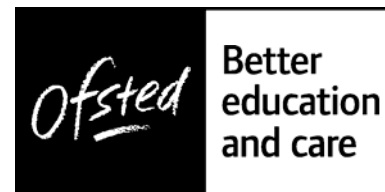


Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

**Direct Tel** 020 7421 6594

**Direct Fax** 020 7421 6855

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



27 June 2005

Mr S Shephard  
Headteacher  
The Bishop David Brown School  
Albert Drive  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 5RF

Dear Mr Shephard

### **Implementation of The Bishop David Brown School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mr R Blatchford HMI, Ms T Herring HMI and Ms G Close HMI to your school on 13 and 14 June 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan. The inspection team was joined by an assessor from the DfES Specialist School Section.

The school has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Surrey and the DfES Specialist School Section. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BISHOP DAVID BROWN SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit twenty nine lessons or parts of lessons, two registration sessions and one assembly were inspected. Year 11 pupils were in examinations. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors, groups of pupils and nominated staff. The lessons observed were identified by the school and joint lesson observations with senior staff were undertaken. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the LEA.

Standards in lessons were generally in line with the average expected for the age range; groups of higher attaining pupils were working at or above national expectations. The school's own analysis indicates that this summer's Key Stage 3 results will be well below the nationally expected levels, but that results at GCSE will show an improvement on those of 2004, both in the percentages of pupils achieving five or more A\* - C grades and those gaining five or more A\* - G grades.

The pupils made at least satisfactory progress in 28 of the 29 lessons, and in 12 lessons their progress was good or better. Where progress was most tangible, the pupils clearly enjoyed their learning and worked collaboratively in pairs or in groups. They saw a real purpose in an activity and wanted to complete it, with pride, to the best of their ability. Progress was less positive in those lessons where the pupils worked through tasks out of a sense of duty. Some pupils displayed variable independent learning habits once they were expected to tackle a task individually or in small groups. Faltering language skills continue to be a significant barrier to meaningful progress for many pupils in Key Stage 3.

The quality of the teaching was satisfactory in all but one lesson; it was good or better in 12 lessons. There were no marked differences between teaching across the key stages. Very effective teaching arose out of the teachers' ambitions to take risks with how they presented new knowledge; they stimulated imaginative learning styles which benefited all pupils. Good teaching was rooted routinely in the teachers' authoritative subject knowledge and meticulously prepared resources to meet the needs of different aptitudes and interests. The teachers generated active learning opportunities and tackled the explanation of difficult concepts in imaginative and enterprising ways. They asked demanding 'why?' questions of all pupils, and prompted a level of thinking that enabled pupils to achieve to their full potential. The teachers paused at different points in lessons to check that the pupils had grasped new ideas, and circulated around the classroom to offer well-judged advice and cajoling support. Humour and positive relationships underpinned good teaching. Keywords were profitably reinforced; homework was

set as an integral part of the learning. Classroom displays were stimulating and information and communication technology (ICT) was deployed in a timely fashion. Throughout the school, as a result of the pupils' more secure attitudes to learning, the teachers were able to demonstrate their true craft.

Where teaching met with more modest success, the teachers gave too much exposition and were not sufficiently focused on learning outcomes. The materials and resources did not meet fully the needs of different abilities, and there were too few opportunities for structured talk. Opportunities to engage the pupils' interests through pursuing useful digressions linked to their own ideas were missed by the teachers, and insufficient use was made of ICT.

The proportions of the pupils who have special educational needs and who are learning English as an additional language are high, and their successful achievement is a critical component to raising standards across the school. Provision is satisfactory and improving in both areas; the appointment from September 2005 of a school leader to oversee all matters related to inclusion is an important step in ensuring good provision. However, the quality of teaching remains too varied to ensure that both groups of pupils make accelerated progress. Some assessment information is too cumbersome to help the teachers to plan teaching strategies for all pupils. In lessons, the pupils' tasks are not well enough matched to their different abilities. The use of visual resources and structured opportunities to generate language and rehearse answers is too patchy; it is pertinent that the pupils describe these strategies as helpful to their learning. The management of teaching assistants is uneven and, in particular, they are not well used when the main teaching activity is dominated by the teacher. Staff support for those pupils who have hearing difficulties is good.

The pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons were consistently satisfactory, and good or better in 17 out of the 29 lessons. Where the pupils encountered very good teaching, their attitudes to learning were equally positive. The pupils' approach to maintaining accurate notes of homework in their planners has improved, but too many pupils remain casual in their record-keeping. In the corridors, playgrounds and shared areas of the school, the pupils' behaviour was consistently satisfactory, assisted by good levels of staff vigilance, although the excellent library space is not treated by pupils with the respect it deserves. The pupils were courteous to visitors and commented favourably on various recent improvements to the overall ethos of the school. The pupils are confident in turning to staff for support, where needed, and concern for their health and welfare is good. In the Year 10 assembly, the pupils' attitudes were very positive, an indication of a much more settled working atmosphere in the school. Following a thoughtful and motivating introduction from the teacher, in which the theme of the week was imaginatively explored, the pupils involved themselves in a period of quiet reflection. Morning registration sessions were spent productively. One significant indicator of the improved levels of behaviour in the school is the number of fixed-term exclusions; they number 22 during the past three months, a significant reduction from the autumn term.

