

# Beaumont Leys School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120281
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	291693
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Brooker HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1040
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Veronica Bolsover
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Logie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2002
<b>School address</b>	Anstey Lane Leicester LE4 0FL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2620257
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The school serves an area to the north-west of the city centre that has high levels of social and educational disadvantage. Students come from a wide range of different backgrounds. Most are White British, although the proportion from other ethnic backgrounds is above average, with those from Indian heritage forming the largest minority. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities, including students with a statement of special educational need, is well above average. The school was awarded specialist science status in September 2005. The construction of the new school on the adjacent playing field, to replace the dilapidated accommodation, is due to start very shortly.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Beaumont Leys is a good school with many obvious strengths. Its success is well founded on the safe and supportive environment that it provides for its students and the hard work of the staff in improving its provision. The excellent curriculum, combined with good teaching and good support and guidance, ensures that the vast majority of students develop as mature young people who are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for adult life. Most students respond positively to the school's high expectations and make good progress, in terms of both their personal development and their work. In general, the students behave very well and have positive attitudes to learning. The challenging behaviour of a small number of students is well managed.

The quality of teaching is good, with elements that are outstanding. However, the quality of students' learning varies widely and some lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for all students or guide their improvement well enough. The curriculum is outstanding because it is very well tailored to meet the individual needs of the students, particularly at Key Stage 4. The school's specialism in science makes a positive impact on provision.

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development and is relentless in pursuing the best possible outcomes for the students. She is very well supported by a strong and effective strategic leadership team and a developing team of middle managers who share the school's aspiration to become outstanding. School self-evaluation is rigorous and effective in guiding improvement.

The school's improvement since the last inspection is impressive, given the considerable staffing turbulence and the difficulties presented by poor accommodation. Results in GCSE examinations dipped in 2004 and 2005, but showed marked improvement in 2006. Assessment data indicate that the school is very well placed to sustain and extend its improvements. Standards of attainment are below those seen nationally, but given their starting points, students make good progress as they move through the school. Achievement is good. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to make effective use of rigorous self-evaluation and strategies for sharing best practice to ensure that all students make consistently good or outstanding progress in lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. On entry to the school in Year 7, students' standards in English, mathematics and science are generally below those expected for 11-year-olds and their standards of literacy are significantly low. Standards of attainment are below national averages both in end-of-Key Stage 3 national tests and in GCSE or equivalent examinations at the end of Key Stage 4. Nonetheless, given their starting points, students make good progress as they move through the school.

Although the school did not meet its specialist school targets in science, results in the most recent GCSE examinations in 2006 improved. The increases were due partly to the success of specific intervention strategies, such as those in mathematics, but primarily because teaching improved and many of the staffing difficulties had been successfully resolved. The proportion

of students who gained at least five higher-grade GCSEs increased markedly in 2006. Moreover, the significantly high proportion of students who gained at least one GCSE is testament to the school's inclusive ethos and effective support for individual learners. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress and achieve well because the help they receive is well matched to their needs. In general, students of minority ethnic heritage make better progress than those from White British backgrounds.

The school makes effective use of assessment data to set challenging targets, to track the progress of students and to target suitable support for weaker areas or individual students. The school's assessment information indicates that the trend of improvement is set to continue.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The students' personal development and well-being are good. The vast majority of students enjoy school and speak positively of the opportunities it offers them and the good support that they receive. Students feel safe at school and say that bullying is taken seriously and dealt with properly. They know that there is always someone they can turn to if they have personal concerns. Students' social, moral and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory.

The school enjoys a harmonious and culturally diverse community, and students respond positively to this by behaving very well in lessons and assemblies and at break times. They are well aware of safe and healthy life-choices, finding the content of the 'Learning for Life' course both useful and thought-provoking. Students are quick to quote examples of how they have developed better eating habits and are aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. However, many older students do not take much physical exercise. Students make a good contribution to the school community and feel that they have a say. They participate in a good range of committees and other activities to improve the life of the school. They also show concern for others through active involvement in charitable appeals. Involvement of many in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is beginning to develop greater engagement for the benefit of the local community. Students are very well prepared for the next phase of education and for adult life because their personal skills are so carefully nurtured.

There are small pockets of disaffection, reflected by the relatively high number of fixed-term exclusions and slightly lower than average attendance. However, there has been good improvement in these areas in the last year. Many of the students at risk of disaffection have responded well to new initiatives. The school manages the challenging behaviour of a small minority very well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. At the root of this are the good relationships that exist between adults and students. There are effective strategies for managing behaviour, so that there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. The most effective teachers use praise well to motivate students and to build their self-confidence. When teachers' high expectations are underpinned by detailed planning and skilful assessment, students of all abilities are enabled to make outstanding progress. Work is generally well planned so that it

presents suitable challenge. In the most successful sessions, interesting activities and stimulating resources are used imaginatively to extend learning. Most teaching is lively and engaging, although some lessons lack sparkle and the pace of learning can be rather pedestrian.

