

# Bishop Heber High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111424
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	356910
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 April 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Kidd

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<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>	1070
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Anne Headdon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Curry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Chester Road Malpas Cheshire SY14 8JD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons taught by 33 teachers. They held meetings with students, including members of the school council, pastoral and academic staff, members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at development planning, internal progress monitoring files, safeguarding and child protection documentation and students' work. Inspectors also analysed 267 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 45 completed by staff and 163 returned by students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether students' ongoing improvements in attainment are being maintained.
- How and with what impact the school has addressed the areas for improvement since the previous inspection in relation to underperforming departments and also use of assessment data.
- The involvement of middle leaders in school self-evaluation and in the promotion of ongoing school improvement.
- Whether the school's judgement on the performance of the sixth form as outstanding is justified.
- The impact of specialist language college status on students' personal and academic achievement.

## Information about the school

This is a broadly average-sized school which has held specialist language college status since 1997 and which serves a large rural area. The school is fed by over 30 primary schools and more than a third of students come from the out-of-zone areas of Shropshire, North Wales and other areas of Cheshire. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below that usually found and there are very few at early stages of learning English. There is an above-average percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and this has doubled since the previous inspection. Bishop Heber is an accredited Healthy School and holds the Artsmark Silver and International School awards.

**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?**

**1**

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

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school, with an outstanding sixth form. Students achieve exceptionally well in their academic studies and benefit from an excellent curriculum and from outstanding care, guidance and support in everything they do. In their words, 'Whenever we are experiencing difficulty and whenever we are unhappy, the staff always have the time to help us. We are so proud of them and we are so proud of being students at "The Heber".' Parents and carers agree and add, 'The very enthusiastic staff, who are expertly led, have created the ideal learning environment in which our sons and daughters thrive.'

Students enter Year 7 with generally above-average levels of attainment and make good and improving progress across the school to reach high standards by the end of Year 11. For example, GCSE results in English Language in 2010 were the highest in the school's history, with every student reaching an A\* to G grade and with the percentage of A\* and A grades almost three times the national average. There were similar successes in a range of other subjects and most underperforming departments at the time of the previous inspection have produced much improved results over a three-year period.

Students behave well and have an outstanding understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Specialist language college status permeates every aspect of school life and there are strong international links within Europe and as far afield as China. Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education and also for the world of work, partly as a result of the excellent range of partnerships with local business, industry and further education.

Teaching is good and improving apace. Teachers know their subjects well. The use of assessment data has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. However, teachers recognise that lesson activities do not always meet the individual learning needs of their students as closely as they might. This is why some students' progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good rather than outstanding. Marking is completed but not every subject provides students with written advice on how they can improve their work. Academic guidance is good overall and is exemplary in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school is now looking to embed this outstanding practice into all years within Key Stage 3.

Staff speak highly of the senior leadership team and of the outstanding way in which it motivates teachers, support and administrative staff. 'Our voices are always listened to and our contribution to school life is valued highly', is a typical comment. The school has an accurate awareness of its strengths and areas for development and both academic and pastoral staff are actively involved in gauging performance and in action planning for improvement. High standards, outstanding student achievement and significant

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improvements since the previous inspection demonstrate that the school has an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement. It provides outstanding value for money.

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

- Further accelerate students' progress by:
  - – tailoring activities in lessons more closely to students' individual learning needs
  - – ensuring that written feedback in all subjects gives students specific advice on how they can improve their work
  - – embedding the exemplary practice in academic guidance which exists in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form into all years in Key Stage 3.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>1</b>
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Students are generally fully engaged in their lessons and are keen to learn. They enjoy working in groups and in pairs to support and challenge each other in their learning. Even when not closely supervised, they remain on-task and persevere with their work. Language college status has a positive impact on the confidence and enjoyment in learning of less-able students, who often demonstrate a fluency in modern languages which belies their years. Students enter Year 7 with generally above average levels of attainment. All groups of students make good and improving progress across the school and reach high standards in GCSE and vocational courses by the time they leave or join the sixth form. Attainment has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is well above the national trend. Boys now attain and achieve as well as girls. Inspection evidence demonstrates that students in the current Years 10 and 11 are on course to meet, and in many cases exceed, their challenging, aspirational targets and to continue the ongoing improvement in standards. The combination of high attainment and good progress means that achievement is outstanding.

