

Bishop Justus CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134632
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	328940
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Joanna Beckford-Hall HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	896
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Michael Camp
Headteacher	Mrs Kathy Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2005
School address	Magpie Hall Lane Bromley BR2 8HZ
Telephone number	020 8315 8130
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school opened in 2004 and is now at full capacity in Years 7 to 11. The sixth form is due to open in September 2009. A high proportion of its students who completed Year 11 in 2008 came from a local school that closed.

This smaller than average school serves a large catchment area with a diverse socio-economic composition. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and the largest proportions are of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, and a high percentage of these students have behavioural, social or emotional needs. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average, and there are few who are at an early stage of speaking English.

The school has designated specialist music status, successfully achieved the Healthy School Award in July 2007 and received Investors in People redesignation in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bishop Justus is a good school where the inclusive learning environment is, in the words of students, 'a welcoming community, a sort of extended family, and the teachers cannot do enough for you'. Led by a visionary headteacher, the senior leadership team have established a school with a strong Christian ethos celebrating student success and providing an outstanding level of pastoral care. The school is right to be proud of this. The senior team fully support the headteacher in her drive to raise achievement, giving every student the best possible chance to succeed at school and in their future educational and working lives.

The specialist music status and religious character of the school, as exemplified in its worship programme, are the cornerstones that bind the whole school together as a community. While a minority of students are inattentive in some lessons, students enjoy their diverse school community and different minority ethnic groups study harmoniously together. Diverse musical opportunities in school and through community partnerships, give a platform for working together, respecting the diversity of the student population. The school's contribution to community cohesion is exemplary. Through prayer, the extended school provision and involvement in fundraising for national and international charities, the school community unites people of different cultures and backgrounds and nurtures respect for others. An outstanding curriculum and enrichment programme underpins students' good achievement and their personal and social development. Assemblies and cultural awareness days deepen students' understanding of why equality of opportunity is important. In assemblies students listen attentively to guest speakers, and in lessons they debate issues that contribute greatly to their outstanding awareness of political, cultural and moral issues. In one instance, students confidently presented contrasting views about the one-child policy in China.

Students are extremely well cared for and this contributes to their good personal development and well-being. A significant factor in the students' good academic standards is the high-quality monitoring of their progress. Through this, senior managers are able to identify any dips in students' attainment and provide appropriate support. As a result, most students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, there is a small variability in the communication of this to some pupils, particularly in Year 7. Accurate analysis of standards and progress, coupled with targeted and well-planned intervention and support, are having a significant impact in Years 10 and 11 and on students' good progress across the school. Personalised, targeted support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for other vulnerable students is carefully monitored and the work of various professionals is well focused. Consequently, these students make good progress.

Standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 were exceptionally high in 2007 in English, mathematics and science and progress was very good. Unvalidated results for 2008 indicate that while standards dipped slightly, they remain high, and still represents good progress for students. The current picture of standards and achievement at Key Stage 4 represents a significant improvement on 2008. The first cohort of Year 11 students who sat GCSE examinations in 2008 is not representative of the school as a whole. A significant proportion did not come through Key Stage 3 at the school and many had significant barriers to learning. A rigorous tracking system gives staff a clear picture of group and individual progress. Assessments of current standards and projected grades are reliable and these show that standards are now above average. Students are making good progress and are on track to match the energetic stride forward taken by leaders and managers in setting challenging targets.

The outstanding curriculum has a positive impact on students' progress, however, teaching and learning are satisfactory because there are some lessons where the poor attitudes of a few students has a negative impact upon their learning and on that of others. While good and outstanding lessons have lively pace and engage students through different ways of learning, some lessons are not sufficiently challenging, and so a few students become inattentive. The best lessons nurture independent learning skills and students take responsibility for choice in their learning. Particularly successful lessons develop leadership and teamwork skills using peer assessment, role play and team debates. The school knows its students well, monitors their progress with care and provides very good academic guidance and support so that most students make good progress. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were generally positive about the school. However, a number of them raised concern about the lack of challenge in a few subjects and occasional poor behaviour in some lessons. While communication with parents about progress is regular, a small number of parents, particularly of Year 7 students, indicated that this could be timelier.

Staff and governors work extremely hard in raising the profile of the school, eager to promote the principle that every child really does matter at this school. Since the last inspection, effective steps have been taken to improve standards and achievements, and the strength of leadership and management, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on existing strengths in teaching and learning so that the quality of lessons is consistently good across the whole school, making sure that the few students who have poor attitudes to learning do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Improve communication channels so that students in Year 7, and their parents, are informed of progress in a timely manner.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students join the school with starting points that are broadly average. Nevertheless, year-on-year attainment levels are increasing across the school, particularly for students who achieve at the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2.

