

Broadwater School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125249
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328323
Inspection dates	16-17 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

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

Type of School	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jill Marsden
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Lee
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
School address	Summers Road Godalming GU7 3BW
Telephone number	01483 414 516
Fax number	01483 425 782

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Broadwater School is a specialist mathematics and computing college located close to the small town of Godalming in south-west Surrey. It is a smaller than average school with slightly more boys on roll than girls. Most students are of a white British heritage. The number of students from a minority ethnic background is well below average, as is the number at an early stage of English acquisition. The number of students with educational difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and those with statements is exceptionally high compared to the national average figure. The student population is a settled one; most students who sat their GCSE examinations in 2008 had been in the school since the start of Year 7. The socio-economic context of the school is broadly favourable compared to all schools nationally and the number of students entitled to free school meals is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Broadwater School offers its students a satisfactory education. There are some good features especially in its curriculum and the care, guidance and support offered. Good improvement has been made since its last inspection and the school offers satisfactory value for money.

Students enter the school in Year 7 with standards that are broadly average. Since 2006 there has been a noticeable improvement in results; they have improved year-on-year and are now in line with national averages. Standards in English have improved faster than in mathematics. The latter subject continues to experience some pernicious staffing issues. Though both subjects have improved, the school knows that there is room for further improvement. The very good tracking systems that are now in place indicate that standards will rise during the current academic year and targets are now more challenging. Thus, as students move from Year 7 to Year 11, they make satisfactory progress, with little difference in performance between boys and girls. The school can also show that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because of the good support given by their teaching assistants.

The school now has a more settled staff and some of the staffing issues that previously existed have been tackled, though difficulties remain in mathematics. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but they are improving. At present, there are inconsistencies that need to be ironed out. For example, the challenges offered to students vary too much and this slows the pace of learning in some lessons. There is also an inconsistent approach to developing the students' key skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed well, but literacy and numeracy development remain patchy because there is no co-ordinated approach in lessons to boost students' skills and confidence.

The students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They are taught to respect differing backgrounds and religious viewpoints. Behaviour is satisfactory, but it has improved significantly since the last inspection. A good proportion of parents replied to the inspection questionnaire and a high percentage of respondents specifically praised the improvements in behaviour. One parent commented. 'I have had three children in the school. I have seen how behaviour has improved. It is now the best it has ever been and my daughter tells me that it is rare for lessons to be disrupted'. Attendance is satisfactory, but this too has improved. Students have a satisfactory understanding of leading healthy and safe lifestyles. Healthy eating is appropriately promoted and good work is done to educate the students about the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol. Health and safety are covered well in vocational subjects. The students are given opportunities to develop responsibility and they make a good contribution to their school community. One enterprising initiative is that, as a mathematics and computing college, students are encouraged to build computers, which are then used around the school. Other good contributions to the school community can be seen in environmental work and in participation in sport. Other aspects of community cohesion carry less emphasis. Though local, national and international causes are supported through charity events, the school is seeking more ways of promoting the students' knowledge and understanding of events beyond the school gates. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Most students say that they now enjoy school and many say that they can see clear signs of improvement; a view echoed by many parents.

Curriculum planning is detailed and a good range of programmes has been developed to help the students progress to the next stages of their educational or working lives. Provision for ICT has improved, reflecting the school's specialist status, and there have been some curriculum developments associated with mathematics. Considerable time and effort has been invested in improving target setting and ensuring that the students are offered good quality advice. Academic monitoring has improved significantly and most students are fully aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The good curriculum and the support, guidance and encouragement offered is contributing well to the improvements in standards and levels of achievement.

The headteacher leads the school well. He is well supported by a new and evolving leadership team. Between them, they have developed a good structured programme for improvement. The key elements of this plan are supported by all staff and by the governing body. Broadwater School is improving. It has travelled a considerable distance since its previous inspection and a number of improvements have been made, especially in terms of behaviour and in

examination results, but further ground needs to be covered. Given the improvements already made, allied to good planning, there is a good the capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further raise standards by the end of Year 11, especially in English and mathematics.
- Improve learning by ensuring that students are consistently challenged in all lessons.
- Place a higher emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students enter Year 7 with broadly average standards, with relatively few higher attaining students joining the school. This is reflected in the low number of the highest examination levels achieved in Key Stage 2. During Years 7-9, students make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 9 in 2008, they gained results which were below average in mathematics, but broadly average in science and English. The school's improved tracking and monitoring systems indicate that current students in Year 9 are working at higher levels and that standards are rising.

The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE has risen every year since 2005 and is now close to the national average, but there is still scope for standards in English and mathematics to improve further. In 2008 GCSE results were stronger in English than in mathematics, where the school has not consistently met its specialist college targets. Difficulties in recruiting staff contributed to a recent downturn in results in mathematics. Relative to their abilities, all students are making satisfactory progress and the indications are that progress rates are getting faster. Across the school, there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school has put much effort into improving behaviour. This is currently satisfactory and it continues to get better. Very little disruptive or uncooperative behaviour was seen in lessons during the inspection. Students and parents agree that lesson disruption has all but disappeared because of the improvements in the way the school deals with disaffected students. Attendance is also rising and reflects the national average figure.