Students feel safe in school and speak highly of their teachers and of the support staff who work with them. They believe that these adults have their interests at heart and that they are always there if they need them. As a result, behaviour is good, attendance is consistently above average, mutual respect abounds and relationships among all members of the school community are warm. Through the workings of the school council, peer mentors, paired readers and sports leaders, students demonstrate a proactive approach to the support of their peers and to a wide variety of charity appeals. Students have an outstanding awareness of what constitutes a balanced diet and how to live a healthy lifestyle. Twice the national average percentage of students eat in the school canteen. Through the school's specialist language and international status, the canteen involves students in themed days, in which they taste a range of foods from around the world and this is valued by the students. All students have at least four hours physical education per week and there is an abundance of successful sports teams and extra-curricular activities emphasising physical fitness. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, although primarily members of an all-White British school, they have a strong awareness of cultures and religions which are different to their own.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall, continues to improve, and there are examples of outstanding practice in both key stages. Teachers are well qualified and their subject knowledge is secure. Relationships between teachers, support staff and students are good at least and frequently outstanding. In the best lessons, an outstanding Year 7 physical education lesson, for example, planning fostered clear progression in skills and pupils were highly motivated and wanted to succeed; challenge was realistic and encouraged students to aim for the highest standards, irrespective of their ability levels. The school recognises that, on occasions, in some lessons, there is a 'one-size fits all' approach in lessons and that students' individual learning needs are not always met as closely as they could be.

The use of assessment has improved since the previous inspection and staff have benefited from relevant in-service training supported by the modern languages department. The monitoring of students' progress is regular and comprehensive and there is exemplary practice in Key Stage 4 in relation to the rapid identification of possible underachievement and in timely intervention, often on an individual basis, to address this. The school is now looking to embed this outstanding practice within Key Stage 3. The written feedback students receive on their work is generally good but is inconsistent. It does not always give them specific advice on how they can make even better progress.

The outstanding curriculum has a positive impact on students' personal and academic development. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme is highly

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regarded by both staff and students and the school hosts a bi-annual careers conference which is the largest in the local authority. Almost all students follow at least one course in a modern language and many follow two. Students have an extensive options choice at the end of Year 9, there are opportunities for early GCSE entry and the vast majority of students in Year 10 have already completed a national qualification in information and communication technology. There is an increasing vocational element in the curriculum and students are grateful for the opportunities they have to study construction, for example. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities and work experience, including international placements. The curriculum meets the needs of students so well that in 2010 there were no students identified as having left the school without offers of employment, education or training.

Parents and carers pay testament to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school. Indeed, Bishop Heber is a most inclusive school and does what it can to ensure that all students, including those with additional needs and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, can benefit from everything it has to offer. Students, too, the peer mentors for example, do their utmost to ensure that each individual is supported and helped to succeed in both personal and academic terms. The 'Inclusion Resource Provision' is an outstanding example of pastoral care at its best and is staffed by both teaching assistants and members of the peer mentor team. Students who have used the provision make very positive comments about its value and say, 'It is a place where we can be ourselves and where advice and support are always at hand.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The inspirational headteacher leads by example and he is supported very well by a talented and committed senior leadership team. There is a clear, shared vision for development and staff morale is high. As a result of excellent strategies to develop the role of middle leaders, subject leaders and pastoral leaders are now actively involved in gauging the performance of the school, developing the quality of teaching and, on occasions, take the lead in introducing initiatives to promote ongoing improvement. For example, task groups, led by middle leaders, including those from modern languages and history, have led training on assessment and on how to develop students' independent learning skills.

The governing body supports the school well and members are never afraid to challenge the leadership if they feel the need to do so. Members have good links with academic areas and receive regular presentations from subject leaders during the business of the

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learning and teaching sub-committee. This contributes to the governing body being well informed about the school's work.

