

The Bishop David Brown School

Albert Drive, Woking, Surrey, GU21 5RF

Inspection dates 11–12 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite the steady improvement in standards in recent years, students do not yet make enough progress in mathematics or regularly apply and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Students do not make consistently good progress in every lesson. Although there is some good and outstanding teaching, its quality varies too much.
- Marking is inconsistent and some books are not marked regularly. Students are not routinely required to respond to the advice they are given to show that they have fully understood it.
- In a minority of lessons, either work is not matched closely enough to students' skills and abilities, or teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve so they learn too slowly.
- Senior leaders' actions, for example to develop better marking or less teacher-directed learning, have not been in place long enough to generate consistently good teaching.
- Several middle leaders are inexperienced and are still developing in their roles, particularly in promoting good quality teaching within their departments.

The school has the following strengths

- Initiatives introduced by the headteacher and governing body are successfully being embedded in whole-school practice, so that there is an upward trend in the proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades that include English and mathematics.
- Students are keen to learn and participate in the wide range of additional academic, social and cultural activities. These are promoted well through the school's performing arts specialism.
- The harmonious school community helps students from different backgrounds to get on well and support one another, so that they feel valued and safe.
- The school's focus on developing students' reading and writing helps them to learn well in other subjects and to progress successfully into further education, training or employment.
- Students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable have good support to build their confidence and do well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 29 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Observations included the provision for students who find learning more difficult.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of students and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, attended an assembly and scrutinised students’ work, progress data, development and evaluation documents, safeguarding information, records relating to behaviour and attendance, the impact of professional development on the school’s performance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 102 parents’ and carers’ responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as questionnaires completed by 51 staff.

Inspection team

Helen Hutchings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Allcorn

Additional Inspector

Richard Sutton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Students come from ethnically diverse backgrounds, with about a half from minority ethnic groups. Around a third of students speak English as an additional language, with a significant minority at an early stage of speaking English.
- The proportion of students who join the school at a time other than at the beginning of Year 7 is well above the national average with a substantial proportion joining from overseas.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high. The school supports a small number of students who have a hearing impairment.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- An independently run nursery operates on the school site and is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that it is typically at least good, by:
 - planning work which is always closely matched to the skills students have and what they already know and can do
 - raising the expectations of what students can achieve in the time given for their tasks
 - making sure that marking is consistent in all subjects and that students are given regular opportunities to test out the advice given in the written comments about how their work could be improved
 - giving students time to work independently and think for themselves.
- Improve students' progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - disseminating the most effective practice already established in the department so that more teaching is at least good
 - developing a whole-school plan to make sure that students have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - evaluating, refining and strengthening the actions taken to develop consistently good teaching
 - developing the skills and expertise of leaders who are relatively new to their posts
 - making sure that middle leaders are held to account for improving the quality of teaching within their areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although below the national average, the proportion of students achieving five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics rose steadily for three years until 2011, narrowing the gap between the school's results and national ones. Provisional results show a drop in 2012, largely reflecting the decline seen nationally in English. Better science results have contributed well to overall improvements. Mathematics results have improved, but they are not good enough yet and not as strong as in other subjects.
- Given students' below average attainment on entry, their progress overall is similar to that found nationally, but few make more than expected progress. The school's tracking data indicate that year-on-year students are making better progress through Key Stage 3, which gives them a stronger foundation for GCSE work than previously. Similarly, students are making better progress in mathematics than previously, but some have still to make up for underachievement in the past.
- Many students joining the school after Year 7 come from overseas and some do not speak English fluently on arrival. Because of the support they receive, these students do well in their examinations.
- Students who have special educational needs, including those who have a hearing impairment and those receiving support through the pupil premium, do well. This is because the school has invested strongly in making sure that individual students have the academic and/or social and emotional support they need to develop confidence to learn well.
- The school places a strong emphasis on identifying where students have difficulty in reading, and is effectively boosting their skills through a range of interventions, including the systematic teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds). This also helps students' progress in other subjects, especially as teachers regularly reinforce reading and writing in lessons.
- There are examples of lessons, such as in design and technology and geography, where students apply their mathematical skills, but these are not promoted enough and consistently in other subjects.
- Achievement is good in the school's specialist subjects, such as dance, drama and music.
- In lessons, progress often depends on the strengths of teaching. In the lessons that require improvement, tasks do not match students' needs well so that sometimes they are given work which is too difficult, or spend time on unproductive activities before being given more challenging work.
- Students are positive that the school helps them to acquire the skills they need for their future chosen routes. This is reflected in the school's record that, for the last two years, all students have entered further education, employment or training. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive that the school helps students to make good progress. However, students are capable of higher achievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is too variable for students to make consistently good progress over time. There is some good practice in all subjects and some outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection, in line with the school's own evaluation. However, the weaker teaching, which is not focused on any one subject or year group, means that students do not always make the best possible progress.
- Inconsistencies are evident in teachers' expectations of what students can achieve so that not enough is expected of them when they are merely required to respond to questions and adult instructions, rather than exploring issues for themselves.

