

Bury Church of England High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105365
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	377233
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2011
Reporting inspector	John Coleman 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	781
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Allen MBE
Headteacher	Philip Grady
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 31 lessons taught by 31 different teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including data showing students' attainment and progress, policies, the minutes of the governing body meetings and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They also considered the schools records regarding the safeguarding of students and looked through some students' work. Questionnaires were scrutinised from a sample of students, staff and from 328 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent have the actions of leaders tackled the points for improvement raised at the last inspection?
- How well embedded are the recent strategies to modify the curriculum and what impact is this having on students' achievement?
- Do students make enough progress especially in mathematics?
- What is the extent of any variation in the quality of teaching and learning for different groups of students, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Information about the school

Bury Church of England High School is a smaller than average sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Students join the school in Year 7 from over 50 different feeder primary schools covering a wide geographical area.

The school was re-designated in 2009 as a specialist humanities college. Awards include the Geographical Association Secondary Geography Quality Mark and the Schools Council International School Award (Full).

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Since the last inspection, leaders in the school have successfully sustained the outstanding quality of the curriculum and the outstanding provision for the care, guidance and support for students. As a result, students make outstanding progress in their personal development. Also, students' achievement in English has risen significantly so that rates of progress in this key subject are now excellent and students' attainment is high. In the school's specialist subjects of geography, history and religious education, students make similarly excellent progress and reach high standards. Previously below-average attainment in French has been improved, so that students reach broadly average standards. Additionally, some improvement has been achieved in the rates of progress made by students in mathematics. Taken overall, this clearly demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.

Relationships throughout the school between students and with staff are excellent. This makes a significant contribution to the learning students make. Staff provide very good role models in the courteous way they treat students and, in response, students are polite and well mannered. The school's Christian mission statement is successfully implemented and pervades the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In English and humanities subjects there is a high proportion of good and sometimes outstanding teaching, which results in the excellent progress of students. Across other curriculum subjects teaching is mostly good but the rate of students' progress varies. For example, in mathematics, students make mainly satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards. Some satisfactory teaching is found across a range of subjects. The main cause of this satisfactory teaching is the relatively weak use of assessment by teachers in these lessons. For example, teachers' planning shows variable use of assessment information to inform the level of challenge for students in lessons.

Leaders in the school have clear distributed roles and responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance. Through these, senior leaders and the governing body are well informed and have an accurate view of the relative strengths and weakness in the school's performance. However, although these systems are implemented regularly, there is a lack of complete synchronicity about the cycle of monitoring. This is partly because leaders' annual evaluations are carried out in the spring term and use the previous year's examination results.

Consequently, the impact of leaders' strategies to improve provision varies. For example, priorities to develop curricular provision, such as 'Flexible Fridays', are making a significant impact on improving students' experiences and learning. On the other hand, attempts to reduce the amount of satisfactory teaching have been less successful.

The curriculum is outstandingly well matched to the range of students' needs, interests and aptitudes. Almost all students study English, mathematics, science, religious education and French to GCSE standard. A wide range of academic and vocational options and qualifications are offered in Key Stage 4. Building upon the previous arrangement for 'drop down' days, the school introduced 'Flexible Fridays' at the start of this term. Through this, students experience an excellent cross-curricular approach which provides many fine opportunities for students to apply their skills and learning. Outstanding partnerships with external agencies and providers extend curriculum experiences and enrich learning. Several educational visits are made to extend learning and bring it to life. Extra-curricular activities are many and are well attended.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of assessment by:
 - ensuring all teachers' planning identifies students' prior attainment and uses this to provide tasks which build effectively on these starting points
 - improving teaching strategies to check on students' progress systematically throughout each lesson
 - fully and consistently implementing the school's policy for marking students' work
 - improving the quality of feedback given to students so that they are clear about how to improve.

- Improve the impact of the cycle of monitoring by:
 - moving the annual evaluations of the school's performance to the end of each academic year
 - reviewing the evaluations at the beginning of the next year in the light of the provisional exam results
 - targeting precise improvements to move satisfactory teaching to good.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of students

2

Students' questionnaires show almost all agree that they enjoy school, feel safe, that staff care for their well-being and students learn a lot in lessons. Inspectors' observations confirm this; there were many examples seen of staff talking to students about their work, asking how they are getting on or about their involvement in out of school activities, such as in sport. In lessons, students show good attitudes to learning and concentrate well. Attendance is high and makes a very positive impact on students' ability to learn. Students achieve well and gain above average numbers of qualifications. Many opportunities are provided for work-related learning; enterprise days are held, and staff prepare students for interviews and help them

with applications. This equips students extremely well for their future economic well-being. All students successfully move on to further education, employment or training. The good opportunities provided for sport, with good rates of participation, contribute well to the development of healthy lifestyles. Students learn about physical health matters through the curriculum and they are knowledgeable about the best choices to make. A good range of opportunities is available for students to engage in the school and local community. For example, students take extra responsibilities by being a sports captain, a mentor, head boy or girl, prefects or librarians. Students raise money for charities by holding cake sales, taking part in non-uniform days and red nose day.

