

# Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115769
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326267
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Harrett HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<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 (total)	1796
Sixth form	449
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Neil Spurrier
<b>Headteacher</b>	Allan Foulds
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 February 2006
<b>School address</b>	Warden Hill Road Cheltenham GL51 3EF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01242 235555
<b>Fax number</b>	01242 226742

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form; teaching and learning and their impact on achievement and progress; the aspects of personal development and well-being, the curriculum, care guidance and support and leadership and management that the school considers outstanding.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is lower than average as is the proportion of students who have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is a specialist college in the visual arts. It is an International School and has been assessed as a fully extended school. The headteacher has been in post since January 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school in which the sixth form is good. Students enter the school with standards that are above average. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and attain above average standards in their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. Many aspects of the school's provision are good or better, but because the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, students' progress from their starting points is satisfactory. Consistently high standards and the outstanding quality of personal development and well-being make parents and students proud of the school. One parent typically commented, 'I consider Bournside to be a vibrant school offering great opportunities to all students.'

The proportion of students attaining five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, is considerably higher than the national average. In the national tests at the end of Year 9, a similarly high proportion attains the levels expected for their age group. The proportion of students who achieve higher standards than this is in line with the achievement of students with similar characteristics nationally, showing that achievement in the school is satisfactory. There is some variation between girls and boys, with boys generally making better progress than girls and some girls with particularly high ability not attaining the highest grades of which they are capable. Standards have risen since the last inspection but, given the students' starting points and improvements in national standards in the same period, this represents satisfactory achievement. Recent initiatives to raise achievement are beginning to have some impact, and the school has robust evidence to suggest that achievement in the present Year 11 is improving at a faster rate than in previous years. However, this is not yet securely embedded in Year 11 or in other years across the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There are some clearly good features, notably the subject knowledge of the teachers and relationships between students and teachers in lessons. Students are well behaved and follow instructions well. Learning objectives are clear and referred to pertinently in lessons. Teachers are well prepared and use resources well. Lessons have a clear structure, consistent with school policy. Whole-class teaching predominates, with few examples of a more varied approach involving group and paired work. When there is more variety in activities, the students make better progress in their learning. The whole-class approach also means that work is not sufficiently tailored to the ability of individual students to enable them to make more than satisfactory progress. This sometime prevents more able students being stretched to reach the very highest levels. Teaching tends to impart knowledge without sufficient attention to devising activities to engage and challenge the students in their learning. Although the school has introduced a policy of developing skills across subjects, and this often features in planning, these skills are not always explicitly referred to in lessons.

Teaching and learning are underpinned by a good curriculum. In its breadth, depth and flexibility, it is able to match the full range of learners' aspirations and capabilities. New diplomas at Key Stage 4 and a whole-school policy of encouraging the development of skills across subjects are examples of how the school has developed its curriculum to meet the changing needs of its students. The impact on achievement of these initiatives is not yet embedded or fully secure. However, the curriculum's contribution to the students' personal development is outstanding. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, complemented by many opportunities for school visits nationally and internationally. Partnerships have been developed with schools in France, Italy, Nepal, the United States of America and South Africa. The contribution of the school's specialism in the visual arts is excellent and permeates the curriculum. For example, a

series of 'Wide World' art workshops for Year 7 created 90 painted poles prominently displayed in the school to celebrate its International School status.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall, but there is some variation. The school has recently introduced a system of providing students with targets that challenge them to achieve to the best of their ability, but this has yet to be translated into consistently high expectations in classrooms. The system links well with new reporting arrangements which give clear information to students about their progress regularly throughout the year. However, these initiatives are not yet fully understood by the students, and the detailed information on students' progress is not feeding through to lesson planning. Other aspects of care, guidance and support are good. The school meets all requirements in terms of safeguarding students. Vulnerable students are very well cared for. The comprehensive range of support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding in terms of supporting their personal development and ensures that they make the same progress as their peers. Students have full confidence in the school's procedures for looking after them. They feel safe and report that any incidents of bullying are dealt with speedily and effectively. Attendance at school is excellent, promoted by effective procedures for monitoring absence and the confidence that students and parents have in the school.

