

Beal High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102855
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	376776
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Lesley Farmer

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,687
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Weinberg
Headteacher	Sue Snowdon
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2006
School address	Woodford Bridge Road Ilford IG4 5LP
Telephone number	02085514954
Fax number	02085514421
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lesley Farmer	Additional inspector
Beverly Dobson	Additional inspector
Robert Miller	Additional inspector
Howard Jones	Additional inspector
Valerie Fehner	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. During the inspection, joint observations were conducted with senior leaders and a total of 49 lessons, taught by 48 teachers, were seen. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and key members of staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the responses to 466 parental questionnaires and 157 student questionnaires. Other documentation, such as the school's data on performance, its self-evaluation, governing body minutes and key policies, were scrutinised.

Information about the school

Beal High School is an above average-size high school serving a part of Redbridge of considerable ethnic and cultural diversity. The proportion of boys is slightly higher than that of girls. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school has a communication and learning department (CLD) for students with a range of social and communication difficulties, including autism and Asperger's syndrome. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national figure. The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The executive headteacher is a National Leader in Education and the school is the lead sponsor of a nearby academy. Over the next 12 months, the school is set to acquire new buildings and expand to 12 forms of entry.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Exemplary behaviour, mutual respect and a highly inclusive culture are key contributory factors. Judicious, distributed leadership has a very positive impact on the performance of teachers and the quality of teaching.
- Students make outstanding progress throughout the school and attain high standards. Overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding.
- Teaching is highly effective in meeting the needs of all students and promoting rapid progress over time. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and innovative in their approaches to teaching. Lessons are characterised by a range of carefully selected activities that motivate and actively engage students in their learning. Provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those in the CLD, is a conspicuous strength of the school.
- In lessons and around the school, students' behaviour is impressive. They are at all times both courteous and considerate. A culture of respect permeates the school. Adults within the school at all levels expect nothing less than the best of students in terms of their conduct and attitudes to learning and each other. Students in turn are highly responsive and manage their behaviour exceptionally well.
- The executive headteacher and staff work cohesively and rigorously, building on past successes and securing excellent improvement over a sustained period. Senior leaders know the school extremely well and target development carefully, resulting for example, in better teaching and improvements in subject performance over time. Teacher performance and leadership of teaching are carefully aligned to the tracking of student achievement. Consequently, sophisticated pre-emptive training and interventions to build staff capacity ensure that dips in performance are effectively halted. The combination of positive student attitudes and the rich curricular offer ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided is outstanding.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that best practice is shared and disseminated effectively and staff capacity continues to be effectively developed so that:
 - all students within the school and the new academy partnership continue to benefit from high quality provision
 - as the school expands, the skills, knowledge and expertise of newly appointed and existing staff are equally well developed to meet the needs of growing numbers of students, so as to achieve equally high standards.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons, students make rapid progress and attain high standards, particularly during tasks where opportunities are provided for them to work together in pairs or small groups and to discuss their work. Students are confident learners. They routinely demonstrate resilience and perseverance. They are at ease with tasks that require them to work independently and equally, they know when to seek advice so as to maximise the time spent on learning. For example, during a Year 10 Spanish lesson, students were required to work in pairs constructing a dialogue to review a film. Each individual was given a set of prompts provided in Spanish, but was unaware of his or her partner's prompts. The pace of learning was brisk and all students were fully engaged. The entire medium for communication was Spanish; outcomes were of a high standard and teacher facilitation was minimal because the learning had a momentum all of its own.

Students join the school with attainment ranging from average to slightly above average for different year groups. They make outstanding progress and attain high standards. Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including students in the CLD, achieve in line with their peers because of the thorough identification of need and the high quality support that they receive.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their child is progressing well and inspection evidence supports this view. Students too, support their parents' and carers' views. All groups of students achieve very well compared to similar groups nationally. Nevertheless, the school has identified that there is a very small gap between the standards reached across the school and those reached by students of White British and Caribbean heritage. It has identified closing this gap as a priority for further improvement, illustrating its commitment to equality and the pursuit of excellence for all. In the sixth form, students make equally rapid progress to achieve standards that exceed the national average both at the top grades and across each year group.

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Quality of teaching

Teachers have high expectations of students' achievement. Parents, carers and students are extremely positive about the quality of teaching and this is supported by inspection findings. Teachers plan lessons imaginatively to include a range of strategies that meet students' learning requirements at all levels and individually. They make full use of the resources available to them to provide experiences that involve students actively in their learning and to excellent effect. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, students worked in small groups and in pairs. Teaching support assistants ably facilitated the learning alongside the teacher and students were required to circulate in pairs addressing tasks of differing levels of challenge that were arranged at different tables. At varying intervals, the teacher gathered the group together in a mini-plenary to check understanding. As a result, all students progressed rapidly and their motivation and enjoyment were high.

