

# Bishop Barrington School A Sports with Mathematics College

Woodhouse Lane, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 6LA

## Inspection dates

12–13 March 2103

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. GCSE results have gone up steadily to above the national average.
- Students make very good progress, starting the school with below average achievement and leaving with above average results.
- Students develop very good skills in reading, writing, speaking and number. They get exceptionally good support for key skills.
- The range of courses, including academic and vocational options, gives students choice and suits their various needs well.
- Behaviour is very good. In lessons students apply themselves willingly. Around school they are mature and good-humoured.
- Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher and senior leaders have built a shared vision that every student can succeed, backed up by practical plans that have had a big impact.
- They have created an open, warm and honest culture where improvement can thrive, while at the same time teachers are held to account.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers work with great energy and skill. Regular monitoring leads to very effective training and coaching so that weak teaching has been eliminated and teachers constantly strive to do even better.
- The governing body gets good information so that governors can ask probing questions and hold leaders to account.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Very small numbers of students are falling through the net and are not making good progress, often linked to persistent absence.
- Overall attendance is below the national average.
- Students at risk of exclusion and placed in alternative education do not make the same progress as others, and have low attendance.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons taught by 31 teachers. This included three observations jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors joined registrations and saw how students behaved out of lessons.
- Inspectors talked with students, considered examples of their work in all years, listened to younger students reading aloud, and met students at their request about activities out of school.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior and subject leaders, and staff responsible for careers education and guidance. Inspectors talked with representatives of the local authority and of alternative provision for students.
- There were 44 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) which were taken into account, and 46 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered.
- The inspection team observed the school at work and considered documents provided, including: students' achievements and targets; records of attendance, behaviour and safety; student case studies; minutes of governing body meetings and reports to governors; the school's self-evaluation and planning; details of monitoring of teaching and learning, staff training and how performance of teachers and leaders is managed; and the school's website and school policies.

## Inspection team

Barbara Comiskey, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Mark Patton

Additional Inspector

Anne Smedley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bishop Barrington is a smaller than average school for students aged 11 to 16. Most are White British, with a small number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds which are chiefly Asian, mixed heritage and Gypsy Roma.
- About 42% of students are known to be eligible for free school meals, much more than average. There are three students from Armed Services families at the school, and five children looked after by the local authority. All are eligible for the pupil premium (government grant to schools, with a focus on catching up in Year 7).
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is above average.
- The local authority sees the school as an example of very good practice in literacy and in sport. Bishop Barrington has regular contact from other schools wanting to learn from them.
- Alternative provision for three students at risk of permanent exclusion is used at The Green School, Lanchester.
- Vocational education for one day a week for 19 students in Key Stage 4 takes place at nearby Bishop Auckland College for qualifications in catering and motor vehicle engineering.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are national minimum expectations for progress and attainment at GCSE.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement and attendance of small numbers of students not doing well, both those in school and those in alternative education at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Raise attendance levels overall at the school and put in place better ways for students to catch up with work after absence.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Students make very good progress, from below average when they start at age 11 to above average results when they leave. In English and mathematics progress has got better year on year. Boys do especially well in examinations and in the standards they achieve in lessons.
- Students overall achieve better at GCSE than the national average. Last year two thirds gained five good GCSEs with English and mathematics. Results in science and mathematics were in the top 40% nationally. Reliable school data show most students are currently on target.
- The main reasons why achievement has improved so well are the support for students in key skills, that students use well across all subjects, and the success of the headteacher and senior leaders in lifting teaching quality across the school.
- The school ensures that students make exceptionally good progress in key skills of reading, writing, speaking and number from Year 7 and as they move up the school. The way that students speak with confidence and at length, explaining their answers, is impressive. Students are very well prepared for the next stage of education, training or work.
- Students who start with low and middle achievement do particularly well at the school, especially when the full range of courses, non-GCSE and vocational studies, is considered. Students on the two courses at college are monitored well. They are making good progress and are on track to achieve Level 1 or 2 vocational qualifications.
- The progress of high-attaining students compares well to national levels in English and mathematics and has improved steadily in recent years. Students capable of it are entered early for GCSE English and mathematics. They continue to study in order to aim for the highest grades, including work on A level preparation.
- Students entitled to the pupil premium progress well. Last year results in GCSE English and mathematics were more than one grade behind others. However, progress is going up rapidly in both subjects, as part of the school's wider improvement. In English and mathematics, between 2011 and 2012, progress of students entitled to free meals went up much faster than nationally.
- When all subjects are considered, in their total examination scores, achievement of students entitled to the pupil premium is well above average. This includes small numbers of students looked after by the local authority and from Armed Services families.
- Disabled students and most with special educational needs make good progress. They get effective extra support out of lessons. In classrooms teachers are well aware of their needs. However, there are small numbers of students, especially with behaviour needs, with fixed-term exclusions, or who are in alternative provision related to exclusion, whose progress falls behind.
- The school has small numbers of minority ethnic students who achieve well, given their starting points.
- The school's strong drive for success from Year 7 (Year 7 catch-up) is starting to solve these problems for younger students. Issues for very small groups concentrate in Key Stage 4.
- In the online survey (Parent View) parents' views about the progress of their children were positive. This was the same for the vast majority of parents in the school's ongoing surveys and contacts.

