

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School

Vaughans Lane, Great Boughton, Chester, Cheshire CH3 5XF

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Inspection dates:

29 to 30 April 2025

## Outcome

The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of the school is Helen Cairns. The school is a stand-alone academy overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ralph Mainard and David Walsh.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The schools' vision to know, nurture and inspire all, is lived out each day. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, have positive, trusted relationships with each other and staff. They benefit from strong pastoral support. Pupils feel happy and safe in school.

The school is highly ambitious for pupils' academic and personal achievements. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. Students in the sixth form attain suitable qualifications and they are well prepared for their next steps, including moving into further study and apprenticeships.

The school has clear routines to support pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere around school. Pupils are courteous, respectful and behave well in lessons and during social times.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy, safe and aware of the world around them. They benefit greatly from many opportunities to develop their skills, talents and interests. There is a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including boardgames, sports, dance, retro-games, 80s band and catch-up clubs to name a few. Students in the sixth form are strong role models for their younger peers.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

In recent years, the school has reaffirmed its mission, vision and values successfully. Staff morale is high. They are unanimously proud to work at the school and feel well supported with their workload and well-being. The team works together to ensure that there is a school-wide culture of high expectations for pupils' learning. All staff benefit from ongoing high-quality professional development.

The school has implemented a well-thought-out curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a broad range of subjects. A growing number of pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects, including languages. In the sixth form, students have an evolving offer of academic and vocational subjects. They are well equipped for their next steps.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They typically ensure that pupils recall, revisit and embed important learning and skills before moving on to new work. However, sometimes teachers do not consistently apply the school's assessment and feedback expectations well enough, including in pupils' work books. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions and mistakes are not addressed effectively enough and their learning is held back.

The school supports pupils with SEND well. Pupils' additional needs are identified quickly so that staff provide effective help. Teachers use precise information about pupils' needs to adapt their delivery of the curriculum. Pupils with SEND thrive. They are fully integrated into the school community.

Reading has become a high priority. The school makes sure that pupils have opportunities to read throughout the week. Pupils enjoy reading a varied range of books and authors individually and as part of bigger groups. Pupils who find reading more difficult are identified promptly. They benefit from well-considered support. This improves their confidence and fluency in reading. It also means that they can access the curriculum successfully.

Students in the sixth form enjoy learning. They benefit from the varied wider experiences available to them. They are strong ambassadors for the school.

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance. It works well to ensure that attendance is typically high and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is low. This includes disadvantaged pupils. Staff are determined in their efforts to help pupils to overcome barriers to attend school regularly.

The school's programme to support pupils' personal development is highly effective. Curriculum time, assemblies, form time, drop down days, trips and leadership opportunities support pupils' understanding of the world around them. Pupils appreciate being able to learn and consider issues, such as healthy relationships, online safety, mental health awareness and driver awareness for older students. The schools' careers programme is comprehensive.

Recent changes to leadership have been successful. Leaders are committed to the school's continued mission for all to 'be the best version of themselves'. Those responsible for governance ensure that the school is supported and challenged effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Sometimes, teachers do not follow the schools' policies when marking and providing feedback to pupils in their books. This means that some pupils' misconceptions and incorrect work are not picked up on or revisited. This impacts on their learning. The school should ensure greater consistency in the application of its assessment policy, particularly in how teachers identify and respond to key misconceptions and mistakes in pupils' books so that they can further build on their learning.

## **Background**

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2019.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136543
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348263
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1205
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chairs of trust</b>	Ralph Mainard (co-chair) David Walsh (co-chair)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Cairns
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bishopschester.co.uk">www.bishopschester.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The school uses seven registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and a range of staff. They also met with the chair of the trust and other trustees.
- Inspectors visited lessons, held discussions about the curriculum, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and different groups of pupils. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and staff.

### Inspection team

Gary Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
Niamh Howlett	Ofsted Inspector

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