

Bishop Stopford's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102052
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	355117
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	John Kennedy HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1036
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Woodward
Headteacher	Mr Jim Owen
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 39 lessons and observed 37 teachers. They held meetings with staff, students, the Chair of Governors and a representative from the local authority who is also the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its development plan and most recent reviews, analyses of students' progress, safeguarding documentation and other policies and some of the students' records. They evaluated questionnaires from 57 parents and carers, 28 staff and a representative sample from 236 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The impact of leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the progress students make in mathematics and science.
- The effectiveness of the school's systems for assessment, tracking and intervention in reducing the gap between the achievement of boys and girls.
- The quality of sixth form teaching, curriculum and guidance and the impact they have on outcomes for students.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders and managers and their contribution to the school's systems for self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Bishop Stopford's secondary school is larger than average and takes students from over 50 primary schools across a wide area of Enfield and neighbouring boroughs. Three quarters of the students come from minority ethnic backgrounds ? much higher than average ? and about a sixth speak English as an additional language. The largest proportions are of Black African or Caribbean heritages. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is considerably lower than the national average, and most of these students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school was awarded specialist school status in mathematics and computing in 2004 and was redesignated as a specialist school in 2008. A new headteacher took up post in September 2009 and a new deputy headteacher with responsibility for the sixth form started in January 2010.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Bishop Stopford's is an improving school which provides a satisfactory quality of education. There was a considerable dip in students' attainment in 2008. This was reversed the following year and, since then, decisive action taken to restructure the leadership team has resulted in significant improvement to the quality of teaching, and better provision in the sixth form. This is resulting in better educational outcomes for all students.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school and this contributes well to the positive outcomes for students in their personal development and well-being. The quality of care was singled out for praise by some parents and carers who wrote to inspectors. Students feel safe, knowing that they can turn to staff for help if they have any concerns. The incidence of reported bullying is low. A concerted focus on punctuality has meant that few students now arrive late to school. However, some students are slow in going to lessons and this means that they and others miss out because the lesson does not get off to a prompt start.

Unvalidated 2010 GCSE results show a steep improvement in some key measures, such as the proportion of students gaining five or more higher grades which include English and mathematics, and in information and communication technology, where there was an increase in the proportion of students gaining higher grades. The most striking achievement in 2010 was that two fifths of the students gained three or more A/A* grades, placing the school among the best-performing comprehensive schools for this measure in the local authority. However, the overall proportion of students gaining five or more passes or higher grades remains broadly average and the gap in attainment between girls and boys has narrowed only slightly. In science, attainment remains weak because initiatives to improve progress are too recent to have had an impact.

Much of the teaching is good and there is some outstanding practice, but in some lessons insufficient planning for individual learning means that the activities are limited in their ability to engage students fully, particularly those who are struggling to keep up. In some lessons, students do not have enough opportunities to think and work things out for themselves.

Radical steps taken to improve the sixth form are starting to show tangible results. A parent captured this well, saying 'The new head of sixth form is really trying to encourage students in their well-being and education. She has had a difficult job and improvements are visible ? things can only get better'. Despite these positive green shoots, not enough has been done as yet to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the range of subjects, or that the curriculum is broad enough to match the needs and interests of students of all abilities.

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The headteacher has an accurate sense of the school's strengths and weaknesses which has enabled him, with other leaders, to plan carefully and systematically for the future. The quality of middle management is variable and this can be seen in the contribution made by middle managers to the school's self-evaluation. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. They have provided good support for these changes and are increasingly able to hold the school to account for the progress of students. However, the strategic direction they give is too weak in some aspects of the school's performance, including their monitoring of action plans such as those to promote community cohesion. Nonetheless, the school has turned the corner and is on the right track again, with a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the leadership, management and governance of the school, by:
 - developing the strategic role of the governing body
 - bringing about greater consistency in the quality of middle management and the resulting contribution made to school self-evaluation.
- Raise attainment and accelerate the progress that students make, by:
 - ensuring that lesson planning builds on what teachers know about students' abilities and progress so that activities can be tailored to meet individual needs in each lesson
 - providing more opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning
 - adapting the curriculum and the range of teaching strategies to close further the gap in attainment between boys and girls
 - helping students to develop better time-keeping and more positive learning habits so that little time is wasted in lessons
 - ensuring the students make more rapid progress in science.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the sixth form, by:
 - providing a suitable range of courses to meet the abilities, interests and aspirations of students of all abilities
 - ensuring that students receive effective guidance in choosing the right courses and in helping them make the most of those options
 - ensuring that students make better progress across the range of subjects, particularly for those taking AS and applied courses.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The majority of students enjoy their lessons, are motivated and take responsibility for their learning. They enjoy working in groups and sharing their ideas, although some lack confidence in their learning and ability. The use of 'think, pair, share' in a geography lesson encouraged students to work independently and collaboratively. Students say that the management of behaviour is now more effective and this is making a difference. While there was evidence of much good behaviour in lessons, inspectors agree with the minority of students who say that this can be variable. Some students are slow in settling down,