The pupils' attendance remains an area for concern. However, a number of well-judged and timely interventions from teaching and support staff has led to a significant reduction in unauthorised absence. Communication with families about the importance of attendance is effective. The awards and rewards systems for acknowledging high levels of attendance are valued by the pupils. Attendance for the summer term to date is just below 90 per cent, a gradual improvement on previous terms.

The headteacher is providing good leadership. His evaluation of the progress the school has made in recent months is trenchant. His attention to detail on a day-to-day basis makes a tangible difference to the management of the school, and engenders confidence in the staff team. He has established a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and put in place appropriate measures to support and challenge his colleagues. He has recognised the imperative of consolidating the gains of the past year, and has thought through carefully the respective roles of senior staff from September 2005; new appointments have been made to strengthen subject leadership. The interim leadership team and middle managers have responded positively to the headteacher's spirited determination to raise standards in the school; there is a strong sense of the staff pulling together and working hard to achieve a common goal.

The governors continue to grow in their capacity to hold the leadership team to account. They have been active in formulating the school's latest self-evaluation review, and minutes of meetings indicate a high level of productive debate. Their recent analysis of the pressing challenges facing the school is perceptive. They acknowledge the difficulties presented by the falling school roll, and have shaped a budget plan accordingly; this plan is being reviewed by the LEA. The governing body is to be reconstituted for the autumn term, and it has sensible plans to establish five committees focusing on key aspects of the school's organisation.

The LEA has continued to provide good advisory and curriculum support, together with significant financial assistance, which has ensured staffing continuity and stability this academic year. The governors and LEA have recently held a meeting with local schools to discuss a number of issues, in particular the projected decline in the school's Year 7 intake.

### **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

#### **1: ensure that all pupils have a full timetable and a taught curriculum to suit their capabilities**

Year 11 pupils were provided with strong support in preparation for their GCSE examinations, and they responded by active participation in a number of revision courses. A group of Year 10 pupils has started a hairdressing course, and value the opportunity to use the school's good resources. The extra-curricular programme is expanding, with a focus on sport. The planned curriculum for September 2005

includes a suitable vocational element in Key Stage 4, and most teaching across both key stages will be delivered by subject specialists. Approaches to literacy and numeracy are still not integral to cross-curricular planning.

Progress is good.

## **2: provide sufficient guidance to unqualified teachers and graduate trainees and monitor their induction and workload carefully**

A good professional development programme continues to provide relevant training and support for three teachers seeking qualified teacher status and for four newly qualified teachers. Members of both groups value the quality of training and mentoring, and as a result the retention rate for successful trainees is high. During the inspection, the standard of their teaching ranged between sound and good, which represents a significant improvement since the section 10 inspection. The programme manager leaves at the end of the academic year and the need for a thoroughly planned handover is recognised.

Progress is good.

## **3: improve teaching and learning to raise standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics, science and the vocational subjects**

New lesson-planning and observation documents have been devised and are improving consistency. Lesson observations have centred on a shared understanding of the common characteristics of a well-taught lesson. However, the school is aware that some middle managers need further support in achieving consistency in judgements. Feedback to teachers does not always focus on the degree of challenge in lessons. A significant proportion of teachers, who were previously delivering satisfactory teaching, are now teaching some good lessons.

Progress is reasonable.

## **4: put measures in place to improve the literacy of pupils whose first language is not English, particularly in Years 7 to 9**

Several sound strategies have been implemented to improve standards in literacy. These include classroom support, a peer-tutoring programme for reading for pupils who speak the same home language, and the use of dual language dictionaries and vocabulary books. In one lesson, a teaching assistant effectively utilised home languages, drawings and spellings to help two pupils understand concepts and access information. Signs throughout the school display key information in a variety of languages and celebrate cultural diversity. Nevertheless, these developments currently have a limited impact. A significant development of teaching literacy across the curriculum is appropriately planned.

Progress is reasonable.

**5: ensure that pupils' work is comprehensively assessed and that data collected is used to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils to improve their achievement**

There are continued improvements in marking, and in recording and reporting assessment. Parents and the pupils have found the new style of reports helpful in identifying standards and targets. Regular assessments from each teacher are efficiently recorded but are produced in different ways by each department, and not all are moderated. Assessments are analysed centrally on the school's self-designed system, enabling data for three consecutive terms to be sent to parents, and providing accessible information to heads of department and heads of year.

Peer and self-assessment are growing successfully in some departments, with level descriptions presented in language accessible to the pupils. Targets for presentation exceed curricular targets in pupils' books and the latter are frequently at a general level. The targets do not routinely address specific misconceptions or indicate precisely how a pupil might improve or how this will be monitored.

The school's analysis of national assessment results and predicted standards does not include value-added measures between key stages for each pupil.

Progress is reasonable.

**6: improve leadership and management by concentrating on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching rather than outside projects**

Much of this area has been evaluated above. Middle managers have grown in confidence in discharging their responsibilities and acting upon their accountabilities to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher judges rightly that this team, including the new appointments from September 2005, will be key to improving further the attainment of the pupils.

Progress is reasonable.

**7: ensure that all expenditure, including that for performing arts, is well directed towards raising standards and achieves best value for pupils' achievement**

A recent audit assessed that the school's systems of internal control and financial management were operating effectively. The LEA and governors are discussing appropriately the budget projections for the coming two years.

Progress is reasonable.