

# The Bishop Bell Church of England Mathematics and Computing Specialist School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114613
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338420
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1052
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gordon Rideout
<b>Headteacher</b>	Terry Boatwright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Priory Road Eastbourne BN23 7EJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 465400
<b>Fax number</b>	01323 765126
<b>Email address</b>	admin@bishopbell.e-sussex.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Kelly Youldon
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	29
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	Not previously inspected

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Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Thirty-two lessons were observed, taught by 32 different teachers. There were a number of briefer visits to lessons. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and governors. As well as observing the school's work, inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including monitoring records, development planning, local authority reports and documents, and safeguarding and relating documents. The team analysed 132 parental questionnaires and those completed by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether teachers convey high expectations, provide quality guidance in marking and use assessment data to challenge pupils in English, especially higher-attaining pupils.
- the effectiveness of what the school is doing to increase the attendance of the few who are persistently absent
- the effectiveness of middle and senior leaders in supporting and driving forward school improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a large, over-subscribed school with specialist status for mathematics and computing. In 2009, it was designated a High Performing Specialist School and added Leadership Partner School and gifted and talented to its specialisms. The school supports a local secondary school and the executive team and several staff are shared across both schools. The Bishop Bell School operates an improvement and support service to other local authorities and church schools. It delivers some post-16 advanced apprenticeship courses and manages a full-time nursery. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportions from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is a second language are below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, most have specific or mild learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties. The school has received numerous awards including Healthy Schools Award and Artsmark and Sportsmark awards.

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

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

**1**

### Main findings

This is an excellent school that provides an outstanding education. Pupils say, 'We have so many opportunities here and are really well supported.' Parents and carers are very pleased and typical comments include 'This is an exceptional school' and 'I am so impressed.' Pupils receive outstanding care and support. Consequently, they enjoy school. Key factors in this are an outstanding curriculum, the positive impact the areas of specialism have on provision, the arts, sports and wide-ranging enrichment activities, all of which are recognised in the school's many awards. The school has extended the curriculum and developed businesses to help post-16 ex-pupils to take advanced apprenticeships, and work in the Nursery. Excellent links with outside agencies and parents and carers contribute significantly to the strengths in pupils' personal development, well-being and academic achievement. Pupils value the way they are supported and say they feel very safe at all times.

Pupils start school with broadly average attainment and, at the end of Year 11, attainment is above average. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is outstanding. Underpinning the pupils' good progress is good teaching and learning, but little of it is outstanding. The school's effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and the rigorous way in which leaders monitor each individual's performance prompt targeted help and tailor-made courses for those that need it. The impact of good teaching is further enhanced through good assessment and the setting of individual targets for pupils to achieve. However, the quality of guidance in marking and level of challenge, especially for higher-attaining pupils, is inconsistent across subjects. Too few lessons inspire pupils to achieve extremely well and learning activities do not challenge all.

The school's partnership with a local secondary school and work further afield have consolidated and strengthened the work of senior and middle leadership. The senior leadership team has extremely high expectations of all staff and pupils and sets increasingly ambitious targets, based on rigorous self-evaluation. The constant drive for excellence, strongly driven by the executive headteacher in close partnership with senior leaders and the governing body, is an outstanding feature of this school. The pursuit of excellence, and GCSE results rising almost every year since the last inspection, ensure an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. Provision in the Nursery is good but there are shortcomings in its facilities that adversely affect children's learning.

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

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning by:
  - using a greater range of teaching styles to inspire pupils

- ensuring marking consistently gives pupils precise guidance about how to improve their work and ensure such guidance is followed up
- ensuring all lessons contain learning activities which challenge every pupil.
- Ensure children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can access the outside learning area independently, provide cover for inclement weather and improve storage facilities both inside and outside.