In lessons, students enjoy learning, particularly when teachers set challenging tasks which capture students’ interest and engage their curiosity. The outstanding curriculum ensures an excellent match to students’ needs and aspirations. As a result, students show enthusiasm for learning and this contributes strongly to their good progress. The development of students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Students are encouraged to become reflective learners through opportunities in assemblies and themes during ‘Flexible Fridays’ such as the ‘Holocaust day.’ Photographs around the school show a wide range of spiritual experiences for students, including during a multi-faith day and in visits to places of worship including a mosque and a synagogue. Many cultural experiences are provided, such as through links with other schools and communities in contrasting environments, for example. a local Jewish community and a school in Africa.

These are the grades for students’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are typically characterised by good preparation, excellent relationships between staff and students, teachers’ good subject knowledge and effective use of information and communication technology to deliver learning. Although teaching in most lessons is good, the quality varies from broadly satisfactory to outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers have clear

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

expectations for students’ learning based upon prior assessment of students’ starting points. This ensures a good level of challenge for the different abilities of students. In these lessons, teachers quickly engage students with interesting initial tasks which are quickly moved on when teachers have checked students’ successful understanding. In satisfactory lessons, there is often too little effective use of assessment in preparation for the lesson. Also, during lessons, not all teachers take appropriate opportunities to rigorously check on students’ ongoing understanding. The marking of students work varies and feedback to students about their work does not always help them to understand how to improve.

The outstanding curriculum provides students with a wide range of traditional subjects and supports these with several vocational options in partnership with a local college. A further partnership with a special school nearby ensures very effective support for students with lower attainment. Collaborations with other high schools and sixth form colleges are effective in providing extended opportunities for students identified as gifted and talented. Offsite visits and numerous residential opportunities enable students to learn through first-hand experiences and this increases interest and enriches students’ learning. The specialist status subjects make a significant contribution to the outstanding provision. For example, the lead subject of geography provides themed weeks and competitions which are much enjoyed by students.

Students receive high quality support and guidance which takes full account of their individual needs. Staff show excellent care for students’ well-being and welfare. Supervision is vigilant. Questionnaire returns from students and parents and carers show overwhelming appreciation of the school’s work in this area. Transfer arrangements at age 11 and 16 are top class. There are very effective links with feeder primary schools and with colleges and providers to where students move on. The school is very effective in ensuring high rates of attendance. Students who are at risk of being vulnerable are very well supported, including through excellent use of a wide range of external agencies. Students are made aware of the need for e-safety, about the dangers of alcohol and of drug abuse.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets students’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear direction and a Christian vision for the school, which is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior teaching team. There is good, effective deployment of staff and a team ethic to improving the school’s performance. Each of the senior leadership team are paired with two or three subject departments and they undertake observations of lessons, analyse students’ attainment data, scrutinise their work and undertake discussions with students. Heads of departments complete similar monitoring activities on a regular

basis. The outcomes of this monitoring are evaluated by heads of department each year and this informs senior leaders and the governing body. Leaders have ensured good improvement since the last inspection by sustaining and extending the outstanding aspects of the provision and raising students' achievement, especially in English. Efforts to improve satisfactory teaching to good have been less successful and have not precisely targeted the relatively weak use of assessment.

The governing body provides good effective strategic management. The Chair of the Governing Body has a long association with the school. His passionate drive to ensure that students are well cared for is shared by all who work at the school. The governing body is both supportive of, and challenging to, school leaders. Leaders provide regular evaluations of the school's progress to improve provision and outcomes for students. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Good arrangements are in place to undertake risk assessments to keep students, staff and visitors free from harm. Training is up to date and goes beyond what is required statutorily. There is good promotion of equal opportunities as shown by the generally equal rates of progress for all groups of students. Community cohesion is good due to effective policies and a range of outstanding partnerships, which provide excellent support to the school's curricular provision. The school engages exceptionally well with parents and carers providing many avenues of effective communication, including a parent support advisor.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaires. The vast majority of returns are positive about the school's performance. Several written comments were received which praised the school's work including the provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the pastoral care for students and the approachability of school staff. Some negative comments were received including about students' behaviour and bullying, healthy lifestyles and a lack of specialist teachers. The inspection judges that behaviour is good, any instances of bullying are dealt with well and overall healthy lifestyles are good. Overwhelmingly, teachers are deployed to teach their first specialist subject.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Bury Church of England High 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 328 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 781 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	184	56	137	42	5	2	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	185	56	137	42	5	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	160	49	160	49	4	1	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	140	43	165	50	13	4	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	132	40	184	56	6	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	113	34	190	58	17	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	29	207	63	20	6	0	0
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)	124	38	174	53	5	2	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	149	45	159	48	9	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	132	40	164	50	13	4	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	95	29	190	58	13	4	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	155	47	156	48	2	1	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	194	59	126	38	4	1	1	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



8 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Bury Church of England High School, Bury, BL9 0TS

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would like to share with you what we found out about your school. We judged that Bury C of E High School is a good school.

These are the main reasons why we judged the school to be good:

- the headteacher and all school leaders are good in the way they improve your school
- the school provides you with an outstanding curriculum which you enjoy and this meets your needs extremely well
- leaders are exceptional in making sure that every care is made to look after your well-being and to support and guide you in the very best way
- you behave well and make excellent gains in acquiring the skills and knowledge you will need in the future
- you reach above average standards in your work and gain a good number of qualifications by the end of Year 11.

All schools need to develop and improve. We have asked that the use of assessment information by teachers and the school's procedures for monitoring are improved.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector

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