

Inspection of Bishop Vesey's Grammar School

Lichfield Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 2NH

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Dominic Robson. This school is a single academy trust, which means other people also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of governors, chaired by Mark Maybury.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2014.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School are proud of their vibrant school and the education they receive. Due to the rich range of opportunities on offer, pupils excel and develop 'inspiration and excellence' in line with the school's vision. Pupils and their parents speak exceptionally highly of Bishop Vesey's. One parent, typical of so many, reported to inspectors that 'the school promotes the development of its pupils to become well rounded, thoughtful adults'. The school succeeds fully in this mission.

Pupils appreciate the respectful and warm relationships they have with the staff. As a consequence of these, pupils are able to engage with complex ideas and challenging concepts in a supportive and enabling environment. Pupils are supported effectively to be the best version of themselves by the time they leave the school.

The co-curricular programme and significant range of trips is an integral part of pupils' experience at Bishop Vesey's. Leaders have planned these to maximise participation for all. There are also many leadership opportunities which the school has created, including house captains, form captains, Year 7 buddies and library captains. This means that many pupils have the opportunity to contribute to the success of this school and learn how to lead.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Bishop Vesey's is a school that has moved forward to develop and improve standards since it was last inspected. There is an explicit determination to ensure that all pupils learn a rich, well-rounded and high-quality education which equips them to thrive in life. In this, leaders have placed the English Baccalaureate subjects at its heart. For example, all pupils study two modern foreign languages at key stage 3, and this offer has been enriched through the successful introduction of Mandarin Chinese.

Teaching is often inspirational, as staff judiciously select activities which inspire pupils' learning and build on what they already know. This equips pupils with a secure body of knowledge, meaning they are well placed to achieve highly. The school's emphasis on oracy also means pupils can articulate their learning with fluency. For example, pupils could discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different methods to solve a challenging A-level mathematics question. Pupils listen and respond to their peers with respect, building on each other's responses.

Assessment is used well to spot gaps in pupils' learning and to then close them. All this means that pupils are well placed to excel in their external examinations. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who have their needs well identified. These pupils and their parents speak highly of the support they receive which enables them to achieve well.

The school has extensively considered how reading sits within its curriculum. This means that there is oversight of the books that pupils read, and teachers are supported in how they teach more challenging texts. In addition, there are many suggestions for the literature pupils in the sixth form can read to develop their understanding of their subjects.

Pupils' attitudes to their education are exceptionally strong. As they are well supported to succeed, they typically show resilience and perseverance in their learning. Difference is celebrated at the school and all groups of pupils feel welcome and integral to the school. This includes boys and girls who join in the sixth form. Pupils have a significant number of leadership opportunities which enable them to model the school's expectations for younger pupils. On rare occasions that pupils need support with their behaviour, leaders take effective action. Attendance is high and leaders support pupils whose attendance is not at the levels which they would expect.

The breadth of the curriculum means that pupils' personal development is fully integrated into their learning. The school has co-curricular lessons within its timetable, meaning all pupils benefit from the extensive range of organised opportunities. These include a Catalan club, a cipher challenge, engineering and an astrophysics club among many others. Leaders track the uptake of these clubs closely and ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND benefit fully from them. The school enables many opportunities for engagement with the world of work, including work experience for all pupils in Year 10 and Year 12. This means pupils are well informed about future destinations, including top universities as well as apprenticeships. Pupils speak highly of the knowledge and skills they acquire which enable them to be successful.

The school has ensured there is a fully developed curriculum for the pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. This means pupils have opportunities to learn about healthy relationships, other traditions and cultures and how to look after their own well-being. Pupils speak very highly of this curriculum and the chance they have to discuss issues of importance to them.

Parents speak in glowing terms about the school and the commitment of leaders, including the headteacher. Leaders engage fully with staff about workload. The school leads effectively on the development of teachers to ensure they are developed in their practice. Through quality assurance reviews, leaders take effective action should further work be necessary to develop provision. Governors are highly involved in the life of the school and supportively challenge leaders as they are well informed about the school's provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137988
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10314615
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,379
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Maybury
Headteacher	Dominic Robson
Website	www.bvgs.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- As a part of this inspection, the inspectors met with the chair of the trust, other governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff as well as other employees in the school. An inspector also looked at copies of minutes from governor meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, French, physics, English, history and music. They also looked at examples of pupils' work in other subjects. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- The inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to a staff survey, Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Gail Brindley	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Hackfath	His Majesty's Inspector

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