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

**2**

The number of pupils attaining five or more A\*-C grades including English and mathematics in 2009 increased, as it has in most years since the previous inspection, to above national averages. The school's own data suggests significant improvement in the attainment and progress of the current Year 11. The specialist status plays an important part in developing pupils' basic skills. Actions taken to improve achievement in all subjects which did not perform as well last year show a positive impact, especially in English and for higher-attaining pupils. Early entry GCSE and a sharp focus on examination requirements and interventions where needed have resulted in many more pupils being on track to achieve A/A\* and A\*-C grades than previously and particularly in English. Pupils have clearer expectations and are generally more ambitious to achieve. For example, Year 10 pupils studying anthologies have already produced some good quality work and discussed how it could be adapted to achieve maximum marks. However, the standard of work observed by inspectors in some lessons and in some books confirmed there is still too much variability in achievement and attainment across subjects. Pupils are not always inspired and challenged, and consequently do not always give of their best. Pupils' enjoyment of school is seen in their improved attendance, especially by those who had been persistently absent. This improvement is the result of much home school liaison and curriculum flexibility. Pupils achieve well in the arts and in vocational subjects and say they appreciate that the school has worked so hard to meet their needs.

Pupils' behaviour is good, as reflected in their positive attitudes to learning and involvement in all the school offers. The popularity of sporting activities and many sporting successes encourages pupils to become active and healthy, though they admit they do not always choose to eat healthily despite the healthy choices in the School Caf. Pupils contribute very responsibly to the life of the school. The school council is involved in staff appointments and school improvement. Pupils are very active in the local community, through the Youth Parliament and enterprise days. The global awareness group was key to helping gain 'Fairtrade' status. Their charitable work and fundraising support a school in Sierra Leone and a village in Uganda.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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.

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</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>

## How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is innovative and flexible, with a wide variety of additional activities provided. This, alongside the outstanding care, guidance and support and the good, occasionally outstanding, teaching, ensures pupils make at least good progress. Consistent strengths in teaching are, for example, teachers' clarity of what is to be learned, their subject knowledge, questioning skills, use of technology and positive relationships. In the best lessons, learning is brisk and activities stimulating. For example, Year 11 pupils in an ICT lesson enjoyed editing and adding music to their videos, while Year 10 drama pupils led their own learning by acting out 'Tension States' and developed monologues and critiqued each other's work. No teaching was inadequate, but little was inspirational. Too often, pupils miss opportunities to learn for themselves and they are not always challenged, especially higher-attainers. Some excellent marking and use of examination criteria to improve the quality of work was seen, but this is inconsistent across subjects. Marking does not always pinpoint how to improve work clearly enough, nor are checks made to ensure pupils have actioned the points raised.

The curriculum is a significant factor in pupils' above-average attainment. Pupils can start their GCSE courses in Year 9 and early entry in Year 10 frees up opportunities to improve on grades in different subjects and/or take additional courses. Academic routes are wide ranging. The improved vocational pathway greatly enhances provision, for example pupils can choose from horse care, car maintenance to ICT. The positive impact of the specialism is seen in mathematics master classes, computer hardware and technical support and planning in primary schools. The arts and sports feature strongly,

reflecting the school's awards. Involvement with other educational establishments, post-16 apprenticeships and the Nursery provide some unique opportunities for the community and future employment.

This school's very caring ethos and excellent systems for support enable pupils, especially those who are potentially vulnerable, to make the best of opportunities provided in the school. Strong partnerships with outside agencies, families and pupils significantly support the development and well-being of individual pupils facing challenging circumstances. Those with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. Also, pupils' self-esteem is raised through several nurture groups.

*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?**

Senior leaders have an acute view of the many strengths of the school and what can be improved. Rigorous procedures are in place to support self-evaluation, planning for future improvement and continuing staff development. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are comprehensive, supportive and clear in terms of what is non-negotiable and teachers' accountability. Regular 'senior management tours' are used to monitor the impact of the school's termly focus. Teaching has improved as a result of much support and staff training, but, even so, this has not yet resulted in more of it being outstanding. Actions taken to tackle subjects that underperformed last year, for example in English, have been most successful and results are set to rise substantially, especially at the highest grades.

