



The Bishop Wand Church of England School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125280
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 293248
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Armitage HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Laytons Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Sunbury-on-Thames
Age range of pupils	11–18		TW16 6LT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01932 778600
Number on roll (school)	941	Fax number	01932 771022
Number on roll (6th form)	103		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr G S Ceaser FRICS MEng
		Headteacher	Mr N Dunkley MA
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	18–19 October 2006	293248

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The Bishop Wand Church of England School is a comprehensive school serving Spelthorne and parts of Richmond and Hounslow. On entry to the school, the overall ability of students is above average. The large majority of students are of White British heritage. Other students come from a wide range of backgrounds. Nearly 19 per cent of students have some form of learning difficulty or disability. The school is a specialist sports college.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. Standards are above average in Key Stages 3 and 4 and average in the Sixth Form. This means that students make satisfactory progress given their above average ability on entry to Year 7 and average ability when they start the sixth form in Year 12. Students' personal development is good.

The last Ofsted inspection report in 2001 painted a picture of a popular school where standards were good and young people were supported well in their personal development. But it also made clear that that students were not doing as well as they could given their above average ability when they started school. The report judged that this was because the school did not know itself well; it did not monitor and quality assure enough and did not have the resulting plans to bring the quality of its academic work up to the standard of its pastoral support. The result of this situation has been seen in successive examination results - standards overall being above average but with students making less progress than could reasonably be expected.

The school has responded positively to the last report and, during the past two years, has made significant improvements - in its identification of issues and in the way it responds to them. There have been significant changes in the governing body, to the senior leadership team and to other staffing. The analysis of data and other evidence has improved so that staff and governors have a clearer idea of strengths and weaknesses. The academic aspirations of the school are now more tightly defined. Strategies have been implemented to improve students' progress including changes to teaching, encouraging students to raise their own aspirations and take more responsibility for learning, changing the curriculum, and providing tighter management. Ideas have been prioritised and translated into effective plans, many of which are coming to fruition. However, the school is not there yet. Some students' academic progress is now good but this is not consistent across all subjects, classes and year groups, not least because many of the improvements will take time to work well. Some teaching is good but this high quality is not found consistently throughout the school. Some teaching fails to put sufficient onus on students to think for themselves and be actively involved in their learning. Nevertheless, given what has been achieved so far, inspectors are confident that the school's capacity to go on improving is good.

Specialist school status has already had positive results. It is providing opportunities for more able sports students as well as encouraging previously less interested students to participate in a range of activities. However, this approach to supporting higher attaining students is not consistent in the rest of the school.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Overall, students' standards are average and they make satisfactory progress. However, some students do very well so the potential is there for those who can take advantage not only of the good range of subjects available but also the teaching in small,

supportive groups. Effective plans are in hand to broaden the range of courses from 2008 in cooperation with neighbouring schools and colleges.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the best features of teaching and learning already found in parts of the school are introduced throughout in order to improve students' progress.
- Raise students' aspirations still further by giving them more independence and opportunity to take greater responsibility for aspects of their learning.
- Increase the impact of specialist school status by using the good practice for supporting higher attaining students in PE and sport to improve teaching in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Taking into account all subjects, the standards reached by students are above average in Key Stages 3 and 4 and average in the sixth form. However, this overall picture hides some significant variations. For instance, in 2006, fewer than 50 per cent of students attained five or more GCSE grades A*-C including both English and mathematics and in many subjects there were few A* or A grades. In contrast, in others such as office technology, textiles, expressive arts, history, art and design and physical education, at least one-third of the grades were A* or A.

The overall progress made by students during their years in school is satisfactory. Again, this hides variations. For example, students' achievement in English has been unsatisfactory in recent years. However, students are now making satisfactory progress as shown in the 2006 Year 9 results. This is as a result of recent substantial efforts by teachers to identify students' needs more accurately and to adjust their teaching accordingly. Students from different ethnic backgrounds make broadly similar progress to most students, as do those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As they proceed through school, students' confidence and willingness to 'have a go' are developing well as is their deeper understanding of themselves and others. Their ability to take and support a moral position also improves. Students work well together and, for the most part, develop successful, professional relationships with adults. Their cultural development is good through their classroom studies and as a result of extra-curricular activities; for example, during Black History Month and National Music Week. Students make a positive contribution to the community, for example by their work in local schools for the Junior Sports Leader Award. They are developing a useful

understanding of their rights and responsibilities, in particular, through the school council and the citizenship curriculum. They are acquiring knowledge and skills that will be useful later in employment and help sustain their economic well-being.

Students' attendance is good and attitudes to learning are also good. However, there is still scope for raising their aspirations, notably by encouraging them to be more demanding of themselves and the expectations they have of the school for support. Behaviour is also good but in some classes, learning is marred by low-level misbehaviour and distracting chatter. Students are safety conscious and feel safe; they and their parents are confident that staff deal with most incidents of bullying effectively.

Students are aware of lifestyle issues, not least as a result of the specialist sports status which encourages healthy living and the pursuit of exercise after leaving school. Food in the school canteen is nutritious and appetising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there is some which is better than this. As a result of good teaching, examples of effective learning were seen during the inspection; for instance, when Year 10 students in history, working in pairs, sorted out for themselves what to do to get higher marks when answering an exam question. However, this focus on students being given more responsibility for their own learning is not evident enough and in some classes, students were restless when they were not sufficiently active and involved.

