

The Bishops' Blue Coat CE High School

Vaughans Lane, Great Boughton, Chester, Cheshire, CH3 5XF

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. Attainment has been consistently above average in recent years and is strong in a range of subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is outstanding and it is good and improving in English.
- Provision in the sixth form is good. This is due to good achievement linked to a rapid improvement in teaching.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers share their good subject knowledge with their students and this extends students' learning.
- Students behave well. They enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They work well together.
- The support and guidance given to students is of high quality. Students feel very safe and have a very high opinion of the school.
- Senior leaders and staff have high ambitions for the school and work successfully to drive improvements in teaching and achievement.
- The curriculum is strongly matched to the needs of all students and there is very effective provision for their learning and personal development.
- Students have an excellent range of experiences while at school and are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is a strength of the school and at the core of its values. It prepares students exceptionally well to take their place in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not yet outstanding across every subject.
- Some teachers do not always make good enough use of assessment information to plan tasks that sufficiently challenge or engage students, or check their understanding systematically enough while they are learning.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to work unaided so that they find things out for themselves rather than being reliant on the teacher for information.
- Some students, especially boys, do not show consistently excellent attitudes to their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. They also undertook a series of shorter observations when they walked around the school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with students in lessons and around the school, at change-over of lessons, break and lunchtimes. They also spoke formally with four groups of students about their experience in school and the quality of education that they receive.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed policies, in particular the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, monitoring and performance documents, safeguarding information, minutes of the governing body meetings, information about students' progress and samples of their work.
- Inspectors took account of the 77 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own parental survey as well as 47 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Edwin de Middelaer, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lenford White	Additional Inspector
Linda Foley	Additional Inspector
Tim Long	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School is a larger than the average secondary school with a sixth form.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, and who speak English as an additional language, is below average.
- The school converted to an academy on the 18 March 2011. When its predecessor school, also named the Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England School, was last inspected in May 2011, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by pupil premium funding is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Eight students attend off-site provision at West Cheshire College. They study hair and beauty or motor vehicle engineering part-time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that students' achievement becomes outstanding by:
 - ensuring that in lessons teachers systematically check the knowledge and understanding of students while they are learning and give high quality oral and written feedback to correct any misunderstandings
 - improving the use of assessment information to plan activities that challenge all students to make as much progress as possible.
- Develop students' attitudes to learning further so that they take full responsibility for their learning by:
 - supporting teachers to plan activities that engage all students, especially boys, so that they become more passionate about learning
 - continuing to provide more opportunities for students to work unaided and to find out more things for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders are ambitious for the school and are driving improvement effectively. They have a clear vision for the school and there is a culture of high expectations and aspirations with high priority given to the development of students' talents and academic and personal qualities. Achievement and teaching continue to improve and the school is well placed to move forward.
- Senior leaders have a good system for evaluating what is working well and what needs attention. They use data well and have an accurate view of the school's performance. Expectations regarding what must be achieved are high. Leaders plan carefully the actions for improvement and monitor the impact of initiatives effectively. Adjustments are made if change is not having the required impact on students' progress.
- Middle leaders are effective. They understand their roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders are good at holding them to account for the school's outcomes. They have been supported by appropriate professional development to enable them to carry out their duties well. They are skilful at working with teachers to improve teaching and learning and are becoming increasingly effective in leading change in their subjects.
- The school is an inclusive community and has a very caring ethos. As a result, students are happy at school and feel that staff care for them exceptionally well. The school's ethos contributes well to the effective promotion of equality of opportunity; consequently, there is no significant difference in the progress of students of different abilities. Leaders foster good relations and tackle discrimination very successfully.
- The leadership of teaching, and the management of teachers' performance, are good and having a significant impact on improving teaching. There is a robust system for setting targets for staff, with teachers' objectives clearly linked to school improvement. These objectives are clear and teachers are supported to achieve them by appropriate professional development. Teachers' pay progression is directly linked to improved teaching, leading to the progress of students.
- A wide range of training opportunities, linked to school priorities, is provided to support school improvement. Staff fully appreciate the opportunities available for their development.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. It is carefully designed to meet the specific needs of students and there are appropriate systems in place to guide students as they move through the school. Smooth transition has a positive impact on their achievement. The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences and opportunities, although at times these do not fully capture the imagination and engagement of all students, especially some boys. It ensures that students receive a well-rounded education that prepares them well not only for the next phase in their education but also their place as citizens in modern Britain. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for academic, technical and personal development. In addition there are many other opportunities for students, outside lessons, to pursue their interests and develop new ones, through extended curriculum days, activities, trips and visits locally, nationally and internationally.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. It is embedded both in the curriculum and in the school's values and ethos. It plays a key role in further developing students' understanding, respect and tolerance of others and other cultures. Independent careers education, advice and guidance are also strong and appreciated by students. The school ensures that all students have good advice and guidance at key points in their schooling, and gives students positive skills in decision-making to help them choose courses that are most appropriate for their aspirations.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. It is used to support disadvantaged students well through a range of additional activities to speed up their progress in reading and mathematics, provide mentoring and pastoral support to improve students' personal development. This provision has improved the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged students significantly over time.
- The school works well with the diocese and related school improvement advisors, who support the school effectively.
- School leaders regularly monitor the attendance and progress of students who use off-site provision.
- There are highly effective safeguarding procedures in place which protect and ensure the safety of students. These fully meet government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are well organised and are clear about their role; they are fully involved in developing the school's ethos and vision with leaders. Appropriate training means that they have a good understanding of data and the performance of the school, in terms of achievement, progress, teaching and learning. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold

leaders to account by asking pertinent questions and requesting evidence of the impact of action plans. They are active in the performance management of the headteacher and teachers and reward those who do well. They have also been actively involved in tackling underperformance. Governors regularly seek the views of all stakeholders and use the information to develop action plans for improvement. They actively support leaders in the school's journey to become outstanding.

- Governors are highly effective in managing the school's finances. They ensure good financial controls and probity. This leads to good deployment of resources and sound future planning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students arrive at lessons prepared well to learn. They are courteous, polite and enjoy school. Staff have high expectations and students respond well to these. Students, in turn, have a very high opinion of the school and value the educational experiences they receive. Attendance is above average and improving. The school has good systems in place to ensure it continues to improve. Parents, staff and governors also have very positive views about behaviour.
- Attitudes to learning are good overall. When teaching inspires them, students have excellent attitudes to learning. In the main, they are enthusiastic and keen to learn, although some students, particularly boys, do not consistently display a zest for learning. Students enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning; however, opportunities for them to work independently and so grow in confidence to find out for themselves are yet to be embedded across the school.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Relationships with teachers and other adults are very positive and make a marked contribution to good learning and progress. Outside lessons, students show good levels of respect for themselves and others. Bullying and derogatory language is rare and when it does occur is always dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students respond quickly and appropriately to instructions from staff.
- The school has good systems for managing behaviour and these are very effective. Staff offer high quality pastoral care and support for all students. Those students who are vulnerable receive a highly personalised care and guidance, which is very effective in supporting their learning and personal development.
- Students have many opportunities to develop leadership skills and they make a significant contribution to the life of the school. They make a difference through their involvement in paired reading to support younger students, student leadership roles or mentoring and supporting other students.
- Students who attend off-site provision behave well and this impacts positively on their progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Excellent systems for assessing risks and preventing incidents are applied. There is a very strong emphasis on safeguarding and all staff are appropriately trained and are able to identify students at risk. The school works well with other agencies to protect and care for any students who may be vulnerable.
- Students are safe and feel safe in school at all times. They understand clearly what constitutes unsafe situations and are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations, including regard to e-safety and in aspects of substance misuse. The school works well with parents so that they too are aware of risk and alert to preventing any harm coming to their children.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time, in a wide range of subjects, is good. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge. They use questions effectively to deepen students' knowledge and understanding and provide them with a good range of skills to apply to their learning.
- Teachers have good relationships with students and create a highly positive climate for learning. Some teaching enables rapid progress by deepening students' thinking and ability to find things out for themselves. For example, in a Year 9 art lesson, students were highly engaged in developing their watercolour skills in an inspirational visual environment. The lesson had a focus on 'teaching others' and students reflected on, and took responsibility for their learning, and then supported others' learning

through discussion aided by skilful questioning from the teacher. The practice of students being given opportunities to take full responsibility for their work is not applied consistently across the school.