Standards were exceptionally high at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2007. High standards were also achieved in the 2008 tests, particularly in English and science. In 2008, while the proportion of students who achieved five or more higher GCSE grades was broadly average, unvalidated results indicate that the proportion when English and mathematics are included, was below average. Overall, pupils made slow progress in relation to their starting points at the beginning of their secondary education. Inspection evidence from data provided by the school, students' work and lesson observations indicate that current standards and achievement of Year 10 and Year 11 students have improved significantly. Standards are now high and students are making good progress. The analysis of school and individual performance data is regular and rigorous. It enables the school to ensure support is well matched to students' needs and underpins the good progress they make. Senior leaders quickly act upon the identification of any underachievement, putting in place well-focused support for individual students. Current data indicates that students are on track to make significant gains in achieving five or more A* to C grades when English and mathematics are included. The proportion of students on track to attain at the highest levels also shows significant improvement.

Achievement in the specialist subject of music and in information and communication technology (ICT) exceeded targets at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 in 2008 with, for example, 100% A* to C GCSE grades in music and 63% in ICT. However, performance was variable in some subjects such as physical education (PE) and art and design in 2008. Intensive focus upon subject areas requiring additional or targeted support such as art and design, mathematics and PE, show much improvement. Improvements in mathematics have been slower but the well-focused action plan, with support from the local authority, is having impact.

There are no significant variations in the performance of any groups and students with additional needs progress in relation to their capabilities and some make very good progress. While there is no underlying pattern of slower progress for particular groups of students, in a small proportion of lessons, some students do not learn as well as they could because of the poor attitudes to learning of a few students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and secure learning environment. The take-up of the healthy food served in the bistro is impressive and a high proportion of students participate in extra-curricular sports activities. Students enthusiastically shared with inspectors their enjoyment of multiple sporting activities and were confidently able to talk about the importance of healthy living. One student praised the guidance he received about healthy eating for the particular demands of his sporting interests.

There are good social relationships between students, evident in the good conduct around the school and exceptional teamwork in curriculum projects, performance and sporting events. Students say that they feel safe and enjoy most of their lessons. In some lessons, planning and support do not meet the needs of all students, causing an undercurrent of poor attitudes by a few, which affects the learning ethos. Bullying and racial discrimination very rarely occur and students say they are confident that staff would quickly respond. Through peer mentoring, students are involved in resolving any moments of tension. Attendance is above the national average and exclusions are uncommon. Despite the school's best efforts to sustain good punctuality, a number of students arrive late. The school council take their responsibilities seriously, and respond effectively to student ideas and concerns to bring about change. The high regard for creativity, ICT, independent learning and problem solving, coupled with excellent careers and further education advice, successfully prepare students for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspectors observed good and outstanding lessons but the poor attitudes of a few students results in disruption to learning in some lessons, and contributes to the variation in the quality of teaching and learning between subjects. As a result, teaching overall is satisfactory.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. When this is used to plan learning that includes a variety of activities that meet the needs of the students in the lesson, then students want to learn. In good lessons, students have opportunities to organise their learning and work in pairs and groups to debate key themes. Several outstanding lessons had energetic pace with regular changes of task. Peer assessment is used sensitively and fairly, and helps students evaluate

each other's work. Good and outstanding lessons make effective use of learning objectives reiterated to students as a way of guiding their learning. Excellent use of probing questions developed creative and critical thinking skills and teachers had positive relationships with students.

In some lessons, however, teaching does not match the needs of learners, and expectations are too low. Teachers spend too much time on one activity, which slows the pace of learning. Over-reliance on teacher-directed tasks limits stimulating discussion. Questioning does not always challenge students to think creatively. Students with behavioural needs sometimes require more guidance from assistants in lessons. Teachers assess the progress of individual students accurately. Students know their targets. Some good quality marking helps students know what to do and how to improve, but on occasions some marking lacks detail and students are less clear about how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Senior leaders and staff have created an innovative, broad and balanced curriculum that provides excellent opportunity for personalising subject choices, both in choosing qualifications to study at Key Stage 4, and in selecting from an extensive range of enrichment activities. Bringing together subject areas in new faculty groups such as enterprise, logistics and creative environment, helps students develop transferable skills through faculty project work. Advanced learning groups have a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum in most subjects, and all students choose one or more subjects to begin in Year 9 at GCSE level, including GCSE music. Year 9 students spoke positively about this provision, saying it gave them a chance to think about how to prepare for other GCSE courses. At Key Stage 3, citizenship is embedded into subject areas helping students to understand and respect each other, and acquire knowledge of global issues. A major strength of the curriculum is the choice of academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4. The range of courses, expanded since the last inspection, offers more GCSE courses and vocational 14-19 pathways, such as the diploma in ICT. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme in Years 10 and 11 is delivered well through an integrated programme of religious studies. Plans are well developed for the launch of the post-16 curriculum from September 2009.

