



Bury Church of England High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105365
LEA Bury
Inspection number 287211
Inspection dates 24 May 2006 to 25 May 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Julie Price Grimshaw HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Haslam Brow
School category	Voluntary aided		Bury
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Lancashire BL9 0TS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7976236
Number on roll	707	Fax number	0161 7051872
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Allen
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2001	Headteacher	Mr Philip Grady

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	24 May 2006 - 25 May 2006	287211

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bury Church of England High School is a smaller than average voluntary aided mixed comprehensive school with 707 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a range of over 50 primary schools, some in neighbouring local authorities. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The school's population is largely White British with a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school was awarded specialist humanities college status in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bury Church of England High School views its overall effectiveness as satisfactory; however, inspectors judge it to be a good school. There is a very strong Christian ethos, and relationships amongst pupils, and between staff and pupils, are a positive feature of this caring community. Standards are well above average but there is some underachievement, particularly in English. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there are some examples of outstanding practice. There is, however, too much inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work across subjects. The school cares for its pupils well and effectively promotes their personal development and well-being. An outstanding curriculum successfully meets the needs of all learners, and pupils benefit greatly from their involvement in an impressive range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. The school has a very effective pastoral system and pupils feel well supported. Overall, leadership and management are good; school managers have identified the main areas for development and have begun to implement appropriate strategies to raise achievement and bring about a range of improvements. However, there are weaknesses in the management and deployment of temporary teaching staff who are not always given sufficient support and guidance. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in English.
- Ensure consistency in the quality of marking of pupils' work across all subjects
- Implement procedures to ensure that temporary teaching staff are effectively deployed and supported.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation of pupil achievement as being satisfactory. The majority of the pupils enter the school in Year 7 having achieved standards that are well above the national average. In 2005, standards at the end of Year 9 were well above average. However, progress from Year 7 was below expectation when compared with that made by pupils in similar schools. Although progress in science was satisfactory, there was underachievement in both English and mathematics.

Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11 and attainment is well above average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more high grades at 'General Certificate of Secondary Education' (GCSE) has risen over the past three years, and in 2005 the school obtained its best ever results. Very few pupils leave with no qualification. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Although boys and girls attain standards that are well above average there is evidence of underachievement, particularly by girls of average and above average ability.

Severe staffing difficulties have contributed to the underachievement in English and mathematics. In the case of mathematics, these staffing difficulties have been resolved and there are strategies in place to bring about improvements. Evidence from a good, recently developed pupil tracking system and from lesson observations indicates that the school is raising achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school accurately judges personal development and well-being as good. Pupils enjoy coming to school; attendance and punctuality are good and the number of exclusions is low. Pupils feel safe around the school and respect their environment; the campus is free of litter and graffiti. The school has taken effective steps to increase pupils' awareness of strategies for dealing with bullying, and a number of successful initiatives have been introduced, including the provision of an email facility that allows pupils to contact staff anonymously with any concerns they may have. Pupils adopt safe practices and gain an appropriate awareness of risks. Behaviour, both in and out of lessons, is outstanding. Pupils are very positive about their school and they appreciate the rich variety of opportunities they are given. They show genuine care for each other.

A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent and is enhanced through well-planned assemblies, a variety of curricular and out-of-school work, such as visits to museums and theatres.

The school has started to make progress in encouraging healthy eating, and pupils are allowed to drink water during lessons. Pupils are encouraged to make a contribution to the school community; form groups democratically elect representatives including a form captain and school council member. The school is making good use of its status as a specialist humanities college to develop links with the local community – for example, the school has hosted industry evenings for Year 10 pupils, involving local employers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school rates the quality of teaching and learning as satisfactory but inspectors judge it to be good overall. Most lessons are well planned with a good mix of activities which capture the interest of pupils and keep them on task. The majority of teachers possess good classroom management skills and pace their lessons well. In the most effective lessons, the teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be active in their learning. In such cases, pupils work hard and are genuinely keen to learn; they respond very well to the challenging tasks set for them, and enjoy participating in what are often incisive question and

answer sessions. In less effective lessons, learning outcomes are not always made clear and the pace is too slow. Occasionally, the arrangements made when regular teachers are absent lead to unsatisfactory learning.

