

Bradfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107144
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309327
Inspection date	09 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Lowery

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	924
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Oakes
Headteacher	Mr David Conway
Date of previous school inspection	May 2004
School address	Kirk Edge Road Worrall Sheffield South Yorkshire S35 0AE
Telephone number	0114 2863861
Fax number	0114 2862246

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector seconded to Ofsted. The overall effectiveness of the school was evaluated and investigated through the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; aspects of the curriculum; how the school offers guidance and support and the impact of this on their personal development and well-being; and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was collected from: visits to lessons; national assessment data; discussions with staff and students; parents' questionnaires and scrutiny of key school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report. At the time of the inspection Year 11 had left and Year 10 were off-site undertaking work experience placements.

Description of the school

Bradfield School is a specialist engineering college. It is located in a rural area to the north west of Sheffield. Students are drawn from an above average socio-economic area, with a below average proportion on free school meals. The number of students identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion with statements is low. The current headteacher took up post in January 2008 and a new deputy will be joining the school in September.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bradfield School provides a good standard of education. It has strengths in teaching and learning and students' personal development; it is well led and managed. Overall standards are high.

Standards on entry are broadly average. At the end of Year 9 almost all students reach expected standards, with the proportion reaching Levels 5 and 6 higher than average. Standards are above average in English and in science for boys. By the end of Year 11 the numbers achieving five or more higher level passes including English and mathematics is consistently above the national average. The proportion of girls reaching the higher levels of attainment is significantly above that of boys. Standards reached by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. Overall the progress made is at least in line with, and frequently higher than, national expectations. However in Years 10 and 11 progress is more variable, in mathematics it is above average whilst in English it is below that expected; insufficient top A* and A grades are achieved in some GCSE subjects. The school has placed a priority on improving progress in English.

Good achievement and standards are a result of good teaching. Staff work hard to ensure learning takes place in a calm and orderly environment, with positive relationships. Lessons are well structured and staff use good questioning techniques to extend learning. In one Year 9 lesson students were encouraged to use high level language skills to explore emotions evoked by particular media advertising images. Students appreciate where there are opportunities for active practical learning. In the most effective subject areas information on students' prior performance is used to determine how lessons are planned and the marking of work clearly indicates what students need to do to improve. Curriculum provision is good. Specialist status has increased the range of courses available and enhances students' appreciation of technology, information and communication technology (ICT), and design. During the inspection all Year 8 were participating in a technological challenge, culminating in a presentation to local business leaders. There are good opportunities for curriculum enrichment, including sessions led by the local fire service, a university and local authors. A parent reported that her daughter's involvement in the citizenship 'mock trial' had increased her 'confidence, ability to question and think things through'. The school is looking to increase its vocational provision as a means of giving more students access to courses to meet their skills, aptitudes and choices. Weaknesses in accommodation in science, design and technology and drama, identified in the last inspection in 2004, have been addressed; however, parents and students continue to express concern over the state of the school buildings and the limited provision for indoor sport.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. There is a strong moral and cultural ethos, and students demonstrate a good sense of community. An active school council presents its views to senior staff on a regular basis. Strong contributions are made to the local community, including musical performances, environmental projects and, for example, the production of a DVD by media studies students for Schools Watch on alcohol, arson, litter and vandalism. Years 9 and 10 students assist with the delivery of languages and health awareness in the local family of primary schools. Successful charity projects are run annually to support

overseas communities, including in Guatemala and Ghana. Links are now being established with another Sheffield school in order to further encourage students' multi-cultural awareness. Students report they feel safe in school, that incidents of bullying are rare and that adults are available to support them should problems arise. Attendance has improved and is now above average. There is a good understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle; however, a number do not choose healthy food or take part in additional sporting clubs. Behaviour around site and in lessons is good. Students are clear about the high expectations adults place on them. Occasional incidents of low level disruption to learning arise principally in lessons where work is not matched to the needs of learners or where there is inconsistent use of behaviour management systems. Opportunities to support students' future economic well-being are satisfactory. Good provision is made for the development of literacy, number and ICT skills; however, the school recognises that enterprise education requires further development.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Good support is provided by tutors and students welcome the assistance provided by pastoral leaders. All required safeguarding systems are in place for child protection. Strong partnerships with the local family of schools underpin good transition arrangements for new students joining Year 7. The quality of academic guidance is variable. Information on student progress is not consistently analysed by all staff and across all year groups. As a result not all students, in particular in Years 7 and 8, are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. Guidance is stronger in Years 9, 10 and 11 where it is closely linked to supporting individual students to do well in their examinations.

The headteacher and senior staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Rigorous review systems are in place, with contributions from staff and students. The headteacher has established a clear vision for the development of the school, with an emphasis on improving standards. Whole school challenging targets are in place for the 2008 and 2009 examinations. A systematic programme for training is linked to research projects which are being undertaken by all teachers and support assistants. Good leadership is provided by heads of department who are clearly focused on continued improvements to teaching and learning and raising standards. Partnerships have been strengthened and there are good links with local schools, colleges, and business, enhancing the delivery of specialist engineering courses and raising student expectations. A small minority of parents expressed concerns over the effectiveness of communications with home. The school has already identified this and is increasing the frequency of its newsletters and moving to termly progress reports. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge. A new committee system, including a strategic committee, contributes to strengthening longer-term planning. Resources have been carefully deployed to improve accommodation and the school is providing good value for money. The school has good capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure assessment and tracking systems are used effectively by all staff to raise achievement and offer greater challenge to higher attainers.
- Improve provision for enterprise education.

- Increase the proportion of students adopting healthy lifestyles, selecting healthy food and participating in regular sporting activities.

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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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	NA
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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



10 July 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Bradfield School, Sheffield, S35 0AE

I am writing to let you know the judgements I have made following the visit to your school. Thank you for your help and taking the time to talk to me during the inspection. Your comments were important in enabling me to conclude Bradfield School provides you with a good standard of education.

During my visit I noted that standards are high and most students achieve well. Engineering college status has increased the range of courses available. Support for your personal development is good. Most of you have a calm and sensible approach to your learning. You feel safe in school and help from staff is available should you need it. Teaching is good, in particular where staff make lessons practical and relevant to your needs. However, the guidance you receive on how to improve your work is variable. Many of you reported how you appreciated the support provided by tutors and pastoral leaders. You make a good contribution to the school and local community and are energetic in your charity work. It is clear you understand the importance of healthy living, but too few choose to eat healthy food and take regular part in sporting activities. Your school is well led and managed and the headteacher is clear about how he wishes to continue to raise standards.

In order to improve your school even further I have asked Mr Conway, governors and staff to:

- ensure all staff assess your work carefully and track your progress in order to advise you how you can make even better progress
- provide the opportunity for all of you to take part in enterprise education
- assist more of you to adopt healthy lifestyles, eating well and joining in regular sporting activities.

I trust you will work closely with staff to secure success. Good luck in your future studies.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Paul Lowery'.

Paul Lowery
Lead inspector