

# The John Bentley School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126501
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340993
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Russell

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1206
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Radford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gordon Trafford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	White Horse Way Calne Wiltshire SN11 8YH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01249 818100
<b>Fax number</b>	01249 818136
<b>Email address</b>	reception@johnbentley.wilts.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Forty-one lessons were observed, taught by 41 teachers; there were also a number of briefer visits to lessons. Meetings were held with students, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, 201 questionnaires completed by parents, and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether all groups of students are making consistently good progress
- whether the school's provision, particularly teaching and the curriculum, meets the needs of all groups of students
- whether effective action has been taken to correct the dip in sixth form achievement
- the impact of the school's systems for management and accountability.

## Information about the school

John Bentley is a school of above-average size serving the town of Calne and its surrounding villages. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above that seen nationally. The school is a specialist college for languages, a training school and the lead school in the Calne Extended Services Cluster.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

2

## Main findings

John Bentley is a school with a number of significant strengths. Students are very well supported and cared for; they are kept (and feel) very safe. A range of high-quality opportunities helps them to live very healthy lives and to make a strong contribution to the school and wider community. Joint work with parents and a range of other partners is excellent, as is the school's contribution to community cohesion. The school also makes superb use of its status as a language college to provide students with diverse and rich cultural opportunities.

Much has been done over the past three years to develop and improve the consistency of teaching. The large majority is now good and some is outstanding, although the way in which teachers provide feedback to students to help them improve their work is more variable. A number of teaching posts are currently being covered on a temporary basis for reasons beyond the school's control. The school's leaders have managed these problems carefully to minimise their impact on students' learning, although there has inevitably been a negative impact for some. Most of these problems have, however, been resolved for September.

Sixth form achievement dipped significantly in 2009. Appropriate actions are being taken in response to this dip and achievement is gradually rising again, although most sixth form students are currently making satisfactory progress.

The senior management team and the governors provide a strong lead for the school. They monitor the school's provision and its impact on students' outcomes carefully and have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. The school is well placed to maintain and continue its development and improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that marking and feedback to students consistently provides them with clear, precise and regular advice about how to improve their work and meet their targets.
- Enable sixth form students to make good (or outstanding) progress, in particular by ensuring that:
  - the sixth form curriculum develops in a way that matches students' needs and abilities as closely as possible
  - highly effective use is made of information about students' achievement in sixth form monitoring, evaluation and planning.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students' outcomes have improved in the three years since the last inspection: all are now at least good and many are outstanding.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

- Teaching is good and has many significant strengths, not least teachers' very positive relationships with students. Each lesson now has clear learning goals, identifying what students must, should and could know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Although not all teachers use this system to maximum effect, in many cases it is helping students to achieve more. Students also have many valuable opportunities to assess and evaluate each other's work. However, although some marking and feedback to students provide them with regular, clear and specific information about how to improve their work, this is not consistently the case across the school.
- The Key Stage 4 curriculum has a number of pathways that meet the needs of

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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students well and supports their good progress. A well-conceived programme for personal, social and health education supports students' good, and in some cases outstanding, wider outcomes, in particular their ability to understand and adopt healthy lifestyles. Extra-curricular opportunities are diverse and popular with students.

- Students are very well cared for and supported  none of the 200 students who responded to the inspection questionnaire disagreed with the statement 'adults care about me'. Students receive a wide range of support from a group of additional professionals. Induction into the school and transitions between key stages are very well managed. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with high-quality support.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

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## Sixth form

The sixth form is satisfactory and improving.

Sixth form students taking examinations in 2007 and 2008 made good progress in the sixth form and achieved well. Sixth form achievement dipped in 2009 and these students made broadly satisfactory progress. Achievement is gradually improving again. The school's tracking indicates that current Year 13 students are on target to achieve more than last year's students, although their progress is satisfactory rather than good. Early indications are that students currently in Year 12 are on track to make good progress. Students' other outcomes are strong and sixth formers make a wide contribution to the school and community.

Leaders have worked with teachers this year to ensure that styles of teaching match the changing needs and requirements of the school's sixth form students. A number of helpful curriculum changes have also been made, although leaders recognise that further changes are needed to ensure that the curriculum matches students' needs as closely as possible. Current sixth form provision is good (and, as a result, achievement is increasing), although changes have not yet had sufficient time to make a full impact on students' achievement.

Aspects of the leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The sixth form is popular, recruitment is rising rapidly and there is a strong focus on the care of the individual. Leaders have analysed the dip in sixth form achievement and are acting appropriately to reverse it. However, data about provision and outcomes have not been used rigorously enough by leaders; as a result, monitoring and planning have not been sharp enough to correct weaknesses at an early stage or drive more rapid improvement.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' responses to the inspection questionnaire were extremely positive. The vast majority of comments were positive and almost all of the negative comments related to concerns about the impact of temporary arrangements on the quality of teaching in a small proportion of lessons. Inspectors found that this has been a problem for the school, but that leaders have acknowledged the difficulties and managed them carefully, and that most problems have been resolved for September.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The John Bentley School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 201 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	41	101	50	11	5	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	77	38	113	56	8	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	79	39	112	56	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	76	38	100	50	21	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	30	120	60	17	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	27	121	60	18	9	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	25	132	66	13	6	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	80	40	101	50	12	6	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	31	108	54	17	8	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	26	110	55	22	11	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	69	34	96	48	12	6	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	74	37	111	55	8	4	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	40	105	52	12	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



28 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The John Bentley School, Calne SN11 8YH

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings.

We judged your school to be good. The school has a number of outstanding areas.

- You are very well cared for and supported by your school  this came over very clearly in the student questionnaire and in our discussions with you.
- You are kept (and feel) very safe.
- Your school helps you to stay healthy, make an excellent contribution to the school and local area, and develop very well as young people.
- Your school works very closely in partnership with your parents and lots of other organisations and makes a very strong contribution to the community.

You are well taught and this helps you to make good progress. There have been temporary arrangements to cover some classes recently and you told us how this has been difficult in some lessons. We were pleased to see that the school has managed to solve most of these problems for September. We also found that the quality of marking and feedback to you about how to improve and succeed varies across the school and we have asked the school to work on this. Achievement in the sixth form dipped last year. It is on the way up again, but we have asked the school to keep an eye on this and to make sure that the sixth form curriculum continues to develop.

The headteacher and other staff are very proud to work at John Bentley and they are working hard to make your school outstanding. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and know what to do next to continue the school's improvement.

Best wishes from the inspection team.

Yours sincerely

Chris Russell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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