

Bishop Perowne CofE College

Merriman's Hill Road, Worcester, WR3 8LE

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders' analysis of the college's performance has been too generous. This has contributed to the insufficiently rapid progress they have made in improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Leaders have been slow to develop a curriculum that fully caters for and challenges all groups of students. In some cases, this has restricted the results students have been able to reach in examinations.
- Given their abilities, students did not achieve as well as they should have done in 2014 in English, mathematics or modern foreign languages.
- The tasks set by teachers do not always build on what students already know and understand. Students become disengaged when the work is confusing or fails to provide a challenge.
- Teachers' marking does not always help students to improve their work. Some teachers do not focus enough on improving students' literacy and numeracy skills when the need arises.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusions has been high for a sustained period of time, and is not falling.
- Attendance is below average, and not improving sufficiently quickly. The attendance of disadvantaged students lags behind that of other groups.

The school has the following strengths

- The procedures for keeping students safe in the college are well designed and thoroughly implemented.
- Students' progress, especially in English, is now accelerating sharply. In most subjects, progress is now in line with expectations and attainment is rising.
- Governors have a realistic view of the college's work, handle its finances well, and have been challenging leaders to improve teaching and achievement.
- The leaders who are new to their roles are pursuing their responsibilities with energy and skill. This has resulted in recent improvements to the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the management of students' behaviour.
- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge, and have students' respect. Homework makes an effective contribution to learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out in response to a complaint made to Ofsted. Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the issues that were raised.
- Inspectors observed learning in 40 lessons, taught by 38 different teachers; 13 observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited the college’s learning support centre, an assembly and form groups, and observed children’s conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers and governors.
- Inspectors met with three groups of students, including two selected at random, and spoke with many others informally. Inspectors listened to students reading in some lessons.
- Inspectors looked in depth at a wide range of books and other work. They scrutinised data on students’ targets and current levels of achievement, and checked these against the work they saw.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents. These included: development plans and their evaluations; minutes of governing body meetings; case studies; policies, including those relating to safeguarding; records showing how the college supports vulnerable students; and college publicity and newsletters.
- Too few parents completed the online survey, Parent View, for their responses to be taken into account. However, inspectors took into account responses to the academy’s own parental surveys as well as the 23 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Additional Inspector
Richard Vasey	Additional Inspector
Susan Thomas	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bishop Perowne Church of England College is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Six out of every seven students are of White British heritage, with the others coming from several different ethnic groups.
- Just over a quarter of the students are disabled or have special educational needs. This proportion is above average.
- Three tenths of the students are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. This proportion is in line with the national average.
- Six students have recently taken up full-time placements at Aspire Academy Worcester, a free school which offers alternative educational provision. In Key Stage 4, 42 students attend Heart of Worcestershire College to follow work-related courses for half a day each week.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- New leaders of English, mathematics and science have joined the college within the last 18 months. A new headteacher and a new head of mathematics have been appointed to start in April 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - using information about what students already know and understand to set activities which match their abilities and enable all groups in the class to make good progress
 - ensuring that all staff follow the college's guidelines for providing students with written guidance on how to improve their work
 - developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in all relevant subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that leaders evaluate all aspects of the college's work rigorously, and act promptly to address its weaknesses.
- Improve students' behaviour and safety by:
 - developing the use of alternative provision so as to provide effective alternatives to fixed-term exclusion
 - working with parents to raise attendance, and in particular the attendance of disadvantaged students, so that it is at least in line with the national average by the end of 2015.