The development of students' literacy and communication skills is evident in all subjects and full use is made of opportunities to exploit the development of technical or subject-specific language and to develop students' proficiency in their writing skills, through corrective marking. Across the curriculum, and in assemblies, excellent opportunities are provided for students to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally through the careful selection of topics and materials that encourage reflection on current issues. In particular, the work which is developed through the religious education, art, music and media studies departments is particularly noteworthy and much appreciated by students. Moreover, several sought to draw to the attention of inspectors that, at the time of the inspection, a number of students from across the age range were performing in a musical concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students are welcoming, friendly and polite. They dress smartly and take genuine pride in being part of the school community. Attendance is above the national rate, which gives testimony to the importance they attach to learning and contributes to their excellent progress. They say they feel safe at school and free from bullying of any kind. They have a clear understanding of the types of bullying that can occur, understand the nature of risk and act responsibly. Inspectors found no evidence to suggest that any kind of bullying occurs other than infrequently and it is dealt with effectively by staff.

Relationships are harmonious between younger and older students and between those of different ethnic groups. In particular, the inclusive nature of the school and the ways in which students, for example those in the specialist autistic provision, are supported and their achievements celebrated by all students, contribute to an exceptional climate for learning, central to which is the principle of mutual respect and equality.

The school has a clear discipline policy that is known to all. However, high expectations on the part of everyone mean that the learning is rarely interrupted.

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Students manage their own behaviour extremely well. They understand the need to ensure that each individual has the right to learn free from disruption, through well-designed curriculum programmes, such as for personal, social and health education, together with citizenship. As a result, the pervading culture is one in which responsible behaviour is the norm. The majority of parents' and carers' responses to the questionnaire related to behaviour were very positive as were those of students. Inspectors support the views expressed and judge behaviour and safety to be outstanding.

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher has a compelling vision for success. She is ably supported by a very effective associate headteacher and leadership team. Leaders and managers at all levels are driven by aspirations of high achievement for all both academically and personally. At every level, the organisation is structured so as to provide students with opportunities to succeed. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and students' progress enables leaders to identify accurately what the school does well and what could be better. This is used extremely well to define priorities in strategic planning, including for staff development, and to refine the curriculum.

Teaching has improved significantly, with commensurate impact on achievement and provides strong testimony of the school's outstanding capacity to continue to gain further ground. The curriculum is dynamic and carefully constructed to provide a range of differing routes to progression into the sixth form and beyond. It is highly effective in its promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strong student involvement in the design of the curriculum has ensured that it meets the needs of differing groups within the school exceptionally well. All leaders are held tightly accountable for students' achievement. The promotion of equality of opportunity is a key driver and the school works hard to eliminate barriers to success, for example through its extensive enrichment programme designed to give all students opportunities to achieve as well as possible.

The governing body is highly active, knowledgeable and supports senior leaders effectively. Self-evaluation is correctly focused and very accurate; governors are fully involved in the process. Safeguarding procedures are tight and child protection procedures and training meet all statutory requirements. The school sees a very important role for itself in working with local schools and within the last year it has become the lead sponsor to a nearby secondary school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Beal High School, London IG4 5LP

Thank you for your help and for talking to us during the recent inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work. I am writing to tell you about our findings. Your school provides you with an outstanding education.

- You make outstanding progress and reach high standards.
- Teaching is outstanding. Your teachers have extremely high expectations of you. Your progress is at its best in lessons that engage you actively in your learning and enable you to work independently or in small groups.
- Your behaviour is exemplary. You told us you are extremely proud of your school and feel well looked after. We saw for ourselves that you are polite, willing and keen to learn. We were extremely impressed by the respect that you show to one another and to the adults in the school. Equally, we recognised the importance you attach to your learning. These excellent attitudes are contributing to your rapid progress in school. Your attendance is also very good. These are important attributes; please keep this up!
- Your executive headteacher and the staff work hard to ensure that the school continues to improve. They concentrate extremely well on the most important areas, for example the quality of teaching and behaviour, and linking these to your attainment and progress. This is why your achievement is outstanding.

We have asked your executive headteacher to ensure that:

- as the school expands, all students continue to benefit from the highest quality provision and the skills and expertise of all staff, including those newly appointed, are carefully developed to meet the needs of the growing numbers of students equally effectively.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Farmer
Lead inspector

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