressed concerns about behaviour. Inspectors found that, where behaviour was not as good, it tended to be related to the quality of the lessons and to a minority of pupils. Overall, lessons are good. Managers have focused effectively on this aspect of the school and standards are rising as a result.

Pupils reach average standards for their age and are doing well compared to pupils in schools operating in similar circumstances. Standards in English and English literature at GCSE are above average. However, pupils' achievement is below average in a few subjects, especially science, where several factors have hindered progress. Pupils do not progress as fast in the first three years in the school as they do in Years 10 and 11. The school is aware of these issues and has made changes which are having a positive impact, for example on the progress boys make. The system for monitoring pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9 is not effective. Pupils are not clear about academic targets and how to improve.

Standards and progress in the sixth form are good. The joint provision has allowed a greater range of subjects to be offered, which means that the school can cater for quite a wide spread of ability. This has encouraged many pupils to stay on in education after age 16.

What is most striking about the school is the pervasive sense that it is a place where learning languages matters. The school has extensive provision for languages, with good links across subjects so that pupils can see how and why they can apply their language skills and knowledge. Pupils appreciate the very good opportunities to get involved in visits abroad. New courses are ensuring that, whilst everyone has to study a language throughout their time at school, there are courses to suit different needs. Extensive use is made of the expertise in the language college to support other schools and the community.

There is strong, purposeful direction from the senior managers, who have a clear vision for the future. The school meets its targets but could set itself more ambitious ones.

Since the last inspection the school has made good improvement. It represents good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is good. Good leadership, a developing curriculum and a focus on the needs of individual students mean that there is good capacity for further improvement. The head of the sixth form provides strong leadership focused on raising attainment. Attainment in Year 13 has risen consistently since the last inspection and is now above the national average. Attainment in Year 12 is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good, backed up by a rigorous system for monitoring and reviewing students' progress. These factors enable all students to make good progress.

Year 12 is open to students of quite a wide spread of ability and the range of courses here is still developing. The curriculum has been expanded to include more vocational options and pupils have more choice as a result of effective working partnerships with a neighbouring high school and the further education college. There are appropriate work placements for students following vocational courses.

The provision for students' personal development and well-being is good. Students enjoy being in school and are supported by a very effective tutorial and guidance system that is successful in helping them to transfer to education, training and employment at the end of their course. Students play a useful part in the day-to-day life of the sixth form and the wider school community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils make faster progress in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve attainment in science in Years 10 and 11.
- Establish an effective system to monitor pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils enter the school with average attainment. The school's analysis of examination results for 2006 show that the results pupils obtained at the end of Year 11 were better than many schools in similar circumstances and were an improvement on the previous year. This represents good progress. Pupils make rapid progress in Years 10 and 11, where close attention is paid to how individuals and groups of pupils are progressing. Standards are continuing to rise and in English are above average. In mathematics they are average. Although standards are satisfactory overall the pattern across subjects is inconsistent, with a few weaker subjects, such as science, and others which are good, for example in the humanities.

Progress in the first three years is not fast enough. At the end of Year 9, whilst standards in core subjects are satisfactory, some pupils underachieve and English

scores at this point are not as good as they should be. The 2006 test results show that the changes the school has made in how subjects are taught are beginning to have a positive impact. Achievement is improving, providing better foundations for beginning GCSE.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The provision for pupils' personal development is good and this makes a significant contribution to their progress. The school's language college status has extended pupils' horizons considerably. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A concerted approach to raising awareness about different cultures has led to pupils developing a great deal of respect for the traditions, customs and beliefs of others. Behaviour and attendance are good, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils have a good sense of being part of the school and the wider community. They adopt healthy lifestyles particularly well and the great majority say that they feel safe at school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are planned well, with varied activities which engage pupils in their learning and provide opportunities for independent learning. In some subjects the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has enhanced learning well. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and in the best lessons there is good pace and challenge. In the few lessons that are insufficiently matched to pupils' needs, the conduct of a minority of pupils adversely affects the learning of others. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by specialist support staff and these pupils make as much progress as others. More able pupils have the opportunity to enter some examination courses early. The school recognises the need for greater consistency in the use of data for setting targets and tracking pupils in Years 7 to 9 and has recently put systems for this in place.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good throughout the school. Year 10 pupils are very positive about their newly extended subject choices. These flexible and enriched curriculum choices

are having a very positive impact on their personal achievement and career pathways. As a result, the very high numbers that successfully obtain jobs on leaving school or go on to post-16 education is an outstanding feature of the provision. Teachers have introduced a number of curriculum strategies to enhance learning in Years 7 to 9 to match the better progress older pupils make.

