

Inspection of Bishop Stopford School

Headlands, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 6BJ

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Jill Silverthorne. This school is run by a single academy trust, Bishop Stopford School, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Brian Withington.

What is it like to attend this school?

The core values, 'faith, justice, responsibility, truth and compassion', are deeply embedded at Bishop Stopford School. They inspire pupils to be the best versions of themselves as they engage wholeheartedly with all aspects of school life.

Pupils feel safe and are well cared for. They enjoy great relationships with caring and dedicated staff. Pupils get along well together. They celebrate their differences. Discrimination is never tolerated.

The highly ambitious curriculum is designed to help all pupils 'realise their unique potential'. Pupils rise to the challenge and achieve extremely well.

The school provides exceptionally well for pupils' wider personal development. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their character by taking on leadership roles and acting as role models to their peers in their work to supporting the school and the wider community.

The enrichment programme is extensive. Annual residential trips to South Wales in Year 7 and the Isles of Scilly in Year 8 provide memorable experiences and support pupils to build friendships and community spirit. Educational visits to Auschwitz and New York enhance the academic curriculum and provide reflection and inspiration to pupils. Many pupils enjoy the school's vast array of clubs to develop their talents and interests.

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

The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It has listened carefully to feedback from pupils, as well as parents and carers. Leaders have acted purposefully to make sure that all pupils enjoy their time at school and benefit fully from the high-quality education and excellent wider opportunities on offer. For example, the school has extended and strengthened the pastoral support available to pupils. As a result, pupils have confidence that staff will support them with any difficulties they may face. Pupils are confident and resilient. They thrive as part of a caring school community.

The curriculum is exceptionally broad and challenging. The important knowledge that pupils will learn is identified precisely. In key stage 3, the curriculum goes beyond the expectations of the national curriculum. In key stage 4, almost all pupils study the full range of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. Across the curriculum, pupils gain knowledge securely and achieve remarkably well.

In the sixth form, students choose from a wide selection of A-level courses. The majority of students achieve well and go on to ambitious destinations in education, training or employment. Most students demonstrate commitment to their education and use their independent study time well. However, expectations of how sixth-form students should use this time lack clarity. Some students do not benefit from sufficient guidance and supervision to further develop effective learning habits.

Teachers present new knowledge and vocabulary clearly and expertly. They routinely check that pupils' learning is secure before moving on. Teachers often provide opportunities to revisit topics. This helps pupils to make connections between new knowledge and what they have learned previously.

The school has effective systems for identifying special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Information about pupils with SEND is shared with staff who carefully adapt learning activities to meet pupils' needs. Staff do this very effectively so that all pupils can be successful.

The school prioritises reading right across the curriculum. Pupils read from interesting subject-specific texts that support and extend their learning. Activities such as author visits and book club further promote reading for pleasure. The school quickly identifies when pupils need extra support with reading. Staff then provide effective help to ensure that pupils gain fluency and confidence.

All pupils and sixth-form students benefit from the extensive curriculum for personal, social and health education. They learn about important issues that affect them, such as online safety and knife crime. The school empowers pupils to make informed decisions that affect their health and well-being. They develop mature attitudes to spirituality, diversity and equality. The careers programme provides all pupils with detailed information about their future choices in education, training or employment.

Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. In classrooms, pupils display extremely positive attitudes. They engage purposefully with all activities. No time is wasted. At social times, pupils are respectful to each other and staff.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Collectively, they strive to develop their expertise and improve all aspects of the school's provision. The school makes sure that workloads are manageable and supports the well-being of staff. Committed and knowledgeable trustees work closely with the school. They provide effective support and challenge to school leaders to make sure that all pupils benefit from the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the sixth form, the school's high expectations are not set out clearly enough for students. As a result, some students do not fully develop effective learning habits fully and, therefore, do not achieve as well as they might. The school should make sure that

students understand the level of commitment that is required if they are to achieve their full potential.

How can I feed back my views?

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

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

Further information

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

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

School details

Unique reference number	137086
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347508
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,458
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	376
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Brian Withington
Headteacher	Jill Silverthorne
Website	www.bishopstopford.com
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Peterborough. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2018. The next inspection is due by March 2026.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the assistant headteachers and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in a number of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and scrutinised records relating to attendance, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils through discussions and using Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Wicken	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector

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