

Bishop Fox's School

Bishop Fox Drive, Taunton, TA1 3HQ

Inspection dates 18–19 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress throughout the school because teaching is good. Teachers ask thought-provoking questions and allow students time to think and then discuss their ideas.
- Students behave well and feel very safe. There is a positive, calm atmosphere around the school and students work well together.
- Students say there is very little bullying and that any which occurs is dealt with well.
- Checks made by school leaders and support given have led to an improvement in the quality of teaching. Leaders provide good quality training to improve teaching.
- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, are ambitious and have high expectations of students. They work together well to raise standards and to improve students' rates of progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking does not always tell students how to improve their work.
- The proportion of students achieving A and A* grades at GCSE is below the national average.
- In some lessons, the work is not challenging enough to make sure the most able students achieve their very best.
- Teachers do not always have the most up-to-date information on the needs of students with special educational needs to be able to provide consistently well for them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 41 lessons, including three joint lesson observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited several lessons for short periods of time to look at students' work.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of 53 responses to the on-line parents' questionnaire (Parent View), and the 86 paper copies sent by parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's analysis of its examination performance in recent years and also the achievement of students currently in the school. They looked at the data on student attendance and exclusions. In addition, they reviewed a range of documents and policies related to the school's development, leaders' observations of teaching, and how the school works.

Inspection team

Chris Allen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Edward Wheatley

Additional Inspector

Anne Looney

Additional Inspector

Rob Isaac

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bishop Fox's is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs who are supported through school action is well above average, whilst those who are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The number of students whose first language is believed not to be English is above average and has increased over the past three years.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding for children looked after by the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families. At this school, the pupil premium applies to students who are eligible for free school meals.
- A small proportion of students receive some of their education at local colleges.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The school became an academy on 1 July 2011. The predecessor school, Bishop Fox's Community School, was judged to be good when it was last inspected in July 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement by:
 - ensuring teachers, in their marking, give students clear guidance about how to improve the quality of their work
 - making sure work is challenging for all students, especially the most able, so that a greater proportion achieve the highest grades at GCSE
 - ensuring teachers have regular information about students' special educational needs and that all education plans are in place and up to date, so that staff can plan lessons more effectively to meet these students' needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment is broadly average. Attainment on entry to the school varies between years, and students make good progress from Year 7 to Year 11. Results have improved in recent years and the dip in GCSE results in 2012, particularly in English and mathematics, has been reversed.
- The most able students usually make good progress, although a small proportion do not. This is reflected in the proportion of students achieving A* and A grades at GCSE. While this is improving, it is still below average. Students have good reading skills. They read widely and benefit from a programme of regular silent reading during morning registrations. Less able readers in Key stage 3 have been successfully supported by the school in improving their reading skills. Students discuss their views in lessons well and are confident to read aloud.
- Students' writing skills are broadly average, and are improving with the school's focus on developing literacy skills in all subjects, as well as in English lessons.
- Students have broadly average mathematical skills. They carry out mental calculation skills well, and, when they are challenged to do so, explain their mathematical understanding well.
- Students from the lower mathematics sets have this year taken the GCSE foundation paper in March of Year 11, and those that achieve a C pass are to be entered for the higher level paper in the summer. No other subjects enter students early for their GCSEs.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because support staff are effective in encouraging them to work independently. They provide helpful guidance for students.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding make progress at similar rates to other students. They do better in mathematics, where they are about half a grade behind other students; in English they are about a grade behind by the end of Year 11. The extra funding has been used to provide extra staffing which contributes well to students' progress.
- Students with English as an additional language make very good progress due to the sensitive support of the school, and the quality of help they receive from other students in lessons. Those in receipt of the Year 7 catch-up premium are making good progress. Students who receive part of their education in local colleges make good progress in the vocational courses they follow. The school mostly ensures that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.