Most students are clear about their progress and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not always the case, particularly when assessment is underdeveloped. When questioning and marking are weak, teachers do not engage the whole class and students are unsure how to do better. The school focus on assessment for learning is improving practice, with very good arrangements in, for example, science. The school recognises that the expertise and good practice, clearly present in some areas, should be spread more effectively across the curriculum.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding because it is good in almost all respects and is exemplary in the way that it meets the needs of older students in respect of both their learning and their personal development. In Years 10 and 11, an extensive range of vocational and applied courses offers flexibility and choice to meet students' different aspirations and capabilities and provides valuable learning opportunities.

The current Key Stage 3 curriculum is more traditional, although it offers some flexibility with early entry for GCSE in religious studies, and an adapted Year 7 curriculum is planned for September 2007. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. The achievement of Science Specialist School status has enabled the school to drive forward a number of useful curricular initiatives.

The school provides a good and varied programme of opportunities for enrichment, extension and revision. For example, students are offered science, drama, music and physical education and they can take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. A good range of educational visits adds breadth to students' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its students and it is constantly reviewing ways to strengthen these vital aspects of provision. Recent innovations include the '2-to-5' scheme and the appointment of non-teaching assistant heads of year to support those students at risk of disaffection and exclusion, ensuring their needs are more rapidly and directly addressed. Very good links with a wide range of support agencies maintain this provision well. Although there is no substantive coordinator for special educational needs, support is secure and the needs of students with learning difficulties or disabilities are very well met.

The support provided for students' progress and achievement is good. They are encouraged to achieve well, although guidance through marking is too often ineffective. Students settle in to school routines very well, owing to the good transfer arrangements from primary school. Students are very well informed about their future options.

Child protection procedures are secure, widely understood and regularly reviewed. The school is aware of the need to tighten procedures for assessing health and safety risks and has taken suitable steps to address this.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in the outcomes for students, both in terms of their achievement and their personal development. This has been accomplished during a period of considerable staffing turbulence and despite the impediment of poor accommodation. The school has been resourceful in responding to unforeseen events and has been determined to minimise the effects of any staffing problems by judicious deployment of staff, clever restructuring of roles and responsibilities and constant hard work to keep staff morale high. In all these respects, the headteacher has taken a very strong and effective lead. She has a clear strategic vision for the school and how it should develop as an inclusive community where students can achieve their full potential. She is unequivocal about the responsibilities of all staff for implementing this vision and has been effective in developing leadership at all levels in order to achieve consistency and sustainable improvement.

The leadership provided by the strategic leadership team is also very good. Senior leaders are relentless in their drive to raise standards and are well supported by the hardworking staff. Students recognise and appreciate the additional efforts that many staff make on their behalf.

There are notable strengths in middle leadership which is good overall. The school's rigorous procedures for self-review ensure that middle managers are held to account and that their individual developmental needs are suitably addressed through specific training and support.

Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. They support the school well and are sensibly integrated into procedures for review and self-evaluation.

The professional honesty of the senior leaders permeates the school's rigorous self-evaluation. This ensures that all stakeholders have an unambiguous understanding about the school's strengths and areas for development. The process is rigorous and effective and it demonstrates that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the contribution that you made to our recent inspection. We enjoyed talking to you, particularly as you were so friendly and so open and honest in giving your opinions. Your views were important in confirming what staff, parents and governors told us. It is clear that Beaumont Leys is a good school because:

- teaching is good and you make good progress as you move through the school
- you have positive attitudes to learning and behave very well
- many of you take advantage of the wide range of additional opportunities that the school provides for you
- you are well cared for and supported so that you develop as mature and sensible young adults.

All these good points are the result of the very good leadership of the headteacher and her senior team, combined with the hard work of you and your teachers. Many of you were very appreciative of the teachers' extra work, often at weekends or in the holidays, so that you do as well as you can. One notable strength is the school's outstanding curriculum because you have a wide choice of interesting courses at Key Stage 4, including some very good vocational options. This means that there is 'something for everyone', regardless of what you choose to do in later life. The fact that so many of you go on to college and stay in education or training shows just how well you are prepared for life after school.

The inspection report reflects these strengths, but it also highlights some areas that could be improved so that the school might become outstanding in future. Although teaching is good and some is excellent, the quality of your learning varies quite widely. We have shared with the school ways that we think this could be improved, for example, with better marking and more careful planning.