



Bishop Ramsey CofE Voluntary Aided Secondary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 102429
 LEA Hillingdon LEA
 Inspection number 286374
 Inspection dates 13 - 14 November 2006
 Reporting inspector Dr Lynn Bappa

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

Type of School	secondary	School address	Hume Way, Ruislip
School category	voluntary aided		HA4 8EE
Age range of pupils	11-18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01895639227
Number on roll	1210	Fax number	01895622429
Number on roll (6th form)	290		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of Governors	Mrs Christine Gentle
		Headteacher	Mr Andrew Wilcock
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection Date(s)	Inspection No.
11-18	13 - 14 November 2006	286374

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bishop Ramsey is a larger than average Church of England secondary school with a big sixth form. Most students come from socially advantaged backgrounds. Few of them are entitled to free school meals. The percentages of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language are lower than found in most schools. The school has an Artsmark award and is a specialist science college. It is currently situated on a split site, nearly a mile apart, although proposals to move to a single site are at an advanced stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'The school is excellent and I am so grateful to God that my children got places here. The Christian ethos is strongly felt in all they do.' This comment, from a parent, very much sums up the view that inspectors have of this outstanding school. A key factor in the school's success is the promotion of equality and the concern for the individual which are outstanding features of the education provided. This is a school where every child really does matter. The headteacher has very high expectations of what should be achieved and very good systems are in place for ensuring that these expectations are realised. As a result, students' achievements are outstanding and they reach high standards in tests and examinations at the end of Years 9 and 11. Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They show greater than average confidence and maturity. The outstanding care students receive, as well as the excellent teaching and curriculum play a key role in students' personal achievements.

Bishop Ramsey has excellent leadership at all levels. The senior staff understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and know where to focus attention for future development. The school has a strong culture of self-evaluation. Team work is a strong feature of the school and everyone plays a part in moving it forward. Parents are very pleased with the school and all that it offers. The school provides outstanding value for money and has excellent capacity to improve on its already high standards.

Parents are very supportive of the school, although a small but significant minority have expressed concerns about the impact of the proposed single site on the school's work.

A further comment from a parent encapsulates the work of the school. 'We are delighted with the supportive and stimulating environment afforded to our daughter. Activities are interesting, books are regularly marked and achievements are rewarded'.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school judges the sixth form to be outstanding; inspection evidence fully supports this view. As one student commented, 'I have been to many schools - this is easily the best one'. It offers a rich and varied curriculum. An excellent choice of post-16 courses, both academic and vocational, is available to sixth formers. The school takes great care to ensure that students choose appropriate options and are well supported both personally and academically. Standards are high and achievement is outstanding. All students gained a grade A-E pass in 2006 and a significantly higher proportion than found nationally achieved the highest grades of A and B. Sixth form students of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make excellent progress during their time in school. Those who join Bishop Ramsey from other schools settle quickly and achieve as well as their classmates. A high percentage of students leave the sixth form to study in further and higher education. Teaching is excellent and students have very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers act as very good role models. They have excellent subject knowledge and plan lessons that challenge and inspire. Students play a very active part in the life of the school and the local community. All sixth form students wore pink in a recent breast cancer awareness day, for example, and they raised a considerable

sum of money. They provide excellent role models for younger students. Students feel valued and know that their opinions are taken seriously. Leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent, ensuring that resources are used very well to meet learners' needs. The sixth form provides excellent value for money and offers its students a first-class standard of education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus on ensuring that the high standards attained across the school are maintained during the imminent major building programme.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students reach high standards and make exceptional progress because the school constantly seeks to help them do as well as they can. As one parent commented, 'The school encourages and motivates the students to do their best, our son is a good example of this'. Performance in the national tests for 14 year olds is exceptionally high. In 2005, the proportion of students who gained at least five grade A*-C GCSE passes was significantly above average. GCSE results rose in 2006. The proportion of students gaining at least five A*-G grades is exceptionally high and no students leave the school without any qualification. The school regularly exceeds its own challenging targets.

Students make exceptional academic progress in Years 7 to 9 and then strongly consolidate this in Years 10 and 11, so that high standards are maintained. Students of all ethnic groups and social backgrounds, as well as those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students thoroughly enjoy school, grow in confidence and develop positive attitudes. Their attendance is well above average and punctuality is good, despite the constraints caused by the split site. By the time they leave the school, they have high self-esteem and strong academic and personal skills. This is a caring school where students feel secure, knowing that any concerns will be dealt with. They are developing healthy lifestyles. They express their feelings well and have a clear understanding about how to be safe in school and the community. Relationships are positive and they report that there is little if any bullying. Where it occurs, it is sorted out quickly. Although a few parents expressed concerns about behaviour, the vast majority of students behave very well. On the few occasions when immature behaviour occurs, teachers deal with it effectively.