- By contrast, in a citizenship lesson, Years 7 and 8 students made rapid progress, researching information and preparing arguments about whether or not underachievers should have to repeat a year. Frequently, teachers make learning directly relevant to students' experiences, which engage them and promotes their understanding.
- There is much detailed marking, giving students useful information about the quality of their work and what they have to do to improve further, but this is inconsistent. Students say that they find teachers' comments helpful, but they do not have enough opportunities to check out that they understand the guidance, for example by completing short follow-up tasks.
- In the better lessons, students are actively involved in a range of activities which help them to work independently, often working in small groups talking about their work and sharing their ideas. Typically, these successful lessons are well paced and teachers question students effectively to strengthen understanding and learning. When given a choice about the level of difficulty of a range of tasks, students often choose the most difficult tasks, and generally complete them successfully.
- Teachers work closely with other adults who provide skilled support for students to reflect on their learning, helping them to work things out for themselves.
- Lessons often give students opportunities to consider moral and ethical issues, such as reasons for war, which effectively develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students participate keenly in extra enrichment activities, including enterprise experiences or making willow sculptures relating to the Olympic Games for a striking school display.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Almost all students respond well to the school's high expectations for behaviour in lessons and around the school, recognised by the overwhelmingly positive response on Parent View.
- The mixed age tutor groups help Year 7 students to settle quickly by ensuring that there is another student they can turn to about routines in their early days in school.
- Occasionally, when lessons are not demanding, students' concentration falters and they chat about other things while completing their tasks, showing that behaviour is not yet outstanding. Otherwise, students have a sense of urgency when moving between lessons.
- The school's records show that good and better behaviour is the norm. For example, racial incidents are rare and there has been no reported homophobic bullying in the last two years.
- Because students' behaviour is typically positive, there are few exclusions. When incidents of unacceptable behaviour do occur, the school ensures that arrangements are made for those who are excluded from their normal lessons to carry on learning in the school's Learning Centre.
- Students respond well to the school's active promotion of positive attitudes and behaviour, for example, the award for being 'found doing the right thing'.
- Students say that the school is a safe and secure place and particularly appreciate the support they have to resolve issues when they arise. This is a school where staff 'go the extra mile' to ensure that students have fair and consistent support in time of need. Students respond maturely, for example by looking after the facilities, ensuring a litter-free site or by undertaking responsibilities to support others. Training given for roles such as 'cyber mentors' develops students' leadership skills well, in addition to providing effective peer support.
- Attendance is average and longer-term absence for extended holidays overseas, a problem in the past, has been reduced because of a coordinated and robust approach adopted by local schools working together.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have built well on the improvements evident when the school was inspected in 2011. However initiatives introduced since then, to improve the less effective aspects of teaching, have not yet generated consistently good teaching. Senior leaders

use external support well to boost the expertise within the school, such as a development programme negotiated with the local authority and links with other schools to share practice. This is proving particularly helpful for small departments.

- Additional support, which is needed, is in place for middle leaders, including those who are inexperienced, to develop their skills to monitor and develop teaching and learning. Targets for students' achievement have been raised. They are monitored regularly so that any potential underachievement is picked up early and action taken.
- The curriculum is innovative and managed well. The success of the joint Years 7 and 8 groups is increasing progress in Key Stage 3. In other years, the flexible curriculum provides a range of qualifications in Key Stage 4 which lead to post-16 education and training. Students enjoy the courses on offer as they are relevant to their interests.
- The management of teachers' performance is undertaken thoroughly, has been reviewed in the light of changed national standards and is clearly linked to pay progression. Staff value the school's programme of professional development and are keen to improve, shown in the discussions undertaken during the inspection about the lessons observed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has reviewed its performance since the last inspection and, under the leadership of a new Chair of the Governing Body, it is in the process of developing a strategic plan for its own development.
 - Clear terms of reference have been introduced for governor committees, to strengthen their focus on the impact of provision on students' achievements.
 - The allocation of pupil premium funding is monitored and has been used effectively to target individuals' needs, for example to ensure that those students who are eligible have suitable electronic links to their work in school.
 - A rigorous approach is taken to safeguard students, and records are thorough and meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125266
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	406308

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	534
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Howorth
Headteacher	Stuart Shephard
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 May 2011
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