



Bournemouth School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113900
Local Authority Bournemouth
Inspection number 289764
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Mary Massey HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	East Way
School category	Foundation		Bournemouth
Age range of pupils	11–18		BH8 9PY
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01202 512609
Number on roll (school)	1049	Fax number	01202 516095
Number on roll (6th form)	311		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Margaret Westhead
		Headteacher	John Granger
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Bournemouth School became a specialist language college in 2001. Attainment on entry is well above the national average. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below the national average. The majority of students come from a White British background.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bournemouth School provides a good quality education. The atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful. Students are well mannered and self-assured and the majority of students have very positive attitudes to learning. As well as providing a good academic education through a curriculum that is well matched to students' needs, the school takes care of its students well. One parent wrote, 'My son will leave Bournemouth School this summer as a confident, articulate, responsible and well-rounded young man.'

Overall, relationships between staff and students are good, and boys feel that support is available if they need it. Students enjoy the many opportunities to take responsibility and are eager to contribute to the life of the school. The strong house system provides a mechanism for boys of all ages to work together, and encourages older boys to provide much valued support for younger ones. Sixth-formers contribute to the academic success of Year 11 students by providing mentoring, and in response to concerns raised at the school council, prefects provide extra supervision at lunchtime.

Staff have high expectations of students. As a result of good teaching, students make good progress. They achieve very good results in national tests at the end of Year 9, at GCSE and at A level. However, the progress that students make from lesson to lesson is variable because their active participation is limited by their teachers. Inconsistent marking and feedback, as well as a lack of variety in teaching strategies, inhibit progress. A significant number of parents, although acknowledging some very good teaching, have concerns about some which is uninspired and lacks the capacity to motivate students. This means that the level of enjoyment of students varies, with younger students feeling more positive about school than those in Years 10 and 11. Students respond enthusiastically and make better progress where there are activities which challenge and involve them in lessons. When teachers give thorough feedback through detailed marking, and match their teaching to individual needs, students know what to do to improve and are more motivated as a result. Students know that staff are available with whom they can discuss their progress. However, regular opportunities for students to review their progress with staff and set meaningful targets about ways in which they can improve are not formalised.

Leadership and management are good. Planning focuses clearly on actions that staff need to take to ensure that the school continues to improve. Although judgements about the school's own performance are optimistic in some areas, the school's evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate. The headteacher recognises the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning further. He and his team lead staff who are keen to take on new ideas and move the school forward. The school therefore has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are good. Students achieve well and standards are high in most subjects. Students joining the school in the sixth form are well supported and make good progress. The majority of students go on to university.

Teaching and learning are good and expectations are high. Lessons have a clear focus on preparation for examinations and this leads to students achieving good grades. Teachers display good subject knowledge and ensure that students have a good grasp of content. Students' progress is regularly monitored and there is appropriate intervention if learners are underachieving.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and to seek the help and support they need. They respond to this well and teachers are generous with their time, but there is no thorough system of academic tutoring where students are set specific targets based on their prior attainment. The extensive enrichment programme is valued by the students, especially sport and the comprehensive preparation they are given for transition to higher education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify and share the best practice in teaching in order to provide more stimulating and interactive lessons which increase motivation, progress and enjoyment.
- Improve consistency in the quality of assessment and feedback so that all students know what they need to do improve.
- Provide regular opportunities for students to discuss their progress with an interested adult.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Measured against national averages, standards are exceptionally high both in the main school and the sixth form. Overall, progress is good. Students enter the school with attainment well above the national average and make very good progress in Years 7 to 9, particularly in mathematics. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is good, with all students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE in 2006. The number of students reaching the highest grades has increased over recent years, although this is not consistent between subjects. Students take a higher number of GCSE subjects than in most schools. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and so make very good progress.