Governors are supportive, well informed and monitor the school's work well, such as the school's partnership and the Nursery. They are rigorous in ensuring that outstanding safeguarding procedures are fully implemented and that the school gives very good support to the local community. The school has good international links and links to help pupils gain a better understanding of multicultural Britain. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is central to its work. Gifted and talented pupils are well supported through enrichment classes and the rigorous analysis of pupils' performance. A wide range of intervention and support programmes contributes most significantly to the achievement of all pupils.

*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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</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>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children make good progress in the Nursery because they are taught in a welcoming environment full of activities which support all areas of their learning and take full account of their interests. Consequently, most reach or exceed the standards expected for their age. They enjoy learning through role play, for example as dentists examining teeth, explaining why they should be cleaned and making new appointments. Relationships are warm and friendly which ensure children settle and gain in confidence. They take turns when photographing each other while waiting to sit and play in the big tray of cornflakes to hear and feel the crunchiness'. They are motivated to learn and understand about making healthy choices when sampling humus and fruit. Their progress is carefully logged and the information used to plan next steps in their learning. The focus on supporting and improving children's experiences is good, and a book tent, small world, and mark making areas are popular. Quick to identify the increasing number of children needing additional speech and language support, staff have sought specialist help and training including for Makaton to help support learning. Rigorous procedures ensure children are kept safe at all times. Children benefit from the post-16 trainees because the adult/child ratio is significantly increased. Trainees are fully involved and have good role models to learn from. Provision for children aged 0–3 is good, all of the areas raised in the previous childcare report have been tackled fully and the provision complies with the requirement for registration. Good leadership and management ensure that children use the outside area frequently and safely but there is no 'free flow' access due to the constraints of the building. This, and the lack of a covered area, limits children's learning experiences. Storage facilities for resources and equipment are inadequate.



*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## **Views of parents and carers**

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are extremely satisfied with the school. There were many positive comments on questionnaires, the few points raised for improvement had no real pattern and mostly concerns related to individual cases. A very small minority were concerned about behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be good and judged the strategies to support good behaviour to be effective. A few parents and carers raised a query about their involvement in helping to support their children's learning, and contributing towards decisions and the progress they make. Inspectors judged the engagement of parents and carers as outstanding. The parent forum and consultation processes are most effective. The school is, however, seeking other ways to increase parents' and carers' involvement. Inspectors judged, while the majority of pupils made good progress, there is scope for teachers to inspire, challenge and guide pupils further so that they make outstanding progress.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Bishop Bell Church of England Mathematics and Computing Specialist 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1052 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	29	82	62	8	6	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	42	32	85	64	4	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	30	77	58	12	9	2	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	21	84	64	18	11	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	32	24	89	67	6	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	25	78	59	17	13	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	12	99	75	13	10	1	2
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)	24	18	83	63	10	8	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	20	88	67	10	8	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	26	73	55	15	11	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	29	76	58	19	14	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	36	70	53	8	6	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	33	74	56	9	7	2	2

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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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 pupil's 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.**



19 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Bishop Bell Church of England Mathematics and Computing Specialist School, Eastbourne, BN23 7EJ

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work and talking with you. These were the main things we found out about your school, which we have judged as outstanding:

Most of you make good progress and your attainment is above average. Your attendance has greatly improved, too. Well done! The care, guidance and support you receive are excellent. This, with the school's strong range of partnerships and areas of specialism, helps you to make the most of the opportunities school provides.

The curriculum offers you so many different learning opportunities and it is adapted to help you have some great choices, whatever your needs.

We judged that teaching is good, although we have asked senior leaders to ensure teachers use a greater range of teaching styles to inspire you and that all lessons have learning activities that challenge all of you. We saw some very good assessment and marking in your work but this was inconsistent across the school. We have asked that teachers always inform you clearly about how you can improve and to check that their guidance is followed up by you. We have asked the governors to improve the facilities for children in the Nursery.

You told us that you felt safe at school at all times and that you were confident any concerns you had would be dealt with quickly. Your headteachers, senior and middle leaders are totally focused on what needs to be done and are passionate about ensuring you have the best education. You can help, too, by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning Lead inspector

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