Teachers share the objectives of lessons with students but few are written in a style that helps them understand how the lesson is relevant to their lives and futures. The volume of written work completed by students varies between teachers and some are better than others at building in more general skills such as literacy, numeracy and information technology. The quality of marking is also very variable. Some teachers tell students exactly why their grade is not higher and give crisp guidance on what would make it better; others merely tick with few comments. The different needs of students across the ability range are mostly well met but the school recognises it needs to do more for the most able, for example, by building on the mentoring programme developed in PE and sport.

Students with particular learning needs are well looked after. In the sixth form, the small classes greatly help students and in most lessons teachers encourage students to work on their own and be responsible learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It covers all the required subjects including two modern languages in Years 8 and 9 and citizenship. In Key Stage 4, students have the opportunity to study vocational courses and an innovative programme for those who need a course finely tuned to their needs. In the sixth form, there is a broad range of A levels and a vocational course. Students' skills are also developed through work experience, the annual Skills Festival and the Young Enterprise Scheme. The National Strategy has had a useful impact on the curriculum; for example, by the way that subjects now have as an aim the development of literacy.

The improved facilities as a result of sports college status including the sports hall, dance studio, changing rooms and fitness suite have helped motivate students. This is reflected in the good take up in out-of-hours activities. There are small groups of identified students whose motivation and participation have been increased as a result of carefully thought through projects and activities. An example is Year 10 girls attending a 'street dance' programme after consultation with them about what they would like to do. There is a very wide range of extra-curricula activities. One parent remarked: 'My son has had many opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, skiing, and World Challenge 2005 in Borneo'.

The school recognises that there is scope for further development of the curriculum to make it even more responsive to students' needs. It is currently under review and plans are well advanced for collaboration with neighbouring schools and colleges from September 2008.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

When interviewed, students of all ages commented that although there is variation in the quality of teaching, they recognise that teachers care and want them to do well. Likewise, they spoke favourably of other teaching and non-teaching staff. This echoes the overwhelming view of parents in questionnaires and of inspectors. The many support facilities work well; for example, careers education and guidance help with option choices in Year 9. Where students have particular issues which are difficult to meet, senior managers take care to do the very best to address them. The school now has much meaningful data on students' academic and other progress which it is beginning to use effectively. The school has good procedures in place to check the security of all adults.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, both in the school and in the sixth form. The headteacher provides clear leadership and direction, focused on improving the rate of students' progress. He is committed to school improvement and has built a strong senior leadership team which shares the vision for improvement and is getting to grips with putting policy into practice.

Many of the strategies identified over the past two years to improve students' progress, including those associated with the sports college status, have had an impact; for example, in this year's Key Stage 3 results. This is evidence of the school's good capacity to improve. Shared leadership is being developed and all leaders now have increased responsibility for monitoring students' performance and improvement. This is developing well and departments are clear about school priorities and how they can contribute to overall improvement. Monitoring and self-evaluation have improved; performance data is analysed, strategies for improvement considered, and action plans implemented. The school now knows itself well and widely consults with parents and students; subsequent actions are communicated to them. However, the impact of these improvements is not yet clear in all areas, for example, in some subjects in Key Stage 4.

Governors are good. They ensure that through their department links they achieve an effective, 'hands on' approach. They are developing their ability to support the school by critical analysis.

Managers are successfully developing good working links with local schools. Through the Sports Partnership the school provides a range of professional support and coaching. The 'Sports World' magazine effectively and attractively promotes the school's activities and students' achievements and fully supports a positive ethos and pride in the school.

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
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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

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

You know that we inspected your school recently. During the inspection, we met many of you. I would like to thank you for sharing your opinions with us. You helped us make our judgements.

You have much to be proud of about your school. Many of you do well; you learn a lot and there are lots of opportunities including the excellent sports facilities. But, in the past, there have been some important weaknesses and some of these still remain. The main one is that you do not make as much progress as we would expect given that many of you are really quite talented when you come to school in Year 7.

Your governors, headteacher and other members of staff realised this some time ago and have been working hard to change things - by improving teaching and the way your work is assessed, giving you more opportunities to participate actively in lessons and by changing the curriculum. These improvements are beginning to have an effect but we agree with your headteacher that still more needs to be done. We think that your school has effective plans to do this.

In the full report which you may wish to read on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk, we have given your school three key issues to address. They are:

- ensure that the best features of teaching and learning already found in parts of the school are introduced throughout in order to improve students' progress
- raise students' aspirations still further by giving them more independence and opportunity to take greater responsibility for aspects of their learning
- increase the impact of specialist school status by using the good practice for supporting higher attaining students in PE and sport to improve teaching in other subjects.

You will see that the second one particularly involves you. Your school is a wonderful resource which, if you use it well, can help you make a good life for yourself. But you have got to want to do it. The second bullet is asking staff to encourage you.

Once again, my thanks for helping us. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Armitage
Her Majesty's Inspector