

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School

Hampton Dene Road, Tupsley, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 1UU

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is improving but it is still not consistently strong.
- Leaders have put in place a number of improvements, but these are not yet thoroughly effective.
- Leaders have an overly generous understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their self-evaluation does not offer the governing body enough detail about pupils' underachievement.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent and not yet good enough.
- Teachers' planning does not result in pupils being consistently well challenged.
- Most-able pupils are not making good enough progress. Too much of these pupils' learning is not sufficiently interesting or demanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is still not good, but is improving. Leaders could make more effective use of additional funding for these pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are attentive and cooperative in most lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is improving because leaders' strategies are working.
- Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are progressing in line with their starting points.
- The governing body is skilled and determined to make lasting improvements to the school.
- The members of the school leadership team work well together. They are committed to raising standards and have the capacity to put in place effective strategies.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership, by ensuring that:
 - leaders have an unflinching evaluation of the school’s strengths and weaknesses
 - governors have a comprehensive understanding of pupil progress information.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that:
 - teaching is sufficiently challenging
 - the quality of teaching is consistently strong across the curriculum.
- Improve outcomes for pupils, by ensuring that:
 - most-able pupils make at least good progress
 - disadvantaged pupils make progress at least in line with that of other pupils nationally with the same ability
 - the quality of outcomes is strong consistently across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since their appointment in 2018, the headteacher and the leadership team have worked tirelessly to raise standards. It is too soon to say that their improvements are thoroughly effective. There is still too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils' outcomes are improving, but are still not consistently good across different subjects and pupil groups.
- The headteacher and deputy headteachers have a clear commitment to the school's improvement. The leadership team has the capacity to bring about further positive change.
- Leaders' evaluation of recent pupils' outcomes is too generous. They have not taken into account that pupils' progress was insufficient across most Year 11 pupil groups who left the school in 2018. This means that the governing body has not had a comprehensive analysis of pupils' progress. However, leaders are working increasingly well with local authority partners and have a better understanding of current pupils' outcomes. The local authority has a justified confidence in the leadership of the school.
- Leaders have made significant changes to the curriculum. The result is that pupils in all year groups are now following a broad and balanced range of subjects. However, plans to improve the quality of progression between key stages 3 and 4 are not yet strong enough.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils enjoy taking part, for example, in drama, music and sporting activities.
- The school's performance management system is closely linked to staff professional development and staff value the training they receive. Professional development is still not robust enough because leaders have not ensured that it is informed by an unflinching analysis of pupils' progress.
- Leaders' use of additional funding has not yet led to consistently good outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Not enough teaching is sufficiently interesting or motivating and so, for example, the most able pupils, are not thinking and learning at a deep level. Pupils do not have a thirst for learning, although they typically work with high levels of concentration and effort.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is effective. Progress made by these pupils is improving. Pupils who have access to the resource-based provision make good progress.
- Leaders are successful in securing the support of the teaching and non-teaching staff. Teachers and other leaders speak highly of the support they give each other. Staff morale is high. Staff have faith in the ability of school leaders to bring about lasting improvement. There are significant strengths in middle leadership.
- The leadership of behaviour is good. Inspired by the school's values, leaders have put in place an effective curriculum for teaching personal development. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and are courteous around the school. Their attendance is

improving. The school provides an effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development curriculum.

- Parents and carers have mixed views on the strengths of the school. In Parent View, typically concerning comments include: 'My child is generally happy, but often complains about the quality of teaching in some subjects. There is a wide variety – ranging from very good to very poor,' and: 'I feel that the teaching is uninspiring and teachers are not motivated. Children are bored. I think it is because of the lack of imaginative teaching.' A number of parents expressed praise for the changes leaders have brought about. Typical of these comments were: 'The school pastoral team and teaching staff have been fantastic at supporting my child,' and: 'The school has made huge progress with the recent change of leadership and subsequent staff restructure.'
- Pupils have access to good-quality, independent careers advice and, as a result, they have a clear understanding of the next stages of their learning. Almost all school leavers go on to education, employment and training. Pupils are ambitious for themselves and are eager to do well.
- Leaders work hard to promote a strong culture of safeguarding and, as a result, this is a strength of the school.

Governance of the school

- The chair of governors and a high proportion of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection. They have the capacity to support and challenge leaders well.
- School leaders have not given governors a sufficiently unflinching view of the weaknesses in last year's pupils' outcomes. As a result, governors have agreed a self-evaluation that overstates the successes of leadership strategies.
- Governors are skilled and represent a helpfully broad spectrum of backgrounds. They have put in place a committee, and a performance management structure that is well considered and focused on pupils' outcomes. Minutes of governing body meetings show that they ask pertinent and searching questions.
- Governors have comprehensively fulfilled the requirements of their self-review. They are diligent, rigorous and passionate about improving the life chances of the pupils.
- Governors ensure that the school is safe and secure.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Statutory safeguarding requirements are in place, including policies, and staff training is underpinned by regular, effective updates.
- Staff receive effective training each year and this leads to effective provision for pupils. Staff receive regular child protection and 'Prevent' duty training. Staff know how to report any concerns and these are dealt with in a timely and supportive manner. The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn well how to protect themselves and others.

