



The Bishop David Brown School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125266
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 283076
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Roy Blatchford HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Albert Drive
School category	Community		Woking
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		GU21 5RF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01932349696
Number on roll	536	Fax number	01932349175
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Brian Baty
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2003	Headteacher	Mr Stuart Shephard

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	283076

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

The Bishop David Brown School is a multi-cultural school situated in Sheerwater, Surrey. It is smaller than average in size having experienced a marked decline in student numbers in recent years; the school is working within the Woking Federation to reverse this trend. The proportion of students eligible for free meals is about average. Many students enter the school in Year 7 with levels of numeracy and literacy which are lower than those seen nationally. The school has a higher than average proportion of students for whom English is an additional language. A significant number of students joins the school after the usual transfer age of 11. The hearing support resource provides a well planned and inclusive education for hearing impaired students. The school's status as a performing arts college was renewed in July 2005. When the school was inspected in November 2003, it was judged to require special measures. Following a period of high teacher turnover, the school is now providing a satisfactory and improving standard of education, and is benefiting from stable staffing and effective leadership.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school is providing a satisfactory standard of education, with a number of good features. Although standards in GCSE examinations and in the Key Stage 3 national tests in 2005 were below those found in similar schools, the overall trend from 2004 is one of gradual improvement. Students are making adequate, and in some cases good and very good, progress because teaching is at least satisfactory across all subject areas. There is some outstanding teaching practice in a number of curriculum areas. Students who have special educational needs are making particularly strong progress. Students' extended writing and independent learning skills are not as developed as they need to be. Rightly, the school has identified the priority of continuing to increase the amount of good teaching in order to improve students' standards in national tests and examinations. The care, guidance and support for students provided by all staff are good. There is a prevailing ethos of calm and purposeful study within the school. Senior leadership is strong and that of middle management is increasingly effective. The school provides satisfactory value for money although the decline in the school roll presents a significant challenge to sustaining a balanced school budget. The school has improved significantly since the inspection of November 2003, and the capacity to improve at all levels within the school is good.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to raise standards further, the headteacher and governors should* ensure that teaching becomes consistently effective across all subject areas* build on the established practices for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning* develop further the students' extended writing and independent learning skills

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards reached by the students this year have improved but are not yet in line with the national average. This confirms the school's judgement. The 2005 provisional test results at Key Stage 3 are broadly the same as in the previous year, and this represents satisfactory achievement considering the starting points of the students. At Key Stage 4 the 2005 results attained by the students rose compared with the previous year, and this also represents satisfactory achievement. There was a particularly high rise seen in attainment of the students in English and mathematics. In mathematics, in 2004, the value added from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 was in line with the national average. In 2005, it is above that of the national average. In both key stages the progress seen in lessons was broadly satisfactory, and was good or very good with some groups of students. The progress made by hearing impaired students, students who have special educational needs, and students with English as an additional language was particularly strong. The additional support provided for those students

has resulted in their good achievement. The accelerated learning centre has also helped to improve the progress of a number of students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well being of students are satisfactory. Most students enjoy their education. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very close to that seen nationally. The awards and rewards systems for acknowledging high levels of attendance are valued by students. The attitudes of students are generally good, but in lessons where teaching is not stimulating there is half-hearted concentration and effort. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and students, parents and staff are very clear that there have been significant improvements. Students feel safe and secure as they move around the school. The introduction of the accelerated learning centre is having a very positive impact on improving behaviour and students' motivation. In the words of one student: 'I like the centre for the calm atmosphere and clarity it gives me. I am able to unclutter my thoughts without pressure'. Students speak well of the ways in which they are involved in school activities. The school council plays an increasingly important role in involving students in decision making; an innovative example is the recent questionnaire which has seen a very high return rate. Students value the opportunities they are offered to take on roles of responsibility, such as being prefects. Tutors play a crucial role in developing students' self-esteem, for example with Year 11 students completing their National Record of Achievement. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school's broad cultural diversity contributes well to promoting cultural awareness. This strength is the result of the school's success in valuing and including all its students. There are many opportunities for students to make a positive contribution to the community, with the recently revived annual production playing an important role. One student commented: 'I am quite shy, but I'm getting more confident. I've loved every minute of it and I hope we do another show next year.' The school does all that may reasonably be expected to promote good attendance. The education social worker and police officer visit homes of local pupils to bring them to school when there is no satisfactory explanation given for absence. The school recognises that levels of attendance remain unsatisfactory, yet the picture is not all bleak. The rate of attendance improved during the last reporting year. In 2005, the highest recorded percentage of 14 year old pupils sat national tests rather than avoiding them by staying at home. Pupils eat and drink healthily at school. Pupils love the free breakfast club where staff and pupils chat and read newspapers. Filtered water is available throughout the day, and free fruit juice is provided at break times. At the behest of the school council, the sandwich choice at lunchtimes has improved, although some pupils noted that they would enjoy a hot meal at lunchtimes, which is currently not available.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory overall, with some practice that is good and outstanding. The very best teaching arises out of teachers' unswerving ambition to ensure that students achieve to the best of their abilities. These teachers motivate students with thoughtful lesson planning, resources and activities; they ask demanding 'why?' questions and involve the students in assessing one another's progress. Good teaching is rooted routinely in teachers' expert subject knowledge and love of their subject. Humour, positive relationships and the skilful orchestration of time underpin classroom practice. The teachers tackle the explanation of difficult concepts in imaginative and enterprising ways. They pause at different points in lessons to check that students have grasped new ideas, and circulate in the classroom to offer well judged advice and cajoling support. Keywords are profitably reinforced and homework is set as an integral part of the teaching. The teaching assistants' detailed knowledge of students' individual needs makes a significant contribution to the climate for learning. Teaching which met more modest success did not address fully the needs of different abilities, there were too few opportunities for structured talk, and classroom management was inconsistent. Opportunities for students to write at length in different areas of the curriculum are limited; some students have difficulties when expected to work independently, lacking self-belief. The school has begun to address both these issues. A decisive influence on improvements in the quality of teaching has been the impressive development of exacting assessment procedures throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Provision for vocational education in Key Stage 4 has been appropriately introduced, with imaginative plans for expansion in 2006. The hairdressing course has served to motivate the attendance and behaviour of a small group of students. Key Stage 4 provision for students who have special educational needs includes a suitable range of courses. Preparation for adult life and economic well-being are promoted through citizenship. The students appreciate the way in which the school has responded to their views and ensured that subjects on the timetable are distributed evenly through the school week. Links with primary schools, particularly seeking to promote standards of literacy and enjoyment of reading, are effective. The school's extracurricular programme provides a diverse range of opportunities including sport, music, drama, art and languages. One Year 11 student commented: "The booster and extra clubs for help with GCSE have been really helpful to me". The performing arts specialism enhances what the school is able to offer to students: one Year 10 student observed: 'Drama is hard work but fun with lots of practical'. A Year 11 student added: 'This year I really know where I am with my music practicals'. The students involved in winning the Surrey Great Debate have gained enormously from their participation: 'It was a wonderful experience.