The most effective teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and use a variety of assessment strategies to help learners understand how well they are progressing. For example, during an art lesson with a group of less able pupils, the teacher skilfully led a very productive plenary session that encouraged pupils to carefully analyse each other's work, focusing on technique and composition. However, there is too much inconsistency in the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work across the school. The best marking provides clear and helpful guidance, whilst some is too superficial and, in some cases, too infrequent. Most teachers effectively differentiate work in order to meet pupils' individual needs. The school has made good progress recently in highlighting the needs of gifted and talented pupils, and in the best lessons teachers plan activities to stretch and challenge such pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school considers the curriculum to be outstanding and inspectors agree. In Years 7 to 9, a broad balanced curriculum meets statutory requirements and the needs of all pupils. In Years 10 and 11, the exceptionally wide range of GCSE courses offered in school and the provision of vocational courses off site, at the local college, is satisfying pupils diverse needs and interests. An outstanding feature of the provision is the recent development of the school's e-curriculum. All pupils have access to the school's intranet at home. They collect and return homework, obtain study support materials and have the opportunity to engage in an interactive student forum.

The school successfully encourages wide participation in enrichment activities, which is contributing to pupil achievement. In addition, an excellent range of other extra-curricular activities enriches the lives of pupils and contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school. One pupil said, 'There is something for everyone here.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school believes the quality of the care, guidance and support it provides its pupils is outstanding. Whilst there are some excellent aspects, inspectors judge it to be good overall. The school's strong Christian ethos lies at the heart of its very effective system of pastoral care. Pupils clearly appreciate the relationships they enjoy with their teachers and are happy to turn to them for help and support.

The transition from primary school is very well handled with most pupils settling in quickly. This is particularly impressive given the fact that the school's intake comes from a large number of primary schools. Form tutors remain with pupils throughout their school career and this helps to consolidate the effective working relationships between tutors and pupils. Child protection procedures are fully in place; vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported.

The recently developed pupil tracking system is helping the school to set appropriately challenging targets for pupils, and the quality of guidance pupils receive about their academic progress is improving. New procedures for assessing progress against targets are bedding in and are increasingly allowing underachievement to be identified. Pupils in Key Stage 4 rightly consider that the advice and guidance for course and career choices is a positive feature.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. Members of the senior management team share a corporate vision for the future of the school. There are secure procedures in place for the monitoring of teaching and learning across the school. Consequently, school managers have a sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses in these areas. Members of the governing body show high levels of commitment to the school and carry out their statutory responsibilities effectively. Recently, the school and governing body have worked together successfully to increase governors' involvement in curriculum matters; for example, by attending presentations given by subject departments and taking a more active role in making decisions relating to the curriculum. The quality of improvement planning is good overall; there is an established cycle of planning, evaluation and review, at both departmental and whole-school levels.

In recent years, staffing difficulties in some subject areas have resulted in a number of problems relating to the deployment of temporary teaching staff. External staff are not always provided with sufficient guidance and support to enable them to deliver effective teaching.

Specialist college status has had a positive impact on the work of the school. In a relatively short amount of time, a number of successful initiatives have been introduced and the school is keen to extend this work. The school has started to form links with local businesses and other schools in the area, as well as with a school in Namibia.

Overall, the school demonstrates a secure awareness of its main strengths and areas for development. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly with regard to the provision of information and communication technology (ICT), and resources are deployed efficiently. The school demonstrates good capacity to make further improvements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	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	2	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	2	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Following our visit to your school we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for sharing your views with us. We would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

We think that Bury Church of England School is a good school with a strong Christian ethos. We believe that the staff care about your personal development and are very committed to supporting you during your time at school, and we were also impressed that so many of you show genuine care and support for each other. You also help to look after the school well - it was really good to see no litter or graffiti!

Examination results at your school are well above the national average but we feel that some of you are not making as much progress as you could during Years 7 to 11, especially in mathematics and English. We know that there have been some staffing difficulties in these subjects in the past and that these difficulties have now been resolved in mathematics. We are also pleased that the school has appointed a new head of English who will be starting in September. We have asked the staff to think about how all of you can make better progress, especially in English. The school has started to look carefully at how your progress can best be tracked so that each one of you makes as much progress as possible.

One of the things that impressed us most was your behaviour; we visited lots of lessons, and in virtually every one you behaved superbly. You also behaved well around the school at break times and during lunch. There is a really good range of subjects and courses for you to follow and we thought that the choice of extra-curricular activities was excellent. Most of the teaching at your school is good, and some is outstanding. You told us that the lessons you like the best are those where the work is challenging and you are encouraged to be actively involved. Some of you mentioned the fact that the quality of marking varies quite a lot and we agree; we have asked the staff to think about how they can develop marking across the school so that all of it gives you useful guidance on how to improve your work. You also mentioned that sometimes, when temporary teachers lead the lessons, you don't learn as much as you would like; again, we have asked the school to look at this issue and think about how the situation can be improved.

Mr Grady and all the staff work hard to help you get the very best from your time at Bury Church of England School. We were pleased that so many of you were happy to be at the school and hope that you will work even harder in order to achieve your full potential.