

Inspection of Bishop Justus CofE School

Magpie Hall Lane, Bromley, Kent BR2 8HZ

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| Inspection dates: | 4 and 5 February 2025 |
| The quality of education | Requires improvement |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Requires improvement |
| Personal development | Requires improvement |
| Leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

The headteacher of this school is Samantha Thompson. This school is part of the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Kathy Griffiths, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Giles Lambert.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has experienced significant challenges since the previous inspection. Supported by the trust, it is working hard to raise standards and ensure that Bishop Justus is a place where pupils want to be. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve have been too low. Published outcomes show that pupils' achievement is significantly below national averages.

In some areas, the school's improvement work has had a positive impact. The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students have positive attitudes to their studies. They learn well and feel supported by their teachers. However, in many areas of the school this improvement work is still in its early stages. For example, whilst classrooms are calmer and more purposeful, too many pupils display boisterous behaviour when moving around the school site. These pupils do not always respond to staff's requests to meet basic behaviour standards.

Pupils can join in with clubs, such as music, basketball and cheerleading. Older pupils volunteer at a local primary school. There are opportunities to travel abroad. For example, pupils studying religious studies recently visited Rome. However, the wider opportunities for pupils to understand how to become active citizens or develop their talents and interests are not as rich or as broad as they should be.

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

The school has recently introduced new curriculums in a number of subjects. As a result, the whole school curriculum is now broader and more ambitious. It clarifies the key knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. For example, the English curriculum is based around the key themes of place in Year 7, relationships in Year 8 and identity in Year 9. In history, pupils encounter key concepts such as authority, power and empire across different historical periods. However, many subject curriculums have only been recently introduced. As a result, pupils have not yet built up firm foundations of knowledge over time. They struggle to recall their learning and deepen their understanding.

In the main, staff have strong subject expertise. This helps them to choose teaching activities that engage pupils with their learning. Teachers routinely use whole-school strategies, such as 'do now' tasks, to revisit previous learning and prepare pupils for what comes next. However, at times, staff do not check that pupils have learned the subject content in sufficient depth. This results in some staff moving on to new learning before pupils are ready. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they should. The delivery of the curriculum in the sixth form is better. Students learn more effectively and typically produce work of a good standard.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It has put in place strategies to support those pupils to access the curriculum. It has also provided staff with training and support. However, the school recognises that there is a lot more work to do. Some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has introduced more strategies to intervene at the earlier stages of poor behaviour. As a result, suspensions, although still high, have reduced slightly this year. Pupils behave increasingly well in classrooms, although expectations about the amount of work they complete are not consistently high across all staff. Outside of class, some pupils defy the school rules and can be rude to staff. Younger pupils can sometimes feel unsafe in the corridors. The school is aware of the need to support staff more fully to implement the behaviour policy. The school has developed a range of approaches to improve pupils' rates of attendance. These efforts are helping pupils to attend more regularly.

Pupils access a well-planned personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They learn about tolerance, respect and equality. Pupils learn about online safety and about relationships. There is a rich programme of careers education, so pupils make well-informed choices about their next steps. Students in the sixth form receive effective support into employment or higher education. However, for many pupils, the extra-curricular opportunities are not broad and rich enough. This means that pupils are not always supported to become active citizens or develop their talents and interests as well as they could.

Staff benefit from the opportunities for training and development provided by the trust. They appreciate the school's concern for their workload and well-being. However, they would like to feel more supported by leaders in managing pupils' behaviour. Leaders at all levels sometimes lack oversight of key aspects of the school's work. This means that they do not always have an accurate picture of what is happening in school. However, the trust and the school are united in their commitment to further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not consistently supported to build a coherent body of knowledge over time. While there has been work to develop the curriculum, this is still at its earliest stages and pupils have gaps in their learning. The school should continue to ensure that the new curriculums are fully embedded. Staff must have the knowledge and skills to plan and implement the curriculum effectively, so that pupils know more and remember over time and consolidate the learning in their long-term memory.
- On occasion, teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning and develop misconceptions. The school should ensure that teachers check pupils' learning systematically and respond to any gaps or misconceptions swiftly so that pupils achieve well in all subjects.
- Sometimes, pupils do not behave calmly or follow the rules during unstructured times. The expectations of pupils' conduct at these times are not as high as they are in

lessons. This has a negative impact on the experiences of some members of the community, particularly younger pupils. The school must ensure that there are systems in place to support positive behaviour at these times, so that pupils move around the school calmly and respectfully.

- The programme to promote pupils' wider development is not as rich and broad as it should be. As a result, some pupils do not gain sufficient opportunities to expand their interests and talents, develop their character or understand how to become active citizens. The school should ensure that opportunities for enrichment, leadership and character development are strengthened and expanded to support pupils' wider personal development.
- The school and trust's oversight of some areas of the provision does not provide sufficiently precise information about where there are weaknesses. In these cases, this means that the actions taken by leaders do not directly address weaker practice. The school and trust must ensure that leaders accurately identify areas of weaker practice and address these robustly.

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

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| Unique reference number | 136466 |
| Local authority | Bromley |
| Inspection number | 10366923 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1170 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 145 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Giles Lambert |
| CEO of the trust | Kathy Griffiths |
| Headteacher | Samantha Thompson |
| Website | www.bishopjustus.bromley.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 22 and 23 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Rochester. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in July 2017.
- The school currently uses six registered providers and one unregistered provider of 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the school senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the trust, including the chair of the trust board, the CEO and the trust secondary education director. Inspectors also met with members of the local advisory council.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, history, science, English and physical education. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents and carers, Parent View and surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Christian Hicks, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Jason Ofori | Ofsted Inspector |
| David Bromfield | Ofsted Inspector |
| Paula Ledger | Ofsted Inspector |
| Vikram Gukhool | Ofsted Inspector |

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