- Safeguarding leaders work well together, communicating information efficiently. Their welfare planning is carefully judged and draws on an appropriately wide range of support from the local authority.
- Pupils have a well-informed understanding of issues such as e-safety and the risks involved in social media.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable and inconsistent. Where teaching quality is good, such as in mathematics and science, it leads to effective pupil progress. However, where it is ineffective and lacks challenge, pupils' progress is not good enough.
- When pupils begin Year 7, their attainment is higher than the national average. However, in some subjects, for example in key stage 3 English, teaching does not sufficiently take into account what pupils have learned when they start at the school. As a result, pupils repeat work on some skills and these do not significantly improve over time.
- When teaching is well planned and makes effective use of pupils' prior learning, pupils make good progress. For example, planning for lower-ability pupils allows them to get involved in their learning and understand what they need to do to improve.
- Most-able pupils are not well enough challenged and so make weaker progress. Too frequently, pupils complete uninteresting work. Pupils' imagination and their thirst for learning are underemployed.
- The school's assessment policy has been adopted consistently. Teaching makes clear to pupils what is to be learned and how they will know they have completed tasks.
- Pupils with SEND are well taught. The school has made increasingly effective links with other schools to make sure that these pupils' assessments are accurate.
- When teaching successfully challenges pupils, they make good progress. For example, in a physical education (PE) lesson, teaching matched activities well to different pupils' abilities. In Spanish, pupils learned with enthusiasm.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pastoral leaders have put in place a good curriculum for pupils called 'Skills for Life'. This helps pupils learn a wide range of skills, helping them prepare well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are confident and know what it means to be a good learner. They are usually well prepared for their lessons.
- Pupils understand how to keep healthy physically and emotionally. PE is effective in helping pupils to learn about exercise and fitness. Staff take care to ensure that pupils' mental health has a high priority. Pupils know whom to go to when they need support and guidance.

- Pupils' attitudes are largely positive. Teachers celebrate pupils' achievements, and this is appreciated and valued by pupils. Pupils take an active role in helping the school. For example, pupils have worked with staff on what they call the 'community charter', which encourages good relationships. In tutor time, staff promote a theme of the week and this is taken seriously by most pupils.
- Staff successfully promote pupils' careers guidance by working with the independent careers tutor. Older pupils are articulate about what pathways they want to follow in the next stage of their education. They have ambitious career goals.
- Pupils who are looked after in local authority care are well supported. The school works closely with local authorities to keep these pupils safe and valued. There are good communications between the school and support agencies to promote pupils' well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In most lessons, pupils listen to their teachers and are polite and courteous to one another. Pupils value their education. Teaching stresses the importance of good listening and it is effective. Pupils answer questions to the best of their ability and know how to take turns. Sometimes, when teaching is not challenging enough, pupils become inattentive.
- Around the school, between lessons and at break- and lunchtimes, pupils behave respectfully and thoughtfully. There is very little litter. Pupils respect one another's work on display.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school is falling. This is because pupils are clear about expectations and behaviour boundaries. Teachers make thoughtful use of alternative ways to support pupils whose behaviour is poor, keeping them in school so that they learn how to make improvements.
- Teachers use the behaviour policy consistently and effectively. They balance sanctions and rewards so that pupils are treated fairly.
- Levels of attendance are improving, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Staff keep each other well informed about pupils who are at risk of not attending school regularly. Early help is effectively offered and staff work well with local authority agencies.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils know well how to use the internet intelligently and know how to avoid the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment when they start at the school is higher than the national average but, last year, pupils in Year 11 did not make good enough progress in a wide range of subjects. In science and mathematics, however, pupils made progress in line with pupils of the same ability nationally.
- Current pupils continue to make good progress in science and mathematics. However,

in other subjects, such as key stage 3 English and technology, pupils' progress is not good. In technology, for example, pupils do not build skills of evaluation securely enough. In English, pupils do not use a wide enough variety of grammatical forms or vocabulary.

- In 2018, Year 11 disadvantaged pupils' progress was weak across most subjects. Although improving this year, it is still not strong enough, for example, in English and technology. Leaders have not yet fully understood why the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has had an inconsistent impact across the school.
- Most-able pupils are not making good progress because the level of challenge in most subjects is not strong enough.
- Pupils read widely as a result of leaders' recent focus on this, although it is too early to say that this has resulted in consistent enthusiasm for, and fluency in, reading.
- Current pupils with SEND and lower-ability pupils are making effective progress. Staff support these pupils well and use accurate information about how pupils are doing. The school has designed an effective curriculum. Pupils are guided to take high-quality qualifications from the full range of courses at the school.
- Pupils taught in the resource-based provision called The Bridge make good progress because teaching uses effective individual plans for pupils. Teaching makes good use of prior-attainment information for these pupils and as a result, there is strong challenge and pupils learn well with confidence and enthusiasm.
- Careers education helps pupils plan well for their next steps. As a result, last year, almost all pupils who left in Year 11 went on to high-quality education, employment or training. This is a higher proportion of pupils than in recent years.

School details

Unique reference number	116991
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10088482

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,049
Appropriate authority	Board of governors
Chair	Mr Timothy O'Byrne
Headteacher	Mr Martin Henton
Telephone number	01432 347500
Website	www.bhbs.hereford.sch.uk
Email address	info@bhbs.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 February 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- When pupils join the school in Year 7, they do so with higher attainment than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than average.
- The school has a special resource base for a small number of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 who have autism spectrum disorder.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school makes use of support from the local authority, but is not in a category of concern.

- The school has had a recent inspection conducted under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools framework.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout key stages 3 and 4.
- Inspectors conducted a joint work scrutiny with members of the middle and senior leadership teams in the presence of the headteacher.
- There was a range of meetings with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body. Phone discussions were held between the lead inspector and the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils and discussed with them their learning and workbooks.
- Inspectors scrutinised the single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead, and scrutinised a range of records of recruitment, welfare plans and actions taken to keep pupils safe.
- There was a scrutiny of a wide range of documentation that the school produces as part of its self-evaluation. Inspectors considered the school’s development planning and policies, and documents published on the website and made available during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at 61 responses from the staff questionnaires. There were 70 responses to Parent View and no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Hoddinott	Ofsted Inspector
Linda McGill	Ofsted Inspector

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