

Baverstock Foundation School and Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103547
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308354
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Anstead HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1309
6th form	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Howe
Headteacher	David Green
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	501 Bells Lane Druids Heath Birmingham B14 5TL
Telephone number	01214 307924
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Baverstock Foundation School is of above average size. It is a designated specialist sports college and has been presented with the Artsmark Gold award. The proportion of learners eligible for free school meals is well above average. Learners from minority ethnic backgrounds represent a similar proportion to the national average and English is an additional language for a very small number of learners. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement in mathematics and science.

The leadership of the school have set clear expectations for teachers in terms of planning lessons and assessing learners' work. However, there is considerable variation between subjects and between teachers of the same subject in how well this is completed. Some teachers provide valuable detailed written guidance to learners on how to improve their work; others provide insufficient detail. In the best lessons, assessments of earlier work are used effectively to inform the planning of a range of activities matched to learners' different starting points. In some lessons, learners are given the same work to do regardless of their different needs. Although some good and excellent teaching was seen in mathematics and science, this was the exception, with around half the lessons seen in these subjects being inadequate. The quality of teaching and learning is highly variable, with a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching meaning that it is inadequate overall. Consequently achievement in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 has been poor for the last two years and standards have been exceptionally low. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of learners attaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics has been well below average for the last few years. English and mathematics are subjects crucial to the future economic well-being of learners. Although progress in English has improved this year and is now satisfactory, overall achievement at the school is still inadequate and standards are exceptionally low.

Apart from the continuing serious underachievement in mathematics and science, much of the provision elsewhere is satisfactory with some strengths. The curriculum offers a good range of academic and vocational choices. The range of clubs and after school activities is outstanding and includes extensive provision for sports training as a consequence of the school's specialist status. Participation rates in the latter are high, making an excellent contribution to helping learners adopt healthy lifestyles. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall. They are good when good teaching enables learners to actively participate in the lesson. Where teaching is inadequate, behaviour often becomes poor as a consequence. Systems for tracking learners' progress are good and identify individuals who would benefit from mentoring or one of the other forms of support the school is able to provide. Many parents commented favourably about the support the school offers their children.

Self-evaluation is a strength of leadership and management and used well to prioritise action. It clearly identifies what needs to improve, how that will be achieved and the impact of actions taken so far. Consequently, achievement in English has markedly improved this year and there have been further smaller gains in mathematics and science. Governors are well involved in evaluating the work of the school and make a good contribution to its capacity to improve. They are concerned that with the resources available to them, and with the considerable constraints imposed by the layout of the school buildings, they are unable to meet their statutory duty to provide full access to the premises for people with disabilities. Specialist status is being used well to drive improvements in teaching and learning at Key Stage 3, with physical education (PE) teachers taking a leading role in delivering a new 'learning to learn course'. The staff and

the governing body have confidence in the headteacher to lead school improvement. Taken together, these all show the school has a sound capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Around half of learners progress to the sixth form from Year 11 and just a few transfer from other schools. Attainment on joining the sixth form is broadly average. The sixth form offers a flexible curriculum containing a good range of courses matched to local need. Two thirds of learners follow academic courses and the remainder study vocational courses. Standards have improved over recent years and the overall pass rate is near to the national average, although this picture masks a substantial variation in performances in Year 12. Achievement is satisfactory and learners achieve particularly well in vocational courses.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Striking features of the most successful lessons include very good relationships and incisive questioning that successfully probes learners' knowledge and understanding. In less successful lessons, the pace is slow and learning intentions are not sufficiently specific to learners' stages of learning.

The school takes care to ensure that learners choose appropriate and meaningful options and, as a result, all but a few successfully finish their courses and almost two thirds transfer to higher education. Learners report that they are given good guidance and that their work is closely checked to ensure that they remain on track to meet individual goals. Learners value the access to information and communication technology (ICT) they have in the sixth form centre along with opportunities to work independently.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring has not been strengthened to ensure consistency of practice in all subjects. The school is aware of the need to ensure that teaching groups are not so small that opportunities for discussion and collaborative working are hindered.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics and science by improving the teaching of those subjects.
- Ensure consistent practice in the use of assessment to help show learners how to improve their work.
- Ensure work provided in lessons is appropriate for learners' different starting points.
- Improve equality of opportunity by meeting the statutory requirement for making the school buildings accessible to those with disabilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Attainment on entry is average. For the last three years, the progress of learners in English, mathematics and science through Key Stage 3 has been inadequate and consistently amongst the lowest in the country. Consequently, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have been exceptionally low. In other subjects, learners make satisfactory progress so that by the time they finish school they have attained broadly average results. However, standards in GCSE English and mathematics remain below average, meaning the proportion of learners achieving five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics is below the government's minimum expectations for this benchmark. The school is trying hard to reverse this legacy of underachievement. Inspectors noted that pupils made good progress in the in the English

lessons visited during the. Progress seen in mathematics and science lessons was inconsistent and remains inadequate.

Learners' progress towards their subject targets is carefully tracked so that the school is aware of which individuals are on target and which are underachieving. Tracking confirms that achievement in English is now satisfactory but remains inadequate in mathematics and science. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to all the others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Learners' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. Learners form appropriate relationships and generally work amicably with each other. However, they do not always show appropriate respect for adults, and a considerable amount of litter is dropped by learners. Many learners play a full and active part in the life of the school. They have many opportunities for taking responsibility, such as running a dance activity, peer mentoring and the sports leaders programme. These they do with commitment and enthusiasm. The school council has raised some issues to which the school has responded but it would like to be given greater status.

Many learners take advantage of the many sporting opportunities to improve their physical and emotional health, and they are increasingly adopting a healthy approach to eating. Learners are equipped with appropriate skills in English and ICT but low standards in mathematics mean that skills essential to their future working lives are inadequate.

Learners' behaviour is satisfactory. It is good in lessons where the teaching is engaging and stimulating. However, where teaching is inadequate, behaviour is unsatisfactory. There is a core of learners whose behaviour is unacceptable at times and so the exclusion rate is fairly high. The school's new approach of internal exclusion has reduced the number excluded from school and is helping these learners to improve their behaviour. Most learners move around the school in a sensible way, but some are overly boisterous. Learners have an appropriate regard for their own and others' safety. They say there is little bullying, and learners from different ethnic backgrounds get on well with one another. Attendance is satisfactory. Learners arrive at school fairly promptly but some arrive late for lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching is satisfactory in all areas except in mathematics and science. Good teaching and learning were seen in a range of subjects, including English, PE, design and technology and history. In these lessons, teachers are clear about what they want learners to achieve, and provide interesting, relevant and stimulating activities that engage them well. Enjoyment of learning is evident and learners are confident in their ability to improve because their teachers provide them with the specific support they need to be successful. Relationships between learners and teachers in such lessons are co-operative and such attitudes foster a good learning environment. In these lessons, marking is constructive and of benefit

to learners in improving their work. Sometimes assessment is used to inform teachers of the standards in each class so they can plan accordingly but this is not always the case.

In some lessons, mainly in mathematics and science, learners do not make sufficient progress. This is because teachers' planning does not take enough account of different needs within the same class and because not all learners are on task. Sometimes poor attitudes to learning were displayed and teachers spent much of their time managing the class rather than helping learners learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum has been improved as a result of better whole-school planning and meets the needs of most learners well. In Year 10, for example, learners can choose from a wide range of vocational subjects and there is improved support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many learners enjoy practical studies such as PE, design and technology and drama, but feel less engaged by the work they are given to do in mathematics and science. External consultants have supported improvements in the mathematics and science curriculum, which is now satisfactory.

Specialist sports college status is used well to support learning throughout the school. The BTEC Sports course has helped the introduction of other vocational subjects. It has assisted in building links with local schools, colleges and the business community. There is an excellent range of clubs and activities which learners can choose to participate in before school, at lunchtime and after school. Learners appreciate and enjoy these activities and, consequently, attendance at them is high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

There are now good arrangements for tracking learners' progress and sharing this information with them and their parents. However, although learners are aware of their targets, they do not always receive sufficient guidance to show them how to achieve the targets. Tracking is being used well at Key Stage 4 to identify learners who are falling behind. They are given good support that addresses past underachievement and enables them to make satisfactory progress, particularly in English. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants and this enables them to make the same progress as other learners.

There are many initiatives to support learners' personal development. A lot of the work is focused on raising self-esteem as well as, in some cases, pupils' aspirations, such as giving them the insight, encouragement and the confidence to consider a university course. Mentors provide good support for vulnerable learners and the school works well with outside agencies to provide tailored personal support. Attendance rates have fallen in the past year due to circumstances beyond the school's control but the school is working hard to address this. The school has effective health and safety systems in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The senior team is accurate and clear in its evaluation of the school's performance. They recognise the need to improve teaching and learning in the parts of the school where they are weaker in order to improve overall achievement. The headteacher has overseen a number of changes to the senior team which are beginning to have a satisfactory impact on school improvement. Middle leaders are evaluating provision in their departments accurately and acting upon findings to improve provision. This has increased accountability and improved the regularity and rigour of review. Work scrutiny has improved the quality of marking in some subjects, and the school is developing better behaviour management.

The school has sound capacity to improve further and build on the satisfactory progress made since the last inspection. Effective management of the school's sports specialist status is having a good impact because the curriculum has been broadened; the PE department are leading professional development in teaching and learning and making a substantial contribution to learners' personal development and well-being.

The school follows national guidance in setting its performance targets and in setting subject targets for individual learners. Targets are based upon prior attainment and are modified in the light of current attainment so that they are challenging yet realistic.

The governors have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are aware of underachievement in mathematics and science. Procedures for monitoring the work of the school are better developed than those for setting the strategic direction. Different governors' sub-committees have established their own long-term view of where the school should be going, but the full governing body is still in the process of pulling all these plans together into one coherent whole. The governors are aware of their inability to meet the statutory requirement to enable access to all parts of the school to those with disabilities. Not all governors have received child protection training.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	4	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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	4	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	3
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?	3	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
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?	Yes	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 March 2008

Dear Learners

Inspection of Baverstock Foundation School and Specialist Sports College, Birmingham, B14 5TL

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you about our findings. I would like to thank those of you we spoke to for the friendly welcome you gave us. Your responses to our questions helped us decide what is good about your school and what needs to be improved. The education you receive at your school is inadequate overall although there are some strengths.

These are the strengths of your school.

- Specialist sports college status is having a good impact on the school.
- You have an excellent range of clubs and activities to choose from, before, during and after school.
- The choice of courses available to older learners is good.
- You have good opportunities to make a contribution to the community.
- Your governors and headteacher have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

There are some aspects of the school's work which we think can be better. Achievement in mathematics and science is inadequate. In some subjects, teachers assess your work well and give you good guidance on how to improve. We think this should happen in all subjects. I have asked your headteacher to improve the teaching of mathematics and science and to ensure assessment is used by teachers to plan work matched to your starting points in all subjects. I have asked the local authority to help the governors modify the buildings so that people with disabilities can have full access to them. You can help by following the guidance you are given on how to improve and by acting responsibly at all times. Inspectors will visit the school again in a year's time to check that learners are doing better in mathematics and science.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

David Anstead Her Majesty's Inspector

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