An external review of the college's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leaders have not secured good progress in English, mathematics and some other subjects. Their delay in adapting the curriculum to offer more challenging courses, and difficulties in appointing permanent staff, mean that academic standards are only now beginning to rise. Leaders have been too inward-looking, but have recently identified good practice in other schools from which the college can benefit.
- The overall evaluation of the college's work presented to inspectors was too generous and did not recognise the importance of addressing urgently weaknesses in students' achievement. Plans are, however, correctly focused and identify appropriate actions. Senior leaders have recently broadened their approach to checking on the quality of teaching, paying more attention to its effect on students' progress and behaviour, and their judgments during joint observations with inspectors were accurate.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teaching in English, mathematics, science and humanities, to support alternative provision for some Key Stage 4 students, and to improve the commitment of others to learning. However, this pattern of expenditure has had insufficient impact on improving students' achievement. The college's evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding lacks precision and there is no convincing evidence that it has been used to adapt the support provided.
- Leaders set targets for students' progress which include a greater challenge for those who start at the college with higher attainment. These provide an effective benchmark against which leaders regularly track students' progress and identify those at risk of falling behind. However, although teachers generally provide suitably adapted work based on assessment data, in some lessons the tasks set do not fully reflect the ability levels at which students are currently working.
- Subject leaders, several new to their roles, are making a strong contribution to developing teaching and enhancing students' learning. They have revised learning plans, improved the accuracy of assessment, and taken steps to check their standards against other schools. They have planned and evaluated the additional teaching, and provided training for support staff which has made them more effective in the classroom.
- Students begin their Key Stage 4 courses in Year 9. Major changes have been made to the college's curriculum, including the establishment of a GCSE engineering course in partnership with a local company, and a reduction in the use of off-site work-related courses. In modern foreign languages, reorganised learning in Key Stage 3 and a new pathway in Key Stage 4 are beginning to increase students' uptake at GCSE level. The college provides good careers guidance, and students feel well prepared for their next stage of their lives. In 2014, all leavers found a place in education or training.
- The college promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, particularly through its citizenship programme. This provides a strong emphasis on enterprise, personal responsibility and democracy. British values are also promoted through the election and responsibilities of the Student Leadership Team, which assists with the organisation of the college and represents the views of students to college leaders. The college fosters mutual respect between groups and equality of opportunity; for example, by facilitating prayer by other religious groups. However, disadvantaged students continue to do less well than their peers.
- The college's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Staff keep meticulous records, and communicate effectively with other agencies to support vulnerable students. They visit alternative provision regularly, and check frequently on these students' achievement and well-being. All staff receive regular safeguarding training, and the college checks that visitors pose no risk to students. Governors ensure that policies are reviewed and are fully implemented. The college is intensifying its work with parents of students whose attendance or behaviour gives cause for concern. Surveys show that the college has the strong support of parents.
- Individual targets are set for teachers that depend on their students' progress. The results are used to make decisions about pay rises and promotion. Staff, including teachers at a fairly early stage of their careers, report that training is well focused and helps them to improve their skills.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors provide effective oversight of the college's work. They ensure that they themselves are properly trained and well informed about the quality of teaching, students' achievement and how it compares with achievement in other schools nationally. They are concerned about how the pupil premium is spent and the gap that remains between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others. Meeting records show that they ask challenging questions of senior leaders. They have a clear vision for the college as a place which puts young people first, meets their social needs and ensures that they make the best possible academic progress. They actively promote mutual respect between different groups, for example by showing consideration to other faith groups.
- Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities. They have ensured that the college meets all its obligations to protect children through the rigorous scrutiny of staff during the appointment process, and the monitoring of policies that safeguard vulnerable students. They make sure the college stays within its budget, and manage the pay and performance of the headteacher and other staff effectively, making sure that pay increases are awarded on the basis of teachers' performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**require improvement****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. A relatively high rate of fixed-term exclusions has persisted over recent years, reflecting the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of students. New strategies centred on a learning and nurture base have been introduced to improve these students' skills and attitudes. Inspectors observed students behaving very well and working hard in the base, but these changes have not yet reduced exclusions. Leaders try to avoid permanent exclusion, and this has only occurred twice in the last two years.
- Despite these behavioural issues, students report that their learning is only disrupted in a small minority of lessons, particularly when their usual teacher is not present. That said, when work is insufficiently challenging, or students think they are unable to complete the tasks set, they sometimes become disengaged and uninterested, and this slows down their progress.
- Students' behaviour at social times is generally orderly and responsible, although occasionally small groups are a little too boisterous. Students respect the college's facilities, and no litter is evident.
- During the inspection, students arrived punctually and well prepared for lessons. They met the college's high expectations with regard to uniform. In the majority of lessons observed by inspectors, students' attitudes were good and made a positive contribution to their learning. They generally took care over their work, collaborated well and responded promptly to staff requests.

Safety

- The college's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Some of the younger students questioned by inspectors said they believed that minor bullying and name-calling take place from time to time, and are not reported to the staff. They know to whom they can turn, and believe that the college would resolve the problem, but lack the resolve to pursue the issue.
- Attendance has been below the national average since the last inspection, and there has been no significant improvement. The attendance of disadvantaged students continues to be lower than that of others. The college is well aware of the need to monitor the safety of students who are absent for longer periods, and arranges home visits when appropriate. Staff check closely on the attendance of students at off-site provision.
- The overwhelming majority of students say they feel very safe in the college, and their parents agree. The college conducts risk assessments for trips and visits, and these are scrutinised by governors. Students are well informed about different types of risk, such as those posed by the internet or by substance abuse. Incidents of a racist or homophobic nature are rare, and when these are reported, they are carefully recorded and pursued by the college.

