

# St Bartholomew's School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110098
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	288590
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wiola Hola HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1588
6th form	309
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Campbell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stuart Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Andover Road Newbury RG14 6JP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 521255
<b>Fax number</b>	01635 576320

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 May 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	288590

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 four Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is much larger than average. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few are from a wide range of other backgrounds and 40 are at an early stage of learning English. Attainment on entry is above average. The proportions of students with learning difficulties or disabilities and of students eligible for free school meals are below average. Students' mobility is low. The school is a specialist school in Business and Enterprise.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Bartholomew's is a good school with many outstanding features such as the sixth form and students' personal development. The school strives to ensure that every student succeeds academically and in other ways so as to have the best possible start in adult life. Academic standards are very high and students achieve well in the main school and exceptionally well in the sixth form. Moreover, test and examination results show that the rate of students' progress is increasing year by year. These outcomes are underpinned by outstanding leadership and management that give clear direction to the work of the school and seek constantly to improve.

Students' good achievement is supported primarily by good teaching and learning. The school is seeking to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning and knows what needs to be done to deal with some inconsistencies in teaching. It aims to improve further teachers' skills in establishing very clearly what gains students are making lesson by lesson. This is to ensure that subsequent tasks are well matched to students' needs and offer suitable challenge which is usually, but not always, the case now. Good achievement is also supported by an excellent curriculum that includes many additional activities to add interest and enjoyment to school life. The school's status as a Business and Enterprise College has had a positive impact on the quality of provision for students across the curriculum. In addition, students receive outstanding care, support and guidance. The house system is much valued by students, staff and parents as a means of ensuring that each student is known well and encouraged to work hard and succeed. It also contributes greatly to students' personal development. The school keeps very good records of students' progress. Through frequent progress checks, it identifies quickly any potential underachievement and acts to address it.

Students are understandably proud of their school and contribute greatly to the sense of community through their mature attitudes and willingness to engage in all that it offers. Another key feature of the school is the way in which governors and staff, teaching and support, work supportively of each other and with clarity of purpose. The school's evaluation of its work and effectiveness is excellent. In spite of the limitations of the old buildings on two sites, the school has excellent capacity to continue to improve. Plans exist for the rebuilding of the school in the next few years. Most parents praise the school for the progress their children make and for the way it helps them to mature.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding. Students reach high standards in a wide range of advanced level courses. Examination results have improved significantly over the last three years and are set to do so again in 2007. In 2006, students did particularly well and current students are making excellent progress. Overall achievement is outstanding.

Excellent leadership and management result in effective action to deal with identified areas for improvement. For example, procedures for monitoring and informing students about their progress have greatly improved since the last inspection. Recent reviews of subjects where students have achieved less well have led to the modification of courses and improved standards, in drama, for example. The curriculum provides a wide range of subjects that meet most students' needs very well. The school provides very clear guidance about available courses and about future career opportunities. As a result, the great majority of students complete their chosen

courses and successfully move on to employment, further training or higher education. Students respond very well to the good quality of teaching. They are keen to learn, develop good relationships with teachers and are very willing to take responsibility for their own learning. They quickly develop the study and research skills that they need to be successful. Students' personal development is outstanding. Students are mature and articulate and make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. The house system enables them to support younger students in the main school, developing their teamwork skills. The sixth form provides excellent value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve further the quality of teaching and learning: ensure that students are suitably challenged in all lessons because teachers have identified clearly the extent of their learning through skilled questioning or other methods of day-to-day assessment.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Standards have been rising and the 2006 test and examinations results in Years 9 and 11 were exceptionally high whereas in previous years they were above average. Results in the sixth form are high.

Taking account of students' above average starting points, the 2006 results show good overall achievement from Years 7 to 11, although not in all subjects: progress over Years 7 to 11 in English and mathematics was broadly average. Over Years 7 to 9, students achieved well in English and mathematics and satisfactorily in science.

Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities, or who are looked after, make similar progress to their peers.

The rate of students' progress over Years 7 to 11 has improved significantly in recent years and this reflects the school's work on improving teaching and learning. The school's records of students' current work show that, in all stages, standards and achievement are expected to rise further in 2007.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Personal development and well being are outstanding. Students are very proud and supportive of their school; their behaviour, attendance and punctuality are excellent and they have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy their education and value the calm and purposeful atmosphere that exists in the vast majority of lessons. The school's house system, the opportunities to take on responsibility and the recognition of personal involvement are also greatly valued by students. Students are friendly and confident and show high levels of respect for other students and to staff. They know who they should turn to for help and feel safe and well cared for.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very strong; the broad range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and the arts, supports this development well. Students learn about other cultures and have many opportunities to reflect on others'