The quality of teaching is good

- A large majority of teaching is good or outstanding and none is inadequate.
- In better lessons, teachers ask thought-provoking questions and give students time to think and discuss their answers with each other. In a Year 9 history lesson, for example, the teacher used propaganda posters to help students recognise the moral dilemma of sending young men to war. Students showed good independent learning skills in making their own notes as they assimilated the information. In a Year 8 science lesson, students showed a real interest in their experiment on testing the fizziness of soft drinks, and worked highly effectively and supportively in groups.
- Teachers usually make good use of accurate assessment information, and match work closely to students' learning needs. They usually provide extension work for the more able and structured activities for the less able students to help them learn in small steps.
- Occasionally, work is not suited to the abilities of all the students. In some cases, this led to undemanding work for able students. At other times, teachers and support staff do not have the most up-to-date information they need to help them plan work for less able students. Some education plans are not fully in place and have not been recently updated, which restricts these students' progress.
- Teachers' marking is often good but variable in quality. Whilst most students know what they need to do to improve their work, some do not. Marking is good in English lessons where the

teachers' comments are detailed and identify what students need to do to make better progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- A real strength of the school is the positive ethos and the calm and purposeful manner in which the students approach school life. Students are polite, courteous and friendly. Between lessons, they move quickly and quietly around the school; in assemblies, they are engaged and interested, and in lessons, they show a keenness to learn.
- Students commented that 'all the staff are really friendly', which is an indication of the strong relationships that are evident between students and their teachers.
- Incidents of bullying at the school are very rare, and students are confident that if they do have a problem, a member of staff will sort it out for them.
- In most lessons, students' behaviour is exemplary. Students' attention wanders a little when work is not challenging enough. They work cooperatively and effectively and this contributes to their good progress. Most parents feel that students' behaviour is well managed.
- Attendance is currently average, although in previous years the school has had higher than average levels of attendance. The school has good systems and procedures in place to work with families and challenges students whose attendance is below average.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the vast majority that replied to the parent questionnaire said that their child feels happy and safe at Bishop Fox's.
- Students understand the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying, and are clear about how to respond. Students feel both secure and safe.
- The school has very clear and consistent procedures for ensuring that students whose behaviour is poor are dealt with effectively.
- The school has developed an effective rewards policy which students understand. It encourages the students to try their best and to work hard in their lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides extremely good direction for the school's improvement. He is a respected and caring leader in the eyes of the students, teachers and the wider community. With the support of his senior and middle leaders, there is a real focus on encouraging students to aspire to do their very best. All staff are committed to improving students' achievement and providing them with equal opportunities.
- The pastoral team have strong systems in place to identify underachievement, and a wide range of strategies that they use to help students who need their support.
- Leaders have good systems to check the effectiveness of the school and the quality of provision in local colleges where students go for vocational training. They identify areas for improvement accurately and act quickly to improve provision when needed. The curriculum addresses the academic and vocational needs of all students. Careers advice and the transition to post-16 education is well planned and structured. A wide range of out-of-school activities are provided and students say that there are 'loads of clubs for sport, technology and drama', as well as opportunities to attend revision classes to help them when they are struggling.
- The school has effective systems to improve the quality of teaching, and inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Teachers have targets to help them improve their teaching skills, and their progress on salary scales is linked to their professional development and students' progress.
- The school provides many opportunities for creative activities. Drama, dance, art, music and design and technology are a significant part of the curriculum and help to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Links with primary schools are good. Students say that the transition to Bishop Fox's is helped by the induction days and the school visits by senior leaders. One Year 7 student said that he found the school to be a 'friendly and welcoming community'. Year 10 buddies are attached to Year 7

classes when the new students start, to help the younger students settle in.

- Links with local colleges are good, and encourage students to continue with their education effectively. The great majority of students continue with education and training.
- Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. A training programme is in place to ensure that all teaching and support staff receive regular child protection training.
- The school has good links with the local authority and other consultants who provide a high level of external support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are supportive and challenge school leaders. They are well informed about the strengths of the school and its areas for development. They have a good understanding of the standards reached by students and of how the school's performance compares with that of other schools, both in the region and nationally. Members of the governing body have undertaken training which supports them in holding the school to account. They make sure the school's finances are used effectively, for example, to support work to improve the progress made by students supported through the pupil premium funding. They know how the school promotes improvements in teaching, how the school manages the performance of individual teachers, and how good teaching is rewarded. Governors make sure that the school meets statutory requirements for safeguarding students, and ensures there are robust procedures to check the suitability of staff appointed to the school.

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	136851
Inspection number	413446

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	896
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Alderman
Headteacher	Paul Scutt
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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