### The quality of teaching

**is outstanding**

- Teaching at the school is impressive. Nearly all lessons are good, many are outstanding with real sparkle, and none are inadequate. Very effective teaching is the typical diet for students. In this young staff, teaching has been consistently strengthened, including support for new teachers.
- Teachers are highly skilled professionals. They plan diligently and are well informed about students. As lessons develop, they are very good at improving literacy and numeracy, and at

encouraging personal development in natural and unforced ways. There is a deeply embedded culture of learning, including amongst the non-teaching support staff.

- In outstanding lessons students work with energy and independence. In a GCSE top set English class students were challenged to take lines from the world's best works of literature and improve them, so they understood effects of literary style much better. In a science class for low-ability students on cells excellent resources were finely tuned to their needs. The teacher's high expectations enabled students to present their findings with great success. In physical education students' leadership skills are developed to a high standard.
- In an outstanding form tutor period, part of a carefully planned programme, a Year 11 student worked with a class of 11-year-olds on a game he had design himself for the Electronic Whiteboard. Students responded keenly and improved punctuation skills as a result.
- In the few lessons needing improvement during the inspection teachers knew how to do better, such as more open questioning or a bit less teacher-talk and more thinking time for students.
- Disabled students and most with special educational needs learn well from teaching which is well matched to need. Teachers are very good at bringing lessons to life by excellent resources they have made. They listen to students very well and spot misunderstandings, as in an outstanding mathematics lesson on angles in Year 8. The teacher's skilled questioning meant he saw where three students were going wrong and put it right so they made rapid progress. Most students from minority ethnic backgrounds also learn well, but a small number are falling through the net.
- High-ability students make good progress and are challenged to do even better. For instance, in a high-ability science class for Year 7, students advanced and applied their scientific knowledge by researching, presenting and debating topical issues involving science.
- Across subjects, skills of reading, writing, speaking and number are developed with exceptional skill, care and persistence. Typically, subject teachers put unfamiliar vocabulary on display and explain what words mean. Able students get more demanding tasks, such as chairing groups.
- Written work is marked to a high standard, with clear advice about next steps to do better. Students act on this advice. For example, they redraft paragraphs to improve the content or accuracy. Students' work shows high standards of presentation.
- School leaders have changed the homework policy, in response to well considered student and parental feedback. The focus is now on individual research and use of the school's virtual learning environment. In the online survey parents were very supportive of homework practices.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students' behaviour is mature and courteous. Out of lessons they respect each other and the building: there is no graffiti. The school is a pleasant place to be; students are proud of it, pride which spills over into positive attitudes to learning. For example, they are punctual for lessons.
- Students think that behaviour in school is good. Teachers are fair and there are lots of incentives to behave well. Students feel safe in school and understand how to avoid risks. They know about various types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying online, racist language and homophobic bullying.
- Racist incidents and bullying are kept to a minimum and, when they do happen, are handled well. Students know who to go to for help but, much more than that, older students give very good support to younger ones as mentors, prefects, literacy supporters and in sport. The school website gives good practical guidance about who to contact about bullying.
- Students can take the initiative for themselves. For instance, the School Council is taken seriously. Representatives attend the school's Senior Leadership Team meetings and make constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Teaching assistants work well in class to support students and small groups with special educational needs, where they help students to do things for themselves. The main focus for teaching assistants, however, is not in class but one-to-one or group support in key skills.
- Exclusions are above average. However, since September well targeted work with younger

students using the pupil premium grant has reduced fixed-term exclusions of vulnerable groups. The remaining problems are most often found in Key Stage 4.