Students take their responsibilities seriously, as is evident in their charitable fundraising work and contributions to the community. Support for a school in Malawi, for example, helps their understanding of the world community. Spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As one parent commented, 'My daughter's time at this school was not only an academic journey but a time where her spiritual and emotional needs were well nurtured'. Students respond exceptionally well to the school's strong Christian values. They develop a clear sense of what is right and wrong and show a high degree of respect for others. Assemblies provide very good opportunities for pupils to reflect about life. Cultural awareness is well developed through a wide range of high quality extra-curricular opportunities, including many visits both within the United Kingdom and beyond. Students are very well prepared for life outside school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

High quality teaching enables students to make outstanding progress in their studies. The school takes care to ensure that all students are given the best opportunity to achieve. As one parent commented, 'The level of teaching is first-class'. Two students in a German lesson commented, 'German is quite easy and it's fun!' The ethos of the school means that the students are very keen to do well and that they know how to learn. They have very good relationships with their teachers. They show a high level of enjoyment and interest in their work. Teachers show enthusiasm for their subjects and plan their lessons well, with activities that are appropriate and varied. They have very high expectations of the students and set them challenging targets. They ask well-chosen questions to help students deepen their understanding and apply what they have learned to different situations. Most teachers are reflective and constantly strive to raise the achievement of their students.

Assessment is used very effectively so that students have a very clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to improve. As one student commented, 'It helps us to exceed our boundaries. It's constructive criticism'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Despite the constraints of the split site, the curriculum meets the needs, aspirations and capabilities of all groups of students very effectively, and places a strong emphasis on the development of well-rounded individuals. The curriculum is flexible and is adjusted to meet the needs of individual learners. Alongside the wide range of traditional academic courses, the school offers a good number of vocational courses to suit the needs of students in Years 10 and 11. Students are given clear guidance about their choice of courses and there are well developed programmes for the promotion of their personal development. A particular strength of the school is the extra curricular provision. One parent wrote 'The extra curricular activities are fantastic'. This aspect of provision contributes significantly to students' personal development and enjoyment of school life. Very good provision for students with learning difficulties or disabilities ensures their full access to learning. The school's designation as a science college adds a further ingredient to a very rich mix of opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. The school provides an extremely caring and supportive environment where students can flourish as individuals. Students and many parents commented positively on this aspect of the school's work. Bullying is said to be rare and students said that there would be a rapid response should it occur. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and reviewed on a regular basis. The school's total commitment to students' welfare is illustrated by its strong links with a wide range of external agencies. These are used extremely well to enhance the provision. Careers advice is effective and pupils are equipped to make informed choices about their future education and employment. The school works well with parents and communicates effectively with families. The quality of pastoral care is enhanced by the supportive work of the school chaplain and a counsellor. There are good links with local primary schools so that students settle quickly into Year 7. As one parent commented, 'Our child has a statement, and we are very impressed with the fabulous support we had from Bishop Ramsey in the year before he joined the school'.

School leaders make very good use of data to track the progress of students in different year groups and subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's inspirational leadership is highly effective and has had a major impact on the school's Christian ethos. As one parent stated, 'The headteacher sets a very positive example to pupils and staff alike with his professionalism and caring manner'. He knows the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and this is evident in the high quality of the school's self-evaluation. This is comprehensive and rigorous, clearly identifying strengths and weaknesses. He is supported by very able senior managers, whose roles are well matched to school priorities. Initiative is encouraged and rewarded. Teachers with responsibilities within the school show a very high commitment to further improvements. There is a strong feeling of accountability underpinned by the school's performance management system.

Monitoring systems are very effective and senior leaders and subject heads make very good use of performance data to improve standards. The recent and successful drive to raise the standards at GCSE is an example of practice at its best. Governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide a very effective balance of support and challenge to the school.

The excellent personal development of the students is a result of strong pastoral leadership at all levels. There is a very strong commitment towards valuing every student. Staff, parents and students are rightly proud of this aspect of school life. One parent commented that she felt honoured that her children go to Bishop Ramsey. The opinions of parents and students are always valued and frequently acted upon. The school works very well with a wide range of partners, including the Church and neighbouring schools. Issues relating to the last inspection have been tackled very successfully. There are robust systems in place to ensure efficient management on a day-to-day basis.

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Annex A to the inspection report

Inspection Judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

¹ Grade 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Annex A to the inspection report

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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	1	

The quality of provision

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

Annex A to the inspection report

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B to the inspection report

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

21 November 2006



Dear Students

Bishop Ramsey CofE Voluntary Aided Secondary School
Hume Way
Ruislip
HA4 8EE

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I should like to thank you for the polite and helpful way you welcomed us. We very much enjoyed discussing with you the work that you were doing and looking at the progress that you were making. You talked enthusiastically about how much you gained from being students at Bishop Ramsey. We thought you would like a summary of the inspection findings, but also hope that you and your parents will take the opportunity to read the whole report. Your school is outstanding and has many strengths. Its main qualities are listed below.

- Bishop Ramsey provides you with an excellent education, enabling you to progress very well through your schooling and achieve outstanding examination results in Year 11 and in the sixth form.
- A strong Christian ethos is at the heart of your school, and both you and your teachers contribute very well to these values.
- You take pride in your work and participate enthusiastically in everything that your school has to offer.
- Your teaching is excellent, and you show very positive attitudes to learning.

We have now asked the headteacher and other senior leaders to make sure that the standards stay high when the building work takes place.

With my best wishes for your future,

Dr Lynn Bappa
Lead Inspector