

The Bishop Bell CofE Mathematics and Computing Specialist School

Priory Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex. BN23 7EJ

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Standards have improved since the last inspection. Recent results show that students make good progress.
- Progress is faster in English than in mathematics. However, progress in mathematics is speeding up, particularly for those students supported by additional government funding.
- Teaching is typically good over time. Most teachers have high expectations and help students to achieve well.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school's work. Behaviour is good.
- The school's arrangements for keeping students safe and secure are good. Students feel safe and valued and parental satisfaction is high.
- The executive headteacher and headteacher work closely with senior colleagues to ensure staff remain focused on improving students' achievement.
- High quality partnerships exist with other schools and educational establishments. The governing body provides good support to leaders to improve the school still further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The very good practice in marking and feedback in some subjects is not consistently applied across the school.
- Not all teachers give students work that challenges them, particularly the more able students.
- Not all leaders, including governors, are confident in analysing information on students' progress to check they achieve as well as they should, and senior leaders need to check more closely that the practice of all staff fully reflects revised safeguarding policies.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons, of which almost all were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, three governors including the Chair and two Vice-Chairs of the Governing Body, two representatives from the local authority and school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school’s information on students’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation, the school improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, the safeguarding policies, records of checks on the suitability of staff and adults to carry out their roles in the school, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, inspectors took account of the 81 responses to a questionnaire for members of staff.
- Inspectors talked to students about the school’s work and listened to some students reading.
- It was not possible to observe Year 11 lessons, as a timetabled revision programme for these students had begun before the start of the inspection. Also, Year 10 students were off site during the inspection, undertaking vocational experience. However, Year 11 students were among those interviewed as part of the meetings held with students.
- Inspectors followed up the school’s response to a serious incident which occurred before the previous inspection, and was the subject of a serious case review, published in December 2013. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection, to inform inspectors’ judgements.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Cox

Additional Inspector

Roger Fenwick

Additional Inspector

Madeleine Gerard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than average. Most students are of White British heritage. Very few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is broadly average. In this school, the funding is used to support students who are eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The executive headteacher is a national leader of education (NLE). He coordinates the school's support work in a number of local primary and secondary schools and academies. The executive headteacher works closely with the headteacher in leading and managing Bishop Bell School.
- The school enters some Year 11 students early for examinations in English and mathematics.
- The school uses one alternative training provider, Heathercroft Training, which provides courses in early years and horse care. The school also provides some post-16 apprenticeship courses to former students and others.
- Since the last inspection, the on-site nursery, run by the governors, has closed.
- The school met the current government floor standards in 2013, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that all groups of students make the best possible progress by ensuring:
 - that the very good practice in marking in some subjects is shared across the school so that students have more opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback
 - that all teachers give students work that fully stretches them, particularly the most able.
- Strengthen further the impact of leadership at all levels, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that information on students' progress is analysed rigorously in order to evaluate accurately which aspects of what the school provides are working well and what needs to be improved
 - ensuring that the thorough revisions made to safeguarding policies are fully reflected in current practice by all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards at the end of Year 11 have risen since the last inspection, despite some variation between subjects. The school's own information indicates that three quarters of the current Year 11 students are set to achieve five or more higher-level GCSEs, including English and mathematics. This would represent an improvement on the 2013 results.
- Progress during Year 11 is accelerating. There has been a rising trend over the past two years. Progress in English is faster than in mathematics. This year, progress in mathematics is speeding up as a result of more stable staffing, together with an intensive programme of examination revision for students.
- The progress made by disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good, as a result of one-to-one support. This particularly helps to improve their literacy skills, giving them more confidence to study on their own.
- The school has a flexible early entry policy for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics for students in Year 11. This decision makes a strong contribution to increasing students' motivation and confidence. All students have the opportunity to re-sit their examinations if they do not achieve their target grades.
- The achievement of students who follow work-related courses with other training providers is good, and is similar to that of students in the school. There are effective arrangements for checking their work, attendance, punctuality and behaviour.
- In 2013, the students supported by additional government funding made faster progress in English than their peers nationally. However, progress in mathematics was slower. From the school's own information for 2014, these students are set to continue to make even faster progress in English. In mathematics, their progress is gathering pace. The gap in attainment between them and their peers in the school and nationally is narrowing quickly.
- In 2013, the most able students achieved the higher grades expected in English and history. However, students' achievement is not yet outstanding because in some other subjects, the most able students do not reach the higher grades of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics and science. The school's current information indicates that a greater proportion of the most able students are set to gain the highest grades.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good. This has been largely as a result of well-considered training, together with a supportive programme of regular monitoring and coaching provided by senior leaders, who have an accurate view of the quality of teaching.
- In the most effective teaching, teachers have secure subject knowledge, and use questioning effectively. They provide regular checks on students' learning and ensure students have opportunities to build on their prior learning. This was seen in a Year 7 mathematics session. Through checks on students' progress, the teacher identified areas in which students were not confident in applying a particular calculation technique. Students successfully worked together, concentrating on improving one skill area in using fractions, percentages, equations, or ratios.
- Teachers and students follow the whole-school assessment policy using 'Strength – Improvement – Response' (SIRs). This is a system whereby students are encouraged to respond to teachers' comments. In some subjects, such as English and history, marking and guidance to students are strong. Teachers provide clear points for improvement and opportunities for students to respond to teachers' advice. However, this good practice is not consistent across all subjects.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive good individual attention, encouragement and guidance from teaching assistants which enables them to gain confidence in

completing their work and in giving their responses to the whole class in discussions.