Language college status has been significant in the re-design of the curriculum. The department leads in fast-tracking students on to GCSE courses and leads the way in teaching and learning approaches that prepare students well for life in a multicultural society. The school is quite rightly proud of its outstanding links with the community. Whole-school initiatives, such as the UK Careers Academy, the development of work-related modules, and enterprise and business initiatives are important examples of the additional opportunities offered to its pupils which extend learning and improve pupils' motivation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides outstanding care, advice and support. Pupils are particularly appreciative of this. Typical comments include: 'this school is unique, staff don't give up on you, they help you with any learning or personal problems'; 'they listen to you, understand your needs and you can tell that they want you to do well'. Procedures to ensure health, safety and child protection are in place and reviewed regularly. Personal development is monitored particularly well and pastoral support is outstanding.

Inclusion is at the heart of the school's work. The Pupil Support Area provides excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and others. For instance, the learning difficulties and/or disabilities base, learning mentors, Connexions, Youth Service, Education Welfare Service and other key staff are all located in the same area of the school and frequent staff meetings ensure that joined-up support is provided. These factors ensure that different groups of pupils achieve well. Learning mentors play a significant role within the school's excellent induction programme and are highly regarded by pupils. For instance, comments from vulnerable pupils included, 'If I didn't have the learning mentor I wouldn't even be in school'.

Monitoring procedures for academic progress are developing positively, although more work is necessary to make learning targets clearer to pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school is well led and managed. The recent review of the teaching structure is encouraging greater responsibility amongst subject leaders for improvement in their areas. Middle managers are becoming more skilled in this through the training and

good support senior leaders arrange for them. Good practice is being shared across subjects. The governors and school leaders work very effectively together. They have tackled the action points from the last inspection well: the personal, social, and health education and citizenship programme is good and there is appropriate provision for religious education. Provision for ICT is now satisfactory, with some subjects using these technologies well.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing to thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school and to let you know about our findings.

We think that Brigshaw High is a good school and that the way it cares for you and supports you is outstanding. The way this is organised, with all the staff working so closely together under one roof, is exceptional. You told us how much you appreciate the work they do for you. Being a language college has had a big impact on the opportunities you have and on your awareness of the world around you. You are aware of how useful learning languages is nowadays.

Here are our main conclusions.

- The principal and senior managers lead your school well.
- You make good progress, compared to many other pupils in similar schools.
- You make faster progress in Years 10 and 11 than you do in Years 7 to 9.
- Your examination and tests results are satisfactory.
- Your GCSE results are above average in English and in some humanities subjects.
- The sixth form is good, with good results and progress. It is great to see so many of you staying on in education or training.
- Your school has excellent links with other schools and your local community.
- The curriculum is good: it has expanded to give you a good choice of subjects.
- You are well taught. Your teachers take great care with their lesson planning.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around school is usually good, although a minority of you let the others down and that slows progress in a few lessons.
- Your attendance is good.
- You realise the importance of having a healthy lifestyle.
- There are good opportunities for your personal development.
- The buildings and the resources are good: you told us how much you liked the new sports facilities. You are lucky to have such an attractive school.

Your school has improved a lot since the last inspection. We have asked the principal to look at the following points to help the school get even better:

- look at Years 7 to 9 to see how you could make faster progress there
- make sure you are told how you are doing in each subject and how to improve
- improve the science results in Years 10 and 11.

Your principal has already started working on these and we could see the difference this has begun to make in the examination results in 2006. We would like to encourage you to keep showing such positive attitudes to learning and we wish you every success.