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are inattentive and prone to chatter. Students enjoy coming to school and this can be seen in attendance levels which are consistently above average and in the low numbers of regular absentees.

The progress that boys and girls make in English is particularly strong. Rates of progress in mathematics are improving because of better teaching, and are now broadly average, but progress in science is not yet at this same level. Some Black students, particularly boys of lower ability, make slower progress than their peers. The small number of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Students get on well with each other and their strong spirit of togetherness is exemplified in the respectful and spiritual way they took part in a ceremony dedicated to their patron. Students took a key lead in the ceremony and showed real capacity to reflect on their own feelings and those of others. They contribute to the wider community in many ways, such as through the support they give to a charity working with children in Africa who have been affected by Aids. A group of Year 10 students, following a rigorous selection process, have been trained as 'learning detectives', so that their observations can contribute to improving the quality of learning in lessons.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, enthusiastic and skilled teachers use questioning to gauge how well students understand what they are doing and their readiness to move on, while also providing students with opportunities to deepen their learning. Students respond well to opportunities to show the progress they are making. For example, in a mathematics lesson they used colour cards to show whether or not they had grasped some difficult tasks in calculating percentages. In these lessons students make better progress because they are exposed to imaginative and enthusiastic teaching which makes demands on their learning. In lessons which are not at this level, teachers tend to dominate too much and there are insufficient opportunities for students to engage in constructive peer or group activities or to think independently. Oral feedback tends to be stronger than written feedback, and some marking provides limited or no guidance to help the student know what to do to improve.

The restructuring and expansion of the curriculum in Key Stages 4 and 5 is enabling students to be able to access pathways and courses which are more appropriate and better matched to their needs and aspirations. This is particularly the case for the current Year 12 students. The curriculum offer in science has been broadened to include a BTEC option to cater for the interests and abilities of a wider group of students. Many of these changes are relatively recent and have yet to have a full impact on students' attainment. The wide range of extra-curricular sports and the high take-up of and active participation in inter-house competitions contribute to students' healthy lifestyles and their enjoyment of school. The school looks for opportunities to provide good role models for the students. For example, a recent visit from a Black Caribbean soap star made a deep impression on them.

Staff pay careful attention to the needs of those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Students are very appreciative of the care they receive and one student likened the school to a parent who looks out for and cares for them. Effective transition arrangements enable younger students to settle into Year 7, and impartial guidance and advice help older students make choices about what best options to consider as they leave Year 11. External agencies such as the police enhance the quality of support on offer.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Students rightly say that their headteacher 'knows what he is doing'. He has made key appointments which have strengthened leadership throughout the school and he is

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tackling key priorities with rigour and determination, and with good support from his team. Steps are being taken to tackle inconsistency in middle management, as seen in the use of internal expertise in the management of mathematics to bolster the running of the science department. Leaders have tightened the systems of accountability and reporting through regular cluster meetings, and consequently there is a sharp and relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching while at the same time holding teachers, heads of department and pastoral heads to account for the progress of students at risk of underachieving. Staff speak of a strong and common sense of purpose and direction now, with one commenting that 'the school has a different ethos and is an exciting place to work'.