- Students who attend the off-site training learn well. Staff who work with them ensure they know how they are doing, and what needs to be done to improve their skills.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because some students have not achieved consistently as well as they should, particularly in mathematics and science. This is because not all teachers give students work that fully stretches them, particularly the most able.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. There is a positive atmosphere around the school. Students conduct themselves well and are respectful and courteous towards each other and to staff.
- Attitudes to learning are generally positive. However, behaviour is not outstanding because in some lessons, students' attitudes to learning show a lack of enthusiasm.
- Attendance has risen in the last year due to more rigorous monitoring, and it is now in line with the national average. Students are proud of their school and there is no litter or graffiti around the school site.
- A revised behaviour policy was introduced in 2013, together with the reorganisation of the team responsible for care and support of students. As a result of a number of positive initiatives, exclusions have decreased over the last year and are well below national figures. Instances of bullying and racist incidents are rare.
- The school provides a specialist programme for students, both internal and from other schools, who are in danger of being excluded. The individual support given enables them to manage their emotions and behaviour more positively, so they can be quickly re-integrated into their usual classes.
- The school's work to keep the students safe and secure is good. For example, 'yellow forms' have been introduced on which students can notify senior staff of any safety or other concerns they might have. The student voice and student leadership group provide regular opportunities for students to discuss and raise any safety or other concerns with senior leaders. Despite some staff not being fully familiar with new policies, one Year 11 student reported a typical view, 'We are confident that all issues are dealt with. The school keeps secure records and tracks incidents so that the pieces of the jigsaw can be pieced together, and the picture completed.'
- Students have a good understanding of the dangers of different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber bullying. Leaders effectively promote equality of opportunity for members of the school and are active in tackling all forms of discrimination.
- Students have a good awareness of how to stay safe while using the internet or social media. There is now more openness among staff concerning safety issues. For example, there is now a button on the school's website and a special email address for students, staff and parents to raise their concerns and trigger alerts. All emails and internet usage are monitored.
- Almost all parents and carers reported that their children are happy and feel safe at the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and headteacher have steered the school through a period of some uncertainty, and have had to face and overcome a number of staffing difficulties. The executive headteacher and headteacher work closely with senior colleagues to ensure that staff have remained focused on improving students' achievement. As a result, since the last inspection, teaching has improved and standards have risen.
- A key ingredient in the school's success has been the training of staff to better meet the needs of the students. Through lesson observation, coaching and working together as a team, areas of good practice and expertise have developed across the school. As a result, teachers are in demand to advise and train other teachers within the local authority and beyond.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have ensured that safeguarding procedures meet

statutory requirements and have responded well to external reviews. They have improved school procedures to monitor child protection arrangements regularly, and initiated a local schools' network for safeguarding. All staff and students have undertaken safeguarding training and are using a specially designed safety toolkit. However, leaders' monitoring does not always ensure staff practice fully reflects the recently revised safeguarding policies.

- Successful partnerships with other schools and training providers ensure students have access to worthwhile work-related courses in, for instance, early years care, horse care and motor vehicle maintenance. These have been introduced in order to meet students' needs and enthusiasms. These developments, together with improvements in attendance, the quality of teaching and the speeding up of students' progress, demonstrate leaders' strong capacity for further improvement.
- Through rigorous checks and the setting of targets for teachers, the work of individual staff is monitored with great care. Increases to teachers' salaries do not take place unless they have met their targets, which are linked to students' progress.
- Very clear principles of tolerance and respect for all human life, regardless of background or beliefs, play a central role in the strong development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Systems to track, monitor and record students' progress are increasingly effective. However, not all staff and governors are confident in analysing information on students' progress to check to see if all learners have achieved as well as they can. This is why leadership and management are not yet outstanding.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their departmental subject areas. They work effectively to provide students with programmes and interesting activities that improve their performance. There is a good balance between academic and work-related courses.
- The local authority provides effective and suitable support. Reviews on safeguarding, checks on teaching, moderation of teachers' checks on students' progress, and well-considered training have been planned carefully and well received by staff.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body cares deeply about the school and provides effective support for the executive headteacher and headteacher. Governors have taken decisive and robust action when interventions have been necessary. Through their frequent visits to the school, they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They ensure that the performance and salary progression of staff are linked to students' progress.
- Governors have a broad understanding of the information about students' progress and how it compares with that for schools nationally. However, not all governors use all the information they are given to ask searching questions in order to challenge senior leaders.
- Governors have a very detailed understanding of how additional government funding is used to support students' learning. However, they have not evaluated the impact of the strategies supported by this funding.
- They regularly attend training to ensure they are up to date with the procedures for setting targets for teachers, and a date in July has been firmly booked for all governors to attend safeguarding training. Members of the governing body have ensured that good protocols and procedures are in place to ensure the well-being and safety of students.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114613
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	442659

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1025
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Jeffries
Headteacher	Terry Boatwright and Nigel Jewell
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 November 2012
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