- The school has a very good tracking system for behaviour which has led to fewer in-school behaviour incidents. Students can cool down for short periods in the 'Achievement Centre', a place with a warm and positive culture and meaningful activities for students to do.
- In 2011 and 2012 attendance was too low. School records show that almost half of the absence so far this year was due to the winter vomiting virus. However, students still missed lessons.
- The school has recently put new steps in place to reach students before habits of being absent get established. For example, they work with primary schools to identify children who already have problems of absence, for immediate support. As a result, attendance in Year 7 has gone up. However, overall attendance of older students has not gone up.
- Small numbers of students have repeated absences, including some with special educational needs and a few entitled to free school meals. Some Gypsy Roma students and those in alternative provision do not attend well enough.
- Parents' views about behaviour in the online survey were very positive, as were those of staff.

## **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher, with her senior team, has created a positive climate, shared aims and high expectations. They have systematically put in place clear policies and made sure that they work, a major cause of better teaching and achievement. For instance, regular meetings with each middle leader use robust information to hold them to account for every student. Students themselves know their targets and nearly all are keen to achieve them.
- Senior and middle leaders have a realistic view of teaching and achievement based on good evidence. Problems in students' progress are acted on swiftly to stop them falling far behind.
- Observation in classrooms is also acted on very well. Teachers are supported to do better by training and individual coaching. Effective performance management has eliminated inadequate teaching, improved the amount of good and outstanding teaching, and tackled formerly weak subjects.
- The local authority gives light-touch support to this good school, including scrutinising results with leaders. Because the last Ofsted inspection was in 2007 the school asked the local authority to carry out a review with lesson observation in 2011. With energy typical of school leaders they learned from the process and acted on findings.
- Students at the school have a wide variety of needs; courses offered meet them well, including academic subjects and vocational options in partnership with a local college. An external review of extra-curricular activities carried out by the local authority showed that most students take part in at least one club or sport in line with their interests.
- Students get clear and unbiased advice about education, work and training post-16. Careers information and preparation for later life in tutorial lessons are very good. There are regular events to link with business and industry. Older students are very well informed about practical applications of subjects, such as in food studies, design, art and sport.
- The school aims to develop students as rounded people. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well in tutorial lessons, religious education, assemblies, out-of-school activities, support for charities and in displays around the school. In an excellent tutorial session students learned a lot about different credit cards and the pitfalls they can involve.
- Teachers plan well for this wider learning as part of subjects. High-quality discussion about moral issues takes place in history. In a design lesson students talked about the impact of processed food on health and environment. Many boys said that they were keen cooks, could describe meals they make and were well informed about effects of processed food.
- Spending of the pupil premium grant and Year 7 catch-up funding is well informed by recent research and knowledge of students' needs. Target setting is meticulous. Help that individual students get focuses on: literacy and numeracy; social skills development; access to clubs and

sports that students could not afford otherwise; and, also, imaginative steps such as promoting enjoyment of higher-level reading and use of information and communication technology.

- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school. Almost all who responded to the online survey for inspection said they would recommend the school to others.
- Many staff completed the voluntary questionnaire for the inspection. The level of pride and enthusiasm was exceptional, a testimony to the positive ethos senior leaders have created.
- The school meets statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Information to the governing body is good. Governors know how achievement compares to that of other schools, about teaching quality and spending of the pupil premium. For example, the results 'dashboard' for schools is new nationally but governors had already discussed it. Governors keep good oversight of spending including the pupil premium. Since 2010 governors have systematically taken part in effective training because they realised they had too little first-hand information. They ask probing questions and have lively debates, especially in sub-committees with special interests. Performance management is robust. Teachers move up the pay scale only if targets are met; some have been turned down.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114301
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	403237

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	710
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Raymond Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Gent
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 October 2007
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