experiences. They adopt safe practices and are aware of the need for healthy lifestyles. Students make a positive contribution to the school and wider community through house, year and school council activities including a variety of charitable fund raising events. At all stages, students are extremely well prepared for their future economic well being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enjoy very good relationships with students. Older students state that learning has improved and that there is now a greater variety of teaching styles. However, students, parents and inspectors note that there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching within and across subjects. In the best lessons, students are well managed and are given a variety of challenging tasks matched to their ages and abilities. In these lessons students know what is expected of them; they work with interest and enthusiasm and make very good and sometimes excellent progress. Elsewhere, students are still willing to work, but the teaching does not always ensure that all students are fully involved or challenged and this slows the pace of learning. Teachers' marking is mostly helpful and incorporates encouraging comments; however, not all teachers give students enough guidance on what they need to do to improve. Students with learning difficulties and those who are gifted or talented are identified accurately and are taught well in class lessons or in small groups.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding and reflects students' needs. It is very effectively supported and enhanced by the school's close working relationship with a wide range of local businesses. Choices of subjects in Years 10 to 13 are wide ranging and include some vocational subjects. This provision is being further extended next year. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught as a discrete subject throughout Years 7 to 11 with most subject areas also now making good use of computers. This was an issue raised in the previous inspection and has been addressed in a positive and very effective manner by the school.

Imaginative timetabling and well planned curriculum organisation make good use of time and allow students the flexibility to take examinations early, for example, GCSE ICT in Year 9. Students study two separate modern foreign languages in Years 8 and 9 and at least one in Years 10 and 11 and this enhances their personal development. Very good support is arranged and given to students with learning difficulties or disabilities. The outstanding enrichment programme of sports activities, school teams, house competitions, curriculum support and other activities such as clubs, visits and enterprise days is greatly appreciated and supported by students and contributes greatly to their excellent personal development.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The care, guidance and support given to learners are outstanding. The school has, and uses, systems to ensure that students feel safe. Students say that they feel that staff really care about them. All statutory requirements regarding child protection are followed in a very precise and detailed manner. The school works very effectively with a wide range of outside agencies to support students, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities and looked after children. The school has developed very effective links with local colleges, partner primary schools, agencies and a wide range of local business enterprises. These ensure that students are fully aware of the choices available at all stages of their school lives and are supported to make smooth transitions.

The school compiles data on students' attainment extremely well and uses them to set challenging targets for all students. The data are reviewed regularly in great detail to keep a close check on students' progress, underachievement is quickly identified and extra support provided where necessary. Parents and students are informed of the outcomes through frequent reports or meetings with form tutors; some parents, however, regret that they are not able to meet subject teachers on a regular basis.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Enjoyment and achievement walk hand in hand in this school. Students are valued and standards are high in every respect. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, with excellent support from the senior leadership team, ensures a happy and very purposeful learning environment. Morale amongst staff and students is high. The headteacher provides a very clear vision and direction for the school which is shared and understood by the rest of the staff. There is a clear focus on raising achievement through improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has been generally successful but the quality of teaching and learning is still inconsistent, particularly in relation to assessment of learning in lessons. The school is aware of this and continues to work hard to ensure improvement with valuable contributions from some highly effective teachers who are sharing their expertise.

All staff, teaching and support, make a very positive contribution to raising standards and achievement. They have very clear responsibilities and are held to account. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are very robust and staff receive good support from both senior and middle management. Professional development is very good and is clearly linked to school improvement priorities. Governors are very supportive and well organised. They are well informed and are actively involved in most aspects of school improvement. Financial systems are secure and the school makes very efficient use of resources. The school has outstanding capacity to improve even though the school buildings show signs of age and have limitations, for example, in the small size of some classrooms.

Communications with parents are good, through the 'BartholoNews' newsletter and frequent reports on students' progress, for example. Some parents, however, feel that the recent process

for communicating and agreeing changes to school uniform had some shortcomings. The school is seeking Extended School status and many elements of this provision are already in place and operating very successfully.



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

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St Bartholomew's School, Andover Road, Newbury, RG14 6JP

Following the recent visit of inspectors to your school I would like to thank you for the valuable contributions you made in helping us with our work. We appreciated greatly talking to many of you and seeing you and your work in lessons and around the school. I would like to tell you about our findings.

St Bartholomew's is a good school with many outstanding features and you are rightly proud of it. It enables you to achieve well and reach extremely high standards overall. Your personal development is outstanding. The sixth form is outstanding and students in it achieve highly. Standards at St Bartholomew's are rising and the rate of students' progress is increasing.

These outcomes are underpinned by excellent leadership and management. Staff, teaching and support, are led extremely well by the headteacher and senior staff and all strive constantly for improvement. You succeed because teaching and learning are good, although they are not of consistently high quality in all lessons; you and your parents told us this and we agree. The school knows that more needs to be done to improve further the quality of teaching and learning and it also knows how to do it. We have asked the school to ensure that you are suitably challenged in all lessons because teachers have identified clearly the extent of your learning through skilled questioning or other methods of day-to-day assessment.

The other reasons for your success are the outstanding curriculum, care, guidance and support you are provided with. The many timetabled and additional activities the school provides add greatly to your enjoyment of school. The school works extremely well to ensure that you are safe and develop healthy lifestyles. It guides you very well to make appropriate choices about your studies and your future and keeps a very close check on your progress, giving extra support where necessary.

The large majority of your parents are understandably very supportive of the school and appreciate all that it offers. We wish you all the very best for your own future and for the future of the school.

Yours sincerely,

Wiola HalaHer Majesty's Inspector