

Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136725
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	397485
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
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	1,694
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Spurrier
Headteacher	Allan Foulds
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2009
School address	Warden Hill Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 3EF
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Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	10–11 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Additional Inspector

Lesley Voaden

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Charlotte Evers

Additional Inspector

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Colin Lower

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors saw 48 lessons and 24 hours of teaching and learning. They met with students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at its policies, assessments, records and documents, as well as questionnaires completed by staff, students and 415 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre is larger than the average-sized comprehensive school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most students are White British. Almost all speak English as their first language and about one in 10 has a variety of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school became an academy in May 2011. The school meets the current floor standards which are the minimum standards expected by the government for attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching does not consistently enable students to achieve outstanding outcomes, the Key Stage 4 curriculum does not meet all learning needs, and support to raise the achievement of sixth form students is not fully effective.
- Students’ attainment is above average and their achievement is good. They learn well because they work closely with teachers, one another and independently. All groups, including those with disabilities and those with special educational needs, achieve equally well.
- Teachers’ enthusiasm and a collaborative learning atmosphere promote effective learning. Teachers display good subject knowledge. Most lessons are well planned to offer varied, interesting activities. Students are kept fully informed about their levels of attainment and what to improve. Carefully analysed assessment data promote additional help and intervention for students who need it. In a minority of lessons, more-able students are not given sufficiently challenging work to make more rapid progress.
- Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. Students have very positive attitudes to learning and lessons are often a hive of focused activity. Students are thoughtful and considerate, and bullying of all kinds is rare. This is a safe environment.
- Leadership and management are good and quickly address issues as they arise. A drop in attainment in 2011 was tackled through more intensified management of teachers’ performance, which improved teaching. Monitoring of lessons does not accurately evaluate all aspects of learning. Staff and governing body work closely together to develop the school. The curriculum lacks breadth in Key Stage 4, but makes an effective contribution to students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. Recent improvements in teaching have not yet had a significant impact on raising students’ currently satisfactory achievement. Not all interventions to boost students’ progress are fully followed through.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to move achievement closer to outstanding by January 2013 by:
 - developing lesson monitoring so that it accurately evaluates all aspects of learning
 - ensuring all lessons offer a consistent challenge to more-able students so they make rapid and sustained progress.
- By September 2013, develop the Key Stage 4 curriculum so that it addresses all students' needs and aspirations by supplementing learning opportunities, where relevant, with a range of appropriate vocational courses.
- By April 2013, ensure that closely targeted support for sixth form students is rigorously applied to improve their achievement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with levels of attainment that vary annually, but are usually close to average. Attainment at the end of Year 11 shows a marked improvement since the previous inspection and is above average. Literacy skills are well taught, with many subjects of the curriculum contributing to students' good progress in this area. Students' literacy skills, including in reading, are above average. Inspection findings that achievement is good are fully endorsed by parents and carers, who have positive views about their children's achievement, and few concerns. One typically commented, 'We feel our daughter can achieve her full potential.'

The school reacted vigorously to a drop in Year 11 attainment last year. In consequence, levels have risen to be again above average in 2012. Effective teaching and the good support given to students facing barriers to learning mean that there are no significant gaps in the performance of different groups of students, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs. A lack of challenge for more-able students, as observed in some lessons, has meant that the school has had a slightly lower proportion of highest GCSE grades than expected, given its overall attainment pattern.

Improved teaching is promoting good progress in lessons. In particular, the way assessment is used to raise students' awareness of their standards and how to improve is most effective. Consistently good behaviour ensures a highly positive atmosphere in lessons and students collaborate very closely in mutually supporting one another's progress. Assessment data are used rigorously to identify those students whose progress may be faltering. The school is then proactive in providing the appropriate additional support, tailored to individual needs.

Learning can be a joyous experience. Year 7 students were fascinated to discover the clear links between the wording of the Magna Carta and the school's own vision

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statement. The teacher's confident delivery, the challenging activities and excellent attitudes from all students ensured that they all made outstanding progress.

Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory; the group of students who enter Year 12 have average starting points and make similar progress to their peers nationally. This year, better teaching has led to an upturn in progress but, as this is relatively recent, there is not yet evidence of a significant impact on students' progress over time.

Quality of teaching

The inspection's findings are reflected in parental views, which are rightly favourable about the quality of teaching. Teachers use their well-developed subject knowledge to plan and deliver interesting and relevant learning for students. Most planned activities have assessment and feedback to the learners woven into their structure. This good practice enables teachers to develop a clear understanding of how well students are learning, and actions and plans are adjusted accordingly. Assessment and marking also keep students fully up to date with the standard of their work, their predicted levels and grades, and how to best go about reaching or exceeding their targets. Students often assess one another's work and their own efforts, deepening their understanding of how to succeed in tests and examinations. Reading is well taught across many subjects.

Lessons provide numerous opportunities for students to work independently, in pairs and in groups. Teachers carefully question students to check up on and promote their understanding. Comprehensive lesson and curriculum planning includes strategies designed to grasp and hold students' interest, such as the use of a clip from a Hollywood film to spark Year 9 students' understanding of a poem by Tennyson. The pace of lessons is often brisk, so that students' concentration remains high.

