

Bishop Milner Catholic School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique reference number | 103868 |
| Local authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 376984 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 January 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Robert Barbour HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 778 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 178 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Stephanie Partridge |
| Headteacher | Steve Haywood |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 December 2006 |
| School address | Burton Road Dudley DY1 3BY |
| Telephone number | 0845 1550412 |
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| Inspection date(s) | 12–13 January 2012 |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Barbour

Her Majesty's Inspector

Victoria Bishop

Additional inspector

Janet Bird

Additional inspector

Paul Delbridge-Smith

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 26 lessons taught by 26 teachers, two of which were joint observations with members of the senior team. They also made shorter visits to 20 lessons, all with members of the senior team, to observe aspects of teaching. They held three meetings with groups of students and heard students read in Year 7. Inspectors also held meetings with members of the governing body and with both senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement and development plan, the school's self-evaluation documents, governing body minutes and a range of school policies. Inspectors also analysed 273 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and also questionