

Belvoir High School and Community Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120259
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313569
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Cragg HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	10–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Goff
Headteacher	Johnathan Sherwin
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2004
School address	Barkestone Lane Bottesford Nottingham NG13 0AX
Telephone number	01949 844920
Fax number	01949 844939

Age group	10-14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: current pupils' standards and progress; the quality of teaching and learning; leadership and management; and provision for pupils who have learning difficulties, are looked after by the local authority or have specific social, emotional and behavioural needs. Evidence was gathered through discussions with senior leaders, other staff, pupils, representatives of the school council and the chair of governors, together with visits to lessons and review of school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average secondary school. It serves Bottesford and the Vale of Belvoir. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The great majority of pupils are White British and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils who find learning difficult or have a statement of special educational need are below average. More pupils join or leave the school during the school year than average and there is a higher proportion of boys than girls in older age groups. The school has been awarded the Artsmark, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools status, Investors in People standard and Basic Skills Quality Mark. It became a Trust school in February 2008 and will become an 11-19 school from September 2008. The current Year 6 is the last cohort that the school will have in Key Stage 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Belvoir High is an outstanding school. Almost all the parents who responded to the questionnaire were highly appreciative of the quality of education that it provides. Amongst the many comments, one parent stated, 'not only does the school excel educationally but it also cares about its pupils on a personal basis.' Parents appreciated the 'dedicated and excellent leadership' of the school. Pupils were equally positive about the school in discussions and rightly proud of their success.

Pupils' achievement over the time they are at Belvoir High School is outstanding. By the end of Year 6, in 2007, their standards in national tests were broadly average and they made satisfactory progress, comparing favourably with similar schools. However, by the end of Year 9, pupils' standards in 2007 were exceptionally high in the core subjects, especially science, and in many of the other subjects. In particular, the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels increased because teachers provided greater challenge in lessons. Pupils made outstanding progress from their starting points, put the school in the top 3% of schools nationally, and achieved the challenging targets set for them. The school's assessment information for the current Years 6 and 9 indicates that they are on course to achieve at least the standards reached last year. Pupils who are looked after by the local authority, those with social, emotional or behavioural needs and those who find learning difficult make at least good and often outstanding progress in their academic and social development.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and a strength of the school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Attendance has a high priority and there are very good procedures for notifying parents if children do not arrive at school. Pupils' attendance is well above average. They show great enjoyment and commitment in lessons, working hard and collaborating well, as seen in an accomplished class improvisation in drama. They join in discussion and practical tasks with enthusiasm. Pupils are exceptionally well aware of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. The school council actively campaigns to improve the quality of food available in school. According to pupils, bullying is rare and teachers deal with any incidents promptly and effectively. The pupils interviewed reported few problems with their peers. Pupils make a distinct contribution to the community through the school council, leadership in sport, house activities, charity collections and helping younger pupils with reading. Their high achievement, strong social skills and independent approach to learning equip them extremely well for their future working lives. Their social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Themed days such as the Bhangra and African events, and planned opportunities in subjects, help them to understand Britain as a multicultural society. However, opportunities for their spiritual development, outside the themes for assemblies and religious education lessons, are not as well coordinated.

Teaching and learning are outstanding overall and lead to exceptional performance in most subjects by the end of Year 9. Senior leaders promote a strong focus on learning with an emphasis on high quality assessment. In the best teaching, pupils are very clear about what they are to learn and how they will learn. Teachers set high expectations and include real challenge in activities, expecting pupils to think deeply and respond at length. Pupils appreciate the very good relationships with teachers. Most teaching, from the school's monitoring, is at least good and around half has outstanding features, but the characteristics of the best teaching do not yet extend to all lessons. Teachers mark work regularly and focus on the objectives of

the work, providing clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and the information is used very effectively to identify those who need additional help.

The curriculum is outstanding, especially in the opportunities it provides for enrichment. There is a broad range of subjects provided at Key Stage 3 and staff modify courses well to meet the needs of particular pupils through additional challenge for some, or practical approaches for others, as in the Year 9 French programme based around cookery. Pupils develop enterprise skills through running small business activities. There is a good curriculum on offer for Year 10, due to start in September 2008, with combinations related to pupils' prior achievement. The school has ensured that all pupils received their first choice of options. However, external factors, the building programme due for completion in 2009 and limitations on courses offered by the local college prevent the offer of separate sciences and some vocational provision for next year. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, with particular strengths in sport, and an impressive programme of trips and events, including a residential experience for each year group. Parents and pupils comment very favourably on the breadth of experience available.

Care, guidance and support are excellent and one of the school's strongest features. A parent summed this up, saying, 'We feel our children are seen very much as individuals and teachers do their utmost to help them.' Staff know pupils very well. They ensure that their transfer from primary school is without problems. The school fulfils all the requirements for the safeguarding of pupils. Teachers identify those with specific needs promptly and support them well to achieve their targets. Staff receive high quality information and advice on how to cater for these pupils and to adjust their teaching. There are excellent links with outside agencies. Pupils know their targets and regularly review their own progress with staff, setting themselves areas for improvement.

Belvoir High School is developing rapidly and many parents commented on the exceptional leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff. Along with the governors, they set a very clear and aspirational vision for the school which is shared across the staff. The school sets itself challenging targets and there is no complacency about existing high levels of achievement. These high expectations have contributed strongly to the school's continuing improvement. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and based firmly on systematic monitoring of provision by senior and subject leaders. The school's strategic and action plans are strongly focused on improving learning and promoting pupils' personal development.

Governors know the school well, make regular visits and review progress through their links with subject leaders. However, some policies are overdue for review. There are excellent links with local schools, colleges, businesses and the community, which have been extended through the school's recent Trust status. Since the last inspection, the school has transformed the facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) with interactive whiteboards in all classrooms and an innovative 'classroom of the future' project. Standards in ICT are improving rapidly. New buildings, due to be completed as part of the school's reorganisation, will further improve facilities, especially in science. The school provides outstanding value for money. Teachers now plan more effectively for the range of pupils' needs, including challenge for the more able, and the school's results have improved each year. There is outstanding capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils have access to a full, flexible and up-to-date curriculum which meets their needs as they move into Key Stage 4.

- Plan the opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum and other activities to ensure that all pupils benefit.

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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
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belvoir High School and Community Centre, Bottesford NG13 0AX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. Your views about the school were very helpful and I enjoyed my discussions with those of you I met.

I found that your school provides you with an outstanding education. Last year, pupils in Year 9 achieved results which were very high and they made excellent progress. The school's results improve each year and more of you now achieve the highest levels in National Curriculum tests. I was very impressed with the way you behave and treat each other. You told me that bullying is rare and always dealt with promptly. In the lessons I saw, you worked enthusiastically and produced high quality work. You answered questions and discussed issues in detail. The school council representatives gave me a good picture of how they influence decisions in the school and bring about improvements. I noted that most of you are very positive about the school in the surveys that you complete. You know your targets and are encouraged to assess your progress and identify what you need to improve. You spoke highly of the response you get from teachers in giving you help with work or sorting out problems. Many of you are excited about staying at the school into Years 10 and 11. The school has done well to give all Year 9 their first choice of options. You clearly enjoy the many activities and trips available, especially the residential visits. Your headteacher and senior staff lead the school very well.

I have asked the school to look at some issues.

- It is important that you have access to a full and modern range of subjects as you move up into Years 10 and 11.
- Opportunities for you to develop your spiritual awareness are not as carefully planned as those where you find out about other cultures and societies.

I am sure that your school will continue to improve. I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg Her Majesty's inspector