Students' receptivity to their teachers is a major factor in good learning. Students are enthusiastic and behave with maturity so there are very few interruptions to lessons. Constructive relationships are evident at all levels and students much appreciate the teaching they receive. The enthusiasm of the teacher in leading a group of Year 10 students in a discussion of issues around genetic engineering involved all of them. In the safe atmosphere, the teacher successfully coaxed students to express their opinions about the moral and ethical questions that arose. This enabled them to move on to successfully write a balanced view of the issues. The supportive atmosphere in many lessons encourages students to confidently voice their thoughts about a range of spiritual, moral and social issues.

Regular assessments provide a clear picture of students' progress. Staff analyse the outcomes carefully, using this information to keep an eye on the progress of whole classes and also identifying individual students who fall behind. Carefully tailored interventions and booster sessions are initiated so that almost all groups, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, are enabled to

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maintain their rate of progress and overcome barriers to learning. However, some lessons do not provide sufficiently challenging activities for the more-able students so that they, occasionally, have to work through what are, for them, simple activities before they are able to start more appropriately challenging tasks.

Sixth form teaching is satisfactory because recent improvements have not yet led to sustained good progress. However, lessons display numerous strengths and often challenge students to demonstrate what they know and understand. Teachers do not always follow through the interventions identified as needed to promote a high rate of progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students are typically courteous, and relationships with fellow students and adults are positive and constructive. Lessons run smoothly and disruption is very unusual. The building is well ordered and calm, even when the corridor bottlenecks become jammed with bodies. Behaviour over time is good and exclusions from the school are below average. Students' 'can-do' attitude to learning makes a very positive contribution to their progress. In the sixth form, students are notably enthusiastic to participate fully in lessons, joining in discussions with gusto. The vast majority of parents and carers feel their children are safe and they express few concerns about behaviour.

Students have good awareness of the different forms of bullying. Incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying based on gender and racial prejudice, are rare; the school deals with any occurrences most effectively. Students have a clear grasp of safety in their daily lives and report that they feel safe at school. Attendance is improving and is now above average, and students' punctuality is good. Parents, carers and students are well informed of the link between attendance and achievement.

Leadership and management

Leaders, managers and the governing body share a vision to take achievement and teaching even further forward. Self-evaluation is well organised and generally effective so leaders and managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and act decisively on the latter. School improvement planning is an active process and constantly evolving; its strengths are evident in the school's effective reaction to a drop in attainment in 2011. In particular, a sharp focus on improving teaching through careful performance management has been largely effective, and students' attainment and progress have quickly improved to the previously above-average levels. However, judgements about teaching sometimes lack the required rigour, and consequent impact, because they use a narrow range of criteria.

The school has excellent arrangements to gather and analyse assessment data and all staff have access to information about students' progress. This information makes

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it abundantly clear where action needs to be taken to have maximum impact. Outcomes of the analysis include well-judged professional development opportunities for staff. All staff undertake relevant training, leading to improvements in their skills. Assessment information is also utilised to identify students requiring additional help, including through closely targeted interventions that are quickly acted upon. The analysis of students' performance readily identifies any potential underachievement and positive action now in place is beginning to ensure equality of opportunity for all. The school has identified achievement of some more-able students as a priority for development, but action has not yet had the impact intended.

Members of the governing body hold a good knowledge of the school. They use this and their considerable expertise to offer appropriate challenges. Their quality assurance procedures help ensure that discrimination is not tolerated and that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet requirements. The school has comprehensively addressed most of the issues raised in the previous inspection. Teaching and progress have improved so achievement has been raised, endorsing the school's capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum is balanced and meets all requirements. It has considerable strengths in the way the well-organised personal and social development programme effectively promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These sessions enable students to share their opinions with others, show respect for the views of different people, and consider current spiritual and moral issues. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers good opportunities for students to follow academic courses but does not provide sufficient opportunities for students to pursue vocational pathways.

The school has numerous well-developed partnerships that, for example, enable it to use external agencies in helping to support its students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. It fosters close links with parents and carers, and is pioneering innovative ways of using the internet to smooth the flow of information between school and home.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



14 May 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre,
Cheltenham GL51 3EF**

Thank you for the helpfulness and courtesy that you showed to the inspectors during our recent visit to your school. We very much enjoyed meeting and talking with you about your experiences of school, and were pleased to hear your positive views. The inspectors would like to congratulate you on your good behaviour.

Yours is a good school. You are well taught and make good progress in Years 7 to 11. While teaching has improved in the sixth form, students' progress has not yet caught up, so this part of the school is satisfactory. Overall achievement is good, and this applies to all groups of students due to the good support given to those who need extra help.

The school is well led and managed. Staff and the governing body work well together to improve the school and make it a safe place to be.

In order to improve the school, we have asked staff and governors to focus on the following.

- Improve teaching by checking up on lessons in greater depth and ensuring all lessons are challenging, especially for those of you who learn quickly.
- Develop the Key Stage 4 curriculum so it addresses all your needs and aspirations by offering a range of appropriate vocational courses.
- Ensure the effective delivery of all the support planned for sixth form students.

Once again, many thanks for all your help; it was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan
Lead inspector

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