- Teachers often use assessment information successfully to provide work that meets students' needs; however, this is not always the case and at times tasks are not hard enough to challenge students to reach higher standards.
- Teachers make it very clear to students what they are going to learn and what is expected of them. Often teachers provide precise feedback to students as they set to work but, on occasions, students do not receive enough advice while they are working and misunderstandings are not rectified; this slows their learning.
- Teaching assistants support the learning of students with special educational needs well. They help students to understand and reflect on their learning and apply this knowledge to their work.
- Good teaching of literacy is evident over time through the scrutiny of students' work. Students have many opportunities to develop their oracy and reading in class. Numeracy is developed well through the very effective teaching of mathematics. The development of other skills, such as reasoning and problem-solving, is clear and impacts positively on learning.
- Homework is set regularly, consolidates and extends learning and is of good quality.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter school with attainment that is in line with national averages. Their progress during their time at the school is good overall. Attainment at GCSE has been consistently above average, in a wide range of subjects, and has improved over recent years. The work of current students evidences that attainment continues to be high and that progress is good and improving.
- Students achieve well and make good progress in a wide range of subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9. They develop good knowledge and understanding as well as skills such as literacy and numeracy. This prepares them well for continued studies in Years 10 and 11.
- The school entered all students early for English in 2014, but this did not hinder the progress and achievement of students. The school has now ceased entering students early for examinations.
- The school's tracking and analysis of students' achievement mean that leaders are aware of any gaps in achievement that exist between groups of students. They are committed to closing any gaps they identify and there is evidence of their effectiveness in doing so, particularly in the narrowing of the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers.
- Achievement is outstanding in mathematics and students are confident in using and mathematical concepts such as number, graphs and algebra; they use these well in lessons across the school.
- Progress is good in English and the teaching of literacy across the school gives students many opportunities to develop further their reading, oracy and comprehension in different contexts.
- Students make good progress in a number of subjects including art and drama which are very popular in school.
- The school's effective use of pupil premium funding means that disadvantaged students achieve well and make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Over recent years, the gap between the achievement of these students has closed rapidly compared with other students in the school from 2012 to 2014, though the rate of improvement slowed in 2014. In English at GCSE level, the gap has narrowed from two grades to less than one grade for disadvantaged students compared with others in the school and other students nationally. In mathematics at GCSE level, the gap has closed from above two grades to one grade compared to other students in school and other students nationally.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress during their time at school, and there is evidence that their progress is improving. The curriculum is matched very closely to their needs and they receive excellent care and support to help them achieve well.
- There is, at times, some lack of challenge for the most able but their overall progress during their time at the school is good. The school has put in place a system for tracking their progress and supporting their learning through a range of provision such as regular achievement interviews and mentoring.
- The small number of students who have English as an additional language make the same good progress as other students.
- Year 7 catch-up funding for those students who enter the school behind in their literacy and mathematics is used effectively. It supports these students in rapidly developing their literacy and numeracy skills which impacts positively on their learning and progress.

- The few students who attend off-site provision also make good progress due to the clear communication between the provider and school, as well as the rigour of the school's monitoring of students' overall progress.

Sixth form provision is good

- Students in the sixth form make good progress in a wide range of subjects. The school offers a wide and balanced range of courses designed to meet the needs of students and based upon their prior attainment. The courses prepare students well for their next stage and a large majority progress to higher education.
- Teaching is consistently good and the impact of some is outstanding; consequently, students make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is exceptional and is used effectively to deepen students' understanding of key concepts in their studies. In a Year 13 religious studies lesson, the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and skilled questioning elicited a deep understanding of the topic and enabled students to take part in an animated discussion. Students then reflected on their learning and enjoyed the lesson and were passionate to share their opinions. Teachers regularly check students' understanding of their work and give them good feedback about what they need to do to improve further. This helps students to achieve well.
- Students behave well and make a positive difference to the school. Students take advantage of many opportunities provided for them. All students in the sixth form take part in a residential experience to prepare them for study in the sixth form and develop them as a community within the school. Many take part in supporting other students in school or helping in the local community. Students also take good advantage of the many trips and visits including, for example, one recently to the Congo to help children and young people there. They take part in appropriate non-qualification activities and study and are well prepared to take part in life in modern Britain.
- Students feel very safe in school and are very aware of risks to them and how to prevent these, including e-safety. They appreciate all the experiences and guidance they receive in the sixth form.
- Leadership of the sixth form is effective. Leaders are ambitious for the students and there is clear evidence of their impact on the improvement in achievement and teaching. Students' progress is regularly checked and monitored to ensure that they are meeting targets set for them. Those who are not on track are supported well to accelerate their learning. Independent advice and guidance is comprehensive and students feel well supported in their choices for higher education or other destinations.

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	136543
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	453390

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1,063
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rt Revd Bishop Keith Sinclair
Headteacher	Justin Blakebrough
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2011
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