Specialist music status is having a positive impact on students' achievement and in raising standards. Provision for those who are gifted and talented is excellent and is reflected, for example in their work with local primary school children in a recording studio. A music project with Black African musicians contributed positively to the enjoyment and engagement of a group of students from minority ethnic heritages. Many subjects have adopted the teaching methods of the music team, raising students' self-esteem through performance opportunities and more practical lesson activities. Students value extensive enrichment activities highly. Regular participation in clubs and activities contributes to their enjoyment of school. Sporting and music clubs feature prominently, notably the 360-strong Key Stage 3 choir and the gospel choir.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pastoral care, nurture and support for students' welfare provided by the school are outstanding. The school has effective systems in place for safeguarding all students and for managing and promoting attendance. A particularly strong feature of the school is its knowledge

of students, their needs and the particular circumstances of each individual. Exceptional care and support for those who are looked after by a local authority and other vulnerable students such as those with emotional needs, contribute to their good progress. The Oasis provision, for instance, personalises learning and this flexible provision engages learners well and keeps them on track. The high-quality, regular meetings of the vulnerable children's panel, bring staff together to ensure that there is good communication to support students, and monitor their progress and well-being.

Year 7 students settle in well because of effective transition arrangements, evident in comments from parents and students. The school improved its systems to track and monitor students' progress and target interventions to raise achievement. While there remains some variability in relation to communication with parents and students, academic guidance is very good at Key Stage 4 and generally good at Key Stage 3. Because of the thorough attention paid to individual student progress, their achievement is good and sometimes very good. The Information, Advice and Guidance sessions run by the school give students high-quality information about making the right choices as they leave Year 11. Key Stage 4 students told inspectors how much they value the guidance and support they receive to make option choices, with the chance for personalised support from the personal advisers. Well-resourced in-school provision and positive links with outside agencies, such as the Connexions service, ensure good quality guidance for all students in selecting future education and employments routes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The outstanding leadership team have established a rich learning environment. They have been instrumental in establishing an exciting and innovative curriculum which, coupled with outstanding levels of guidance and support, meets the needs of students well. Central to this is the headteacher's passion for enhancing the skills of senior and middle leaders, giving increased ownership of whole-school improvement and subject development to new faculty and subject leaders. In transforming the leadership team, the headteacher has successfully raised the bar for leaders to set, and regularly evaluate, the impact of challenging targets in boosting standards and achievement. School improvement planning judiciously identifies areas for development, encouraging critical but healthy exchanges of ideas.

Senior leaders provide outstanding support to faculty and subject leaders. Self-evaluation is good in most departments and the resulting action plans increasingly set realistic and achievable targets. The improved progress of students, notably at Key Stage 4, is testament to the impact of more targeted subject evaluations so that underperformance is quickly identified and addressed. Senior leaders, in their relentless drive for improvement, have reviewed the focus of lesson observations, to emphasise how outcomes for learners are central to the assessment of the quality of a lesson. Robust action is being taken to address some identified areas of relatively weaker performance, and the school's monitoring indicates the quality of teaching and learning is rising.

The governing body provides outstanding challenge and support to the school, asking difficult questions of senior leaders to encourage higher expectations of all students effectively holding all leaders to account. The school has good capacity to continue its journey of improvement and expansion because it holds itself rigorously to account in its determination to raise standards for all learners.

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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	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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
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**

12 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Bishop Justus CofE School, Bromley, BR2 8HZ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. You helpfully talked to us about your work and your positive and welcoming school community. We would like to share our findings with you. We judged your school to be a good school, providing you with many opportunities to become caring citizens with real potential to succeed in your future education and working lives. Many of you told us about the strength of the community spirit in school. Your fundraising and charity work, supporting people from different communities and cultures, is impressive. You receive outstanding pastoral care and support that help you feel safe and helps to do so well. It was pleasing to hear about your commitment to the excellent musical activities and many sporting events in your school.

Most of you are on track to reach high standards and make good progress. This is because you enjoy your learning and want to get the most out of your lessons. Improving the progress you make to reach high results at Key Stage 4 can be a target for you each to aim for. Sometimes a few students have negative attitudes in lessons, causing disruption. This is not helpful to teachers or other students. You can all work together to make sure that all lessons give everyone the chance to study and learn as much as they can. Staff know you well and have good systems in place to support you. However some of your parents said that they would like to be kept informed of your progress more often.

Inspectors discussed ideas for improvement with your headteacher. These include:

- making sure that teaching is interesting and challenging for all of you, keeping everyone motivated to do well in all lessons
- keeping those of you in Year 7 and your parents informed of your progress in a timelier manner.

Your headteacher, with the tremendous support of all the staff, is trying hard to give you the best opportunities to succeed. You can each play your part in growing the success of your school and celebrating each other's achievements. The inspection team join me in wishing you the very best for a happy year ahead.

Yours faithfully

Joanna Beckford-Hall

Her Majesty's Inspector