



Beauchamps High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115322
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290206
Inspection date 4 December 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Cosway

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Beauchamps Drive
School category	Foundation		Wickford
Age range of pupils	11–18		Essex SS11 8LY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01268 735466
Number on roll (school)	1316	Fax number	01268 570981
Number on roll (6th form)	80	Chair	Mr R Dickinson
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mr P Bell
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	4 December 2006	290206

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Beauchamps High School is a large comprehensive school serving the town of Wickford. The large majority of students are from White British backgrounds, with a few from an Asian or Black African heritage. A few students, less than one percent, are learning English as an additional language. Most students start at school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are average for their age. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the percentage of students who are entitled to claim free school meals. It gained Specialist School Status as a Business and Enterprise school in September 2003 and has gained an Investors in People Award and Chartermark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. The school has been modest in its own estimation of its effectiveness. It has judged itself to be good, reflecting its desire to continue to find ways in which it can improve.

Most of the teaching is good or excellent and it is outstanding overall. This, along with the excellent ethos for learning, is the key to the school's success and enables all students to achieve very well. All students make outstanding progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or whose first language is not English. Standards are above average in the national tests for Year 9 students. Standards reached in GCSE examinations are well above the national average. In some subjects, such as media studies and French, they are very high. The school is working to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning in technology, where standards are average but lower than in most other subjects.

This is an inclusive school. The care and support for students and the relationships between the students and adults are outstanding, as is students' personal development. Students thoroughly enjoy school and say that their teachers 'really care about us. They are passionate about wanting us to succeed. Nothing is too much trouble, in lessons or after school.' They have very positive attitudes towards learning and their behaviour is good. A small minority sometimes misbehave if the teacher is inexperienced. The students report that the school works quickly and effectively to correct this when it happens, as it does with the very rare instances of bullying. Parents feel that their children are very well cared for and that they make very good progress. The curriculum is good, with a strong range of GCSE subjects, but limited provision for work-related courses. However, the excellent teaching of enterprise skills and information and communication technology (ICT) helps to ensure their future economic well-being is good. Students understand how to lead safe and healthy lives and make an outstanding contribution to the community.

The school's leadership and management are outstanding. The school has excellent procedures in place for tracking students' progress. Staff and governors work very well together. Issues identified in the previous inspection have all been tackled successfully and there has been excellent improvement. Given the very good systems for self-review and the strong sense of teamwork and commitment from all staff, the school has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form has improved significantly over the last four years and results in AS level and A level examinations are now above average. Students enter with standards that are close to average overall as many higher attaining students transfer at the end of Year 11 to local grammar schools and sixth form colleges. Students achieve well and the success of the sixth form has meant more higher attaining Year 11 students are staying at Beauchamps to continue their studies.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning is outstanding. Students are hard working and highly motivated. They are taught to think for themselves and be independent learners. The ICT facilities are very good and the curriculum offers a wide range of A level courses. As vocational courses are provided by other schools and colleges, the school has concentrated on traditional academic subjects. The school is reviewing its policy because the choice of courses does not meet the needs of all students, nor does it sit happily with the school's business and enterprise specialist status, which in all other respects the school fulfils well.

Good leadership of the sixth form ensures that students' good progress and outstanding personal development are closely monitored and promoted.

What the school should do to improve further

- Spread the school's best practice to the technology department in order to raise standards here to those achieved in other subjects.
- Extend the range of subjects available to students to improve their opportunities for work-related learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Attainment at the end of Year 9 in the national tests has risen steadily to above average over the last three years. Students achieve well, especially in English and mathematics.

Attainment has also risen steadily in GCSE examinations and is now well above average. Students' achievement is outstanding; their performance places them in the top 5% of all schools. The proportion of students who gained at least five A* to C, grades is very high. The school regularly exceeds its targets for examination performance. In some subjects students make very significant progress; all or almost all attaining at least a C grade and many reaching A or A*. Most students gain four GCSE passes in ICT- related subjects. The school works very effectively to raise achievement in less successful subjects, as it has done recently in science. Some technology subjects are still performing less well than they should and the senior management team is working on improving the effectiveness of teaching in technology.

Standards in the sixth form are above average and students make good progress. Every student who was entered for A2 level courses in 2006 gained a pass. Attainment was highest in mathematics, media studies and drama.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The personal development and well being of students are outstanding in almost all aspects. They are very proud of their school and the opportunities it provides for high

achievement. They greatly appreciate the considerable efforts staff make to ensure they make at least good progress through support in lessons and after school. Attendance rates are exceptional, which reflects the very positive attitudes to learning of most students.

Behaviour in the school is good and sometimes outstanding, though parents and students recognise that a few students misbehave. Parents and students rightly view the school as a safe and secure place to learn. This is helped considerably by the active involvement of sixth form students in mentoring and guiding younger students. The behaviour and attitudes of sixth form students are outstanding.