There are strong links with parents and carers and outstanding partnerships with a range of businesses and educational institutions, both at home and abroad. Moreover, specialist language college status has a major impact on developing the teaching and delivery of modern languages in partner primary schools. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination in all its forms is not tolerated. Safeguarding policies and practice are good and meet statutory requirements. Training is up to date and staff are fully aware of what must be done if a child protection issue arises. The school promotes community cohesion well and increasingly strong international links develop students' awareness and understanding of global cultures. The school provides outstanding value for money. Finances are tightly controlled and are linked directly to best value and to the priorities for school development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Sixth form

This is an outstanding sixth form. Students adopt mature approaches to learning and enjoy the many opportunities they have for personal research. They work very well collaboratively and enjoy acting as extra learning resources for each other. They are enthusiastic and have high expectations of themselves. Attainment has improved year-on-year since the previous inspection and results at A level are consistently well above the national average. Students' achievement is outstanding and in 2010 there were no areas of underperformance and particularly high standards in design technology, history, mathematics, business studies and English literature. Students feel valued, act as ambassadors for the school and willingly take on extra responsibilities, for example to support students in Year 7 during the residential visit to the Menai Centre. They are

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proactive in their work for the school council and take the lead in fundraising activities and in sports coaching. They also contribute to the local community as young leaders with the scouts and guides.

Teaching is good overall and often outstanding. Students are set challenging targets and are given detailed advice on how they can reach them. Assessment is exemplary and any possible underachievement is identified rapidly and addressed immediately. There is a good range of traditional, academic courses and students are generally happy with the curricular choices they make. The school recognises that there is now a need to introduce more vocational programmes, as the profile of students entering the sixth form is beginning to change. Students speak highly of the excellent support and guidance they receive on careers and entrance to higher education. Over 90% of students, a high percentage, are accepted each year for undergraduate courses at a variety of universities. This reflects the effectiveness of the high quality of guidance given to the students.

Leaders and managers are outstanding and there is an impressive team ethos among leaders and tutors. Ongoing improvement is the order of the day and staff have a keen understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are entirely satisfied with their children's experience at the school. In their words, 'Bishop Heber has exceeded all our expectations and the support our children receive is exceptional.' An overwhelming majority of parents and carers believes that the school keeps the students safe and most are of the view that it meets their particular needs. A very small minority does not believe the school helps them to support their children's learning and that it does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. These issues were investigated and discussed with the school. The inspection team found no evidence during the inspection to endorse these views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bishop Heber High 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 267 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,070 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	117	44	143	54	7	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	112	42	151	57	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	95	36	155	58	9	3	6	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	93	35	150	56	13	5	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	85	32	170	64	8	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	25	165	62	23	9	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	24	173	65	20	7	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)	94	35	144	54	13	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	82	31	169	63	8	3	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	73	27	164	61	16	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	20	167	63	17	6	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	104	39	142	53	10	4	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	116	43	141	53	7	3	2	1

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



13 April 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Bishop Heber High School, Malpas, SY14 8JD**

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we inspected your school earlier this week. You were very polite and friendly to us. We are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up your time to come and talk to us on Monday and Tuesday. I promised to write you a letter to tell you what think about your school. Here it is!

Your school, including the sixth form, gives you an outstanding quality of education and we know you are so proud of 'The Heber' and of the good teaching and excellent support you receive from the adults who work with you. You make good and improving progress in your studies and you reach standards which are much higher than in most other schools: your achievement is excellent. You also have an exceptional understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Your behaviour is good and, as buddies and peer mentors you take good care of those students who are new to the school or who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. You enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities which are open to you and are fully aware of the strong impact which language college status has on your school.

Your headteacher and staff do an exceptional job in ensuring that your school is a happy and vibrant place in which to learn. They are always looking for ways to make your school even better. We would like to help them in this and so we have asked them to help you make even more progress by making sure that the activities in lessons match your learning needs more closely and that the written feedback you receive on your work gives you focused advice on how you can improve in all your subjects. We have also asked them to make sure the students in Years 7, 8 and 9 who are finding things difficult get the same excellent support students receive higher up the school.

Thank you again for your excellent contribution to the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jim Kidd

Lead inspector

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