The school's inclusive ethos underpins the outstanding quality of personal development and well-being. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the students is excellent. The school was re-designated with Healthy Schools status in 2007. The response of the students to the health education programme has been exceptional, reducing substance abuse well and improving the students' diet and their involvement in taking exercise. The school aims to challenge and support all students to be responsible and productive members of a well-ordered and caring community. They achieve this superbly. Students are aware of their rights and responsibilities as members of the school and the wider community. They readily take on responsibilities and value the role of the school council in improving provision, whether this concerns the school environment or contributing to the appointments process for senior staff. Excellent links with the two special schools on the same site are beneficial for all concerned. Behaviour is very good and the students are excellently prepared for their future lives, attaining high standards in basic skills and having many opportunities to develop their personal and workplace skills.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The relatively new headteacher has accelerated the rate of change in response to the issues raised at the last inspection and others which he has identified through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. He provides very good leadership. The school rightly has confidence in the new systems that have been introduced to improve strategic planning and accountability. New appointments are being made to enhance and extend the leadership and management of an already experienced team. Responsibilities at this level are being restructured well to lead and manage the school. Arrangements for line management are clear and effective. The governing body provides good challenge and support and has worked well with the school's leaders to align its work with the cycle of monitoring and evaluation in the school. The strategic management of resources and finances is good. There are many strengths in leadership and management, which account for the excellent quality of personal development and well-being, the superb contribution of specialist status and the good quality of the curriculum and care, guidance and support. There are clear signs of improvement in the achievement of the students but these are not fully embedded across the school. Consequently, the overall effectiveness is satisfactory and the capacity for future improvement is good.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards in the sixth form are above average and the achievement of the students is good. An outstanding curriculum enables the interests and aspirations of the students to be met with an impressively wide range of courses. Students receive very good support in the sixth form which helps them to make good progress in their learning and develop into responsible young adults. The excellent quality of personal development and well-being is reflected in the responsible and mature way in which students contribute to school life and to the community. Sixth form students act as mentors for younger students, who commented during the inspection on how helpful they found these arrangements. Teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. The good quality of leadership and management ensures that students have confidence in the sixth form and are enabled to achieve well in their studies.

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

- Improve the progress of the students at Key Stage 4 so that a greater proportion achieve the highest standards.
- Help students to understand the target setting process and ensure that assessment information informs lesson planning.
- Ensure that teaching engages students productively in their learning and that activities take account of the individual needs of students, especially the more able.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**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>	3	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3	

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<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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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 learners' needs?</b>	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre, Cheltenham GL51 3EF

Thank you for the welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school. Your willingness to tell us about the school and your positive responses to our questions were a great help to us in arriving at our judgements.

Bournside is a satisfactory school, with many good and some outstanding features. These are our main findings:

- You make satisfactory progress in your learning. Students enter and leave the school with above average standards.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are strengths in teaching and learning, such as the good subject knowledge of teachers. Because of the way you are taught, you behave well and show an interest in your learning. We would like the school to ensure that lessons take more account of your particular needs.
- The school is excellent at making sure that you develop well personally and looks after you very well. You told us that you felt safe at school and your excellent attendance shows how much you value what the school has to offer.
- The curriculum at Bournside is good overall. Some aspects of it are excellent, particularly the exciting opportunities that you have to do things outside lessons, on trips, in the arts and in sport.
- Specialist status in the visual arts has had an excellent impact on the school.
- The teachers who are in charge of things in Bournside know what needs to be done to improve the school and are working hard to do so.

These are the things that we have asked the school to do to make things better still:

- Make sure that you are enabled to achieve the highest levels that you can in your learning.
- Ensure that teaching engages you more productively in your learning and that activities take account of your individual needs.

We think that your school can rise to this challenge.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett

Her Majesty's Inspector