In the sixth form, attainment on entry is more variable than in most grammar schools and this accounts for the wider spread of examination results. Students make good progress, particularly in English literature, general studies, sociology and information and communication technology (ICT).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are good overall, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students enjoy being at school and are well motivated to learn. As a result, their attendance is outstanding. Students' contribution to their school is outstanding. A very impressive school council has an active role and provides interesting and innovative ideas for involving the students in more areas of the school's work. Students' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are outstanding and contribute substantially to their future economic well-being. All students take religious studies at GCSE, and grasp the opportunity to debate a range of issues. Students adopt very healthy lifestyles. They have a positive attitude to healthy eating and many participate in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Boys say they feel safe at school. The behaviour of a small number of students both in and out of lessons is a cause for concern to some parents and students. The school is taking active measures to deal with this and these are having an impact.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievement. Students are taught to aim high in lessons, enabling most of them to meet challenging targets. They often show exceptional ability to articulate strong, balanced arguments, giving them the capacity to attain higher standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge and build good relationships with their students, leading to a positive working atmosphere. Students say that they would like more teachers to vary the activities that take place in lessons; some teaching has a dryness of approach with very few exciting ways for active learning to take place. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of enjoyable tasks that cater for individual learning styles and students make very good progress. Teachers have been making better use of assessment information to set appropriate learning goals and to monitor progress more closely. However, this is at an early stage of development and has not been sufficiently refined to ensure that all students know how to improve their work in all subjects. The quality and regularity of marking of students' work varies considerably. Some teachers give insufficient guidance on how students can improve their work. Good use of ICT, including digital interactive whiteboards, supports learning well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of the majority of learners. It has an academic focus and is suitable for the students' aptitudes and abilities. Although specialist languages status gives the opportunity for boys to study two or three languages at GCSE, their choice of other subjects is restricted at Year 9. Students take GCSEs early in design and technology and some in French. One vocational GCSE is amongst the option choices for 2007. AS levels in music and French for some students in Year 11, enables them to make faster progress in these subjects. Students benefit from two weeks of work experience. In the sixth form, students are offered a good choice of A-level subjects although there are no vocational or applied options. The range is widened by some limited collaboration with the local girls' school, which the school would like to extend further. A high proportion of students participate enthusiastically in activities beyond the formal curriculum, especially in sport.

In order to provide a more personalised approach to the curriculum, the senior team is considering increasing the very limited opportunities for students to follow vocational and applied curriculum pathways, or to allow some students to take some examinations earlier than is usual, and thus progress faster.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The good care, guidance and support of students is derived from the positive relationships they generally have with their tutors and very experienced heads of house. Excellent arrangements for safeguarding students are in place. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and well understood by staff. Students know where to turn if they have problems and feel confident that they will get help. The cultural differences between students are sensitively handled. Very little bullying occurs, but when it does, it is generally dealt with effectively so that students feel safe. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good and is supported by regular assemblies and a very comprehensive personal, social and health education programme.

The school is inclusive and all students are helped to achieve well. Arrangements for supporting vulnerable students are excellent and parents are pleased with the support given to their children, who make very good progress. Monitoring of academic progress through the house system identifies students who may be underachieving so that support can be provided for them. Guidance for students to enable them to move to their next stage of learning is sound.

Students and their parents know how well students are doing through a good reporting system. However, the use of data to inform teachers about students' progress is not firmly embedded within planning in all subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The improving results are a consequence of the headteacher's good leadership. Heads of department are generally well supported, particularly by the headteacher. He gives middle managers the independence to lead staff forward and develop their skills, and many are both innovative and successful. An effective system of review and analysis of examination data leads to focused departmental planning and the setting of targets, backed up by appropriate professional development. The recent training on assessment for learning has led to some teachers improving their feedback to students. Middle managers regard their line managers as critical friends to whom they are accountable, particularly for examination results, but they do not have many formal opportunities to review their progress or share their good practice with one another. Regular analysis of performance data about students' progress in order to identify their personal targets has improved since the last inspection. However, the systems that are now in place are not yet robustly and consistently used by all teachers.

Parents and students are consulted regularly to find out their views about the school's provision, although some parents are not always sure that their concerns are listened to. The headteacher involves staff in significant decisions, for example, in the reorganisation of responsibility roles last year.

Governors are supportive and loyal. They also challenge the school effectively. They ensure that the school maintains a good balance between promoting high academic standards and looking after the development of the whole individual. Resources are managed well, including those arising from the school's specialist status. The ongoing building programme is providing good facilities that the students appreciate.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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	1	1
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	1	

Personal development and well-being

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

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?	2	2

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	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
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 sure you will remember that your school was inspected on 28 February and 1 March. The inspection team was impressed by your polite and friendly welcome and would like to thank you for the honest and open way in which you talked to us. In return, I would like to tell you about the inspection findings. There is more information in the full report, which I am sure many of you will read.

Yours is a good school. You do very well in examinations and most of you go on to university. The vast majority of you are well motivated, work hard and feel positive about learning. The school is not just about examination results, though. Specialist languages status and the commitment of teachers mean that there are plenty of interesting activities for you out of school time and you join in with great enthusiasm. There are many opportunities for you to take responsibility within the school and we were very impressed with the way in which you support one another through the house system and school council.

Many of you told us that much of your teaching is good but not all of it. You are making varying progress because the quality of teaching is too variable. We have therefore asked that more teachers plan lessons to not only challenge you but also allow you to be more actively involved in your learning. This will mean that you will enjoy your lessons more and progress even faster. We have asked the school to ensure that you know exactly what you have to do in order to improve your performance in each subject and to provide opportunities for you to discuss your progress regularly with a member of staff.

Teachers and other staff, governors and the many people involved with the school are all committed to doing their best for you. I am sure you will support them.