The quality of teaching**require improvement**

- The quality of teaching remains too variable to support good achievement. Although standards are now rising, teaching has not ensured that, over time, students make consistently good progress across a range of subjects. Teaching in modern foreign languages remains weak.
- Weaker learning is characterised by tasks which do not build properly on what students already know and understand. Sometimes the work is too easy. Tasks are sometimes not broken down into smaller steps to help those who are less confident. Teachers do not always check effectively on what is being learnt.
- The marking of students' work is not always helpful. The college has a clear policy that teachers should identify how students can improve their work and that students should respond. However, in several books reviewed, the guidance on how to improve was missing, or students had not acted on the advice. Occasionally, marking was insufficiently frequent or timely to provide any useful feedback.
- Some teachers provide students with useful guidance on how to improve their writing skills, but in other instances, errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not addressed and there is a lack of guidance on structuring longer pieces of writing. There is no consistent approach to numeracy in different subjects, although on occasion particular skills such as the accurate drawing of graphs are taught effectively. A well-stocked library is central to the college's strong promotion of reading, and this is leading students to read more widely.
- Relationships between teachers and students are clearly strong, and promote learning. In the minority of lessons observed where the work did not entirely engage their interest, they nevertheless remained polite and compliant. Teaching assistants fully understand the aims of the lesson, and so are able to provide effective support through rephrasing questions and breaking learning down into smaller steps.
- In subjects where teaching is good, teachers plan carefully work which builds on students' prior knowledge, and learning proceeds smoothly. Their subject knowledge is strong, and this contributes to precise guidance for students on how to improve their work, both through marking and through discussion in class. In the three years allocated to Key Stage 4 courses, teachers explain exactly how students can maximise their success in writing examination answers. They use probing questioning to find out how well students are progressing and to deepen their understanding. They set homework regularly, which is carefully planned to supplement learning in class.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs generally learn well. Teachers take into consideration how they are best able to learn, and adapt work when necessary. The college has become more effective at identifying those who need additional support, and providing extra teaching and guidance that boosts their attainment, especially in literacy.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- The students who left the college in 2014 had started with attainment that was above average, and left with attainment that was broadly average overall, and below average in English. Although standards are now rising rapidly, the college has yet to demonstrate that it can secure good progress in the majority of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In 2014, the proportion of students who made expected progress and the proportion who exceeded expected progress in English and in mathematics were below the national averages. Progress was also weak in modern foreign languages.
- Disadvantaged students left the college in 2014 on average one and a third grades behind other students in English, and just under one and a quarter grades in mathematics. Compared with students nationally, they were one and a half grades behind in English, and one and a third grades in mathematics. College data show that disadvantaged students make progress in lessons in line with their peers, and with the benefit of additional teaching and support they are now beginning to catch up and close the attainment gap compared to non-disadvantaged students. This is a recent development, and is not yet happening sufficiently quickly.

- Some students were entered early for GCSE science subjects in 2013 and this restricted their attainment in the 2014 GCSE results. The college no longer uses early entry for examinations.
- Historically, the progress of the most-able students has been similar to that of other students in the college, and often below that of similar students nationally. However, inspectors' observations in top sets and the work produced by the most-able students indicated that they are now making good progress. This confirms the college's tracking data, which indicate that these students are now meeting the college's enhanced expectations.
- In the majority of lessons observed by inspectors, students made good or better progress, and this was supported by evidence in their books. A further scrutiny of work from Year 11 and Year 8 showed a similar picture. In almost all subjects, work was usually challenging, accurately graded and represented progress from the start of the academic year which was at or above that expected. The large majority of students who attend alternative provision make at least expected progress.
- Data supplied by the college and checked against the work sample indicate that, based on their performance in recent mock examinations, more of the current Year 11 students are on course to make the progress they should in English and mathematics. Students achieve well in history, geography, music and art, and progress is accelerating in science.
- These data, confirmed by inspectors, also indicate that the progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is increasing, particularly in English, where historically it has been low.
- The progress of students who speak English as an additional language is at least in line with that of other students. The Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used to provide additional literacy teaching, and so makes a contribution to the improving standards in English in Key Stage 3.

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	138107
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	454851

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	803
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Kington
Headteacher	Julie Farr
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2012
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