It made me see issues in a whole new light, also developing my self-confidence, grammatical and oral skills'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has good systems in place for monitoring students' attendance and punctuality, as well as their behaviour and their academic and personal development. The careful identification of students' individual learning needs, and the systems and support to address these, enables students who have a range of special educational needs to make good progress. The school supports very well those students who join classes during the academic year. Child protection and staff checking procedures are robust. These processes are supported well by outside agencies such as social services and the inclusion and behavioural support teams. Careers advice and support are good and ensure that all students are well informed about the options available to them when they leave school. The positive links with local colleges further enhance this provision. Students place high value on the ways in which they are cared for and supported. They comment favourably on how these have improved measurably since the last inspection. The effectiveness of the systems was notable during the lunchtimes and breaktimes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

While the impact on standards in national examinations has yet to be fully seen, the quality of leadership and management at all levels in the school is effective. The headteacher's leadership is very good, recognising the importance of restoring an unequivocal focus on good teaching and decisive management of students. The senior team has a detailed knowledge of the strengths and potential of the school, and has judged well the balance of challenge and support given to all staff and students. Responsibilities and accountabilities are clear, and acted upon with energy, commitment and skill. The team has enabled staff to pull together and work diligently to achieve a common goal: raising standards for students. The leadership of subjects and year groups has grown in confidence. Systems for sharing best practice and monitoring the quality of what happens in classrooms are established, for example with the regular scrutiny of students' books, and are being usefully strengthened. Middle management has had a decisive impact on the good quality of care, guidance and support which students of all ages experience. The accommodation and learning environment have been significantly improved, and classrooms and corridors have vibrant displays of students' achievements. Some of the art work is outstanding. Communication with parents and the local community is well developed, and confidence in the school, deservedly, is being restored. The governors and leadership team are working harmoniously, with plans for the future of the school and its campus containing appropriate priorities. The governing body has been recently reconstituted, and is able to hold to account senior managers from a well informed perspective. Significant challenges are posed by the school's reduction in the number of pupils on roll. The

school has been very well supported by the local authority in bringing about changes and development since November 2003. There is a determination from governors and staff to sustain and build upon the many gains of the past two years, in the best interests of the students' educational achievements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may recall that an inspection team visited the school a couple of weeks ago to report on the quality of education that you are receiving. We would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to inspectors, and particularly to those of you who spoke to us and shared your work and opinions. A full report is available, but this letter summarises our main findings, ones which you may wish to discuss with your form and school councils. The questionnaire conducted recently by the school council is a very good example of students being involved in decision making.

In the past, as you have told inspectors, a number of things have been unsatisfactory. You should all be proud that we now judge The Bishop David Brown School to be providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. Standards in national examinations are not yet as good as they should be, but your progress in subjects is getting stronger all the time. Among a number of strengths at the school, we found: * good teaching which motivates you and leads to examples of high standards of work; * strong support and guidance from your teachers and support staff; * the work of the accelerated learning centre; * the facilities available to you during breaktimes and wet lunchtimes! * the rich range of extracurricular activities, which a number of you drew to our attention; * the positive links you have with primary schools and local colleges.

We have suggested to the headteacher and governors that further improvements can be made by making sure that all teaching is consistently of a good standard, and by teachers monitoring your progress and your books very carefully. What is needed from you is: * to practise your writing skills, especially writing at length when you are given tasks * to develop your research and other independent learning skills, persevering with classwork and homework assignments. You have all played a part in helping the school to improve, and we hope you will continue to support the governors and staff as they work hard to raise standards further.