Students support the move to eating nutritionally sound food, but observation of food choices in the school canteen indicates that many are not taking up healthy options. Students contribute to the school community in a number of ways. Many take up the opportunity to be buddies and mentors for those who need help, whilst others take the initiative to look after the environment in their role as eco-monitors. Some have been involved as learning ambassadors and took part in a teachers' development programme that gave staff a student perspective of lessons. The school council is seen as an effective way of making sure that the student voice is heard. The wild life garden, for example, originated from the students.

The school fully appreciates the need to boost the students' key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The latter are well developed, reflecting a success as a specialist mathematics and computing college, but skills in literacy and numeracy are less consistently developed. The students' future economic well-being is developing satisfactorily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have worked hard to inject more variety into lessons. This has increased the engagement, enjoyment and the progress made by students. Teaching assistants are effective in supporting students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Relationships are good and positive attitudes to learning are in evidence. Though some good improvements have been made since the previous inspection, a number of inconsistencies remain. For example, the level of challenge in lessons is too variable. In the more successful lessons, the pace is brisk; activities are challenging and changed frequently. This, however, is not always the case and some lessons remain too teacher focused. Other inconsistencies can be identified. In most lessons, but not all, clear objectives are shared with the students and there is a sharper focus on what students are actually learning. Time is not always managed well. Final summaries are sometimes rushed leaving little scope for consolidation of the objectives. There are also continuing inconsistencies in the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills. Key words and concepts are not always displayed and are rarely referred to in lessons; staff do not always seize opportunities to develop the students' confidence in using numbers and data. Where learning is most effective, there are some good opportunities for self and peer assessment. This helps the students to make good progress both personally and academically.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good and relevant curriculum opportunities are offered to students in both key stages. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum has recently been modified. Provision for modern foreign languages has been changed, with Spanish replacing German, and Year 7 students are offered more opportunities for project based work. Some students in Year 9 are able to take a GCSE examination in humanities. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 offers a good balance between academic and vocational studies. By the nature of its partnership work with two local further education colleges, students are offered good opportunities to study vocational subjects at either Level 1 or Level 2; there is also an appropriate choice of GCSE subjects. Curriculum planning is good and staff are looking at how the curriculum can be further developed through the provision of diplomas. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 meets needs well and offers good opportunities for progression to further education, or the world of work. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The students appreciate the many and varied opportunities available. The extensive sports facilities and the attractive and well-kept grounds are used well to the benefit of the students' education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The mixed age tutor groups provide a caring social ethos. Staff know their students well both pastorally and academically. Staff show a high level of commitment and encourage students to aim high. Progress is now rigorously monitored. Academic monitoring and tracking are now strong, but some of the procedures are quite new and have not had time to fully impact. Students are informed at least once a term of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Parents and carers are fully involved in such consultations and a clear agenda for improvement has been established.

Effective child protection procedures are in place and provision for vulnerable learners is good. Arrangements for managing disaffected students in a separate unit in the school are good and contribute to the improvements in behaviour. The school provides a safe environment. Risk assessments are carried out effectively and due care is taken with the recruitment of staff. Good support is available for vulnerable students. The transition from primary to secondary school and the selection of course pathways in Key Stage 4 and progression into further education are also all well managed

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management at all levels are improving at a good pace. The headteacher leads the school well and has a clear understanding of what needs doing and how such improvements will be achieved. He is well supported by both his senior team and middle leaders. Staff have identified the reasons why some aspects of the school's previous performance were a cause for concern. Appropriate remedies have been put in place and improvements are being felt. The 2008 examinations results were better than those gained in 2007 and the early indications are that further improvements will take place during the current academic year. Much work still needs to be done, however. Staff readily acknowledge this, but key strategies to improve teaching and learning, raise aspirations and develop community links, are in place and are increasingly having a positive impact on the school's performance.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has recently undergone changes and is developing its role as critical friend. Governors provide good support to the school and they are becoming more effective as a team. They appreciate that they must now develop their role in ensuring that standards are improved further and that the school becomes better at meeting its academic and other targets.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

03 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Broadwater School, Godalming, GU7 3BW

Thank you for the welcome you gave us on our recent visit. We enjoyed learning about the work you are doing. We have concluded that you are offered a satisfactory standard of education, but one that is improving. Your school has some good features, especially in terms of the curriculum and the care, guidance and support that you receive. The leadership and management of your school are good. Your headteacher has developed a good programme for improving the school and he is well supported by his senior management team and all other members of staff. They are all working hard to help you. Your standards of work are in line with national average standards and most of you are making appropriate progress in your work, though we think that standards in English and mathematics could be even higher. The school provides you with a safe and caring environment in which to work. Your behaviour is satisfactory, but it too is improving and we were pleased to see how well you behave in your lessons.

We have suggested some areas for improvement. These are:

- that standards should be higher by the end of Year 11, especially in English and mathematics
- that the level of challenge should be more consistent in lessons
- that greater emphasis should be placed on developing literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons.

Thank you for your contribution to this inspection. We enjoyed meeting you and I would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham
Lead Inspector