Arrangements to protect students meet statutory requirements and staff are clear about what action to take to safeguard those at risk of or suffering harm. Cluster meetings provide an effective vehicle for close monitoring of how groups are performing in terms of their achievement and well-being. Disproportionate gaps or inequalities in students' achievement are being identified and addressed through staff training and enhanced management responsibilities and these are having some success. The school has a range of activities to promote community cohesion, including through its work with local primary schools, its promotion of events such as Black History month and video conferencing and other links with a school in Pakistan. The school hosts computer sessions for elderly local residents. These and other activities have not yet been pulled together in a strategic plan of action, and so it is difficult for the school to measure the full impact of its actions on community cohesion.

The local authority provides valued and valuable partnership support for the school that is carefully tailored to complement the school's own work. It can be seen in the joint plan of action to improve the sixth form and in the programme of training and support being provided for middle leaders. The school's specialism contributes to partnerships with primary schools. Local collaboration with other providers is helping the school to broaden the range of sixth form courses on offer, although this is at a relatively early stage of development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Pass rates for A levels are broadly average. Some subjects such as law and economics perform consistently well, but this is not the case for all A-level subjects and the attainment of many students taking AS courses has historically been low. Nonetheless, given students' starting points, they are making satisfactory progress overall in Years 12 and 13. Leaders and managers have made significant changes to the ethos and culture of the sixth form. They are implementing an action plan in a measured and carefully planned way with a particular focus on improving the quality of the teaching, curriculum and guidance offered. These changes are beginning to make a tangible difference. The sixth form is steadily becoming a place of purposeful learning where students are becoming engaged, attending more regularly and making better progress in lessons. Retention rates are beginning to rise. These changes are being accompanied by the introduction of a better curriculum match for students. Some actions have not yet been completed, such as the planned curriculum changes for 2011. A new and more rigorous assessment system is in place and, as a result, students are getting better and more targeted one-to-one information, advice and guidance.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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Views of parents and carers

A very low proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The majority are positive about the work of the school. For instance, some very positive responses were made about safeguarding. There were more mixed views about the quality of teaching, the progress their children were making, and the effectiveness of communication with parents and carers. Inspectors found that the school is aware of these issues, and addressing them so that further improvements can be made.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bishop Stopford's School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1036 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	49	23	40	4	7	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	21	37	35	61	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	33	29	51	5	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	25	28	49	10	18	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	15	26	24	42	11	19	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	33	23	40	10	18	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	33	26	46	8	14	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	28	23	40	7	12	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	37	19	33	8	14	4	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	40	20	35	4	7	5	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	21	25	44	10	18	6	11
The school is led and managed effectively	18	32	27	47	4	7	4	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	33	25	44	6	11	4	7

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



7 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Bishop Stopford's School, Enfield EN1 3PU

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us. We learnt a lot from listening to you and observing you at work. You told us that the school has improved greatly in the last year. We agree. We find this to be a satisfactory school but one which is on the way up. Teaching is improving and changes to the curriculum mean you will have a wider range of options which may suit some of you better. Many of you are keen to do as well as you can. These are some of the main reasons why more of you are making good progress.

You are well cared for and this helps you feel safe in school. Teachers try and help you as much as they can. One of you described this well, saying 'If you ask, she explains it and she won't stop explaining it until you've got it'. You said that Mr Owen has brought about a lot of changes since he became headteacher and we can see what a difference he and the rest of the staff are now making. You enjoy your time at school and this can be seen in how well you attend and in the way you take part in other activities such as sporting competitions. The school tries to give you curriculum experiences that inspire you, such as meeting famous people who come from backgrounds like yours. You told us how impressed you were with the visit from the actor who plays Patrick in Eastenders and how he told you about the importance of time-keeping. Some of you could put that into practice a bit more when you move from class to class. There are a number of actions that can make the school better.

- Improve the ways in which governors and leaders can keep an eye on and evaluate how well the school is doing.
- Help you do better in your learning by giving you activities that suit your abilities and will interest you, and give you more chances to learn things for yourselves. We have also asked the school to help boys who aren't doing as well as girls to catch up.
- Continue to improve the sixth form so that you will take courses which are right for you and benefit from consistently good teaching and guidance.

You can play your part by coming to lessons on time, ready to learn and determined to make the best of your time in the school. We wish you every success.

Yours sincerely

John Kennedy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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