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school council has a significant influence on school decision making. Students initiated the building of secure cycle and locker stores, set the rules for healthy eating, helped to restructure the school day, are involved in staff interviews and attend governors' meetings. They also contribute actively in the wider community and participate fully in the many extra-curricular activities, which include music, drama, sports and mini-enterprise activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

An excellent range of teaching and learning strategies supports timetabled lessons, including regular revision sessions, excellent support for learning after school and liaison with home to ensure that work is up to date. The advice that teachers give to support students is exceptional. Regular reviews of progress ensure that students and parents know how well work is progressing and what the next steps are to ensure improvement.

Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and excellent working relationships with the students. This creates a very positive learning environment in which students enjoy their work.

There are high expectations in most lessons. Teaching is challenging and students are actively involved in their learning. Lessons are planned very well to provide a range of learning tasks to motivate and support different kinds of learners - those that are good listeners and those who learn better when actively involved in discussions or practical activities. Sixth form teachers include a good range of independent learning and research tasks. Teachers use ICT very well to make lessons interesting. Those in the technology department rightly recognise the need to improve their own performance so that standards achieved match more closely those in other departments.

In a few lessons, less experienced teachers have problems with class management and this occasionally allows a few students to lose concentration or misbehave.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good but has some outstanding features. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, which include many music and sporting clubs as well as excellent opportunities to take part in drama productions.

Very good catch-up sessions are offered to those students who need additional help to get to the required standard in English and mathematics. Students with particular musical, artistic and sporting talents have excellent opportunities to excel. There are guided reading sessions in the school library, for example, for those who need more help. Sessions are also held for good readers who are benefiting from reading more demanding books.

The school realises the importance of ICT in preparing students for life beyond school. Across the main school and the sixth form there is a wide choice of GCSE and GCE courses, including excellent GCSE courses in ICT. While there are many very successful mini-enterprise initiatives involving a high proportion of the older students, they and others still need a wider range of work-related courses to increase the interest and relevance of their learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support systems are outstanding. The school has its share of less motivated students and yet ensures that the great majority achieve outstanding results. The school has very high expectations for its students and excellent pastoral and academic support. Strong though the pastoral support is, it is in its academic guidance that the school is doing outstandingly well. The setting of ambitious targets accompanied by rigorous progress checks has been very successful in raising standards. Tutors and subject teachers consistently inform students of their progress and provide necessary help. Students in both the main school and sixth form greatly appreciate this guidance and greatly value the accessible and extensive additional learning support that enables them to reach their targets.

The school's inclusiveness is reflected in its concern for all. It makes special provision for students needing help with anger management and interpersonal skills, as well as those with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. It also provides advice and guidance to help parents support their children's learning.

Careers and further education guidance is a very strong feature. The school is widely recognised for the informed guidance it provides as well as its efforts to raise the aspirations of those students capable of pursuing higher education. Partnerships with parents and external agencies are excellent; contributing significantly to the school's success.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The leadership and management from the senior team are outstanding. They have a sharp focus on raising achievement. The work of the school has been rigorously reviewed using all available data and the monitoring of lessons. The headteacher is well supported by everyone associated with the school and all have high expectations for continued improvement. Effective planning is already underway to extend the range of vocational education opportunities in the curriculum. Leaders at all levels in the school are promoting high standards. Parent questionnaires and student surveys form an important part of the school's very effective self-evaluation procedures. Every department has its own improvement plan and these are well-considered and effective. Sixth form leadership and management are good because of the effective monitoring, evaluation and training of staff, which is also a feature of the main school. Child protection procedures are robust and safeguarding measures meet current requirements.

Governors carry out their role very effectively and constantly seek ways to improve their practice further. Three governors have attained the BTEC Governance Accreditation and others are working towards this accreditation.

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?	1	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	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
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	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
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?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
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	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

5 December 2006

Dear Students

Beauchamps High School, Beauchamps Drive, Wickford, Essex, SS11 8LY

Thank you for being so polite and helpful to the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed sharing your lessons and talking to you. You told us how you like your school and how much your teachers do to help you to make excellent progress. We agree with you. We also found that almost all of you behave well and work hard. Strengths in your school include:

- you make excellent progress in almost all subjects and your results in GCSE examinations are very good indeed
- the quality of teaching in your school is outstanding
- you are set clear targets and supported and guided very well indeed to help you to achieve them
- the range of subjects you can study is good and there is an excellent range of after-school clubs and activities
- your headteacher and senior teachers provide outstanding leadership
- the ways that you are cared for by teachers, teaching assistants and all adults are excellent
- you are encouraged in many ways to be healthy and safe

We have asked your school try to make things even better. The most important things are:

- raise standards in the few subjects where you do not get the good examination results achieved in other subjects
- broaden the range of vocational subjects that you can study.

Parents and many students tell us that very occasionally some students misbehave. We want you to concentrate and work hard in every lesson to make sure that you make the most of your time here. We believe that Beauchamps is an outstanding school and we want you to benefit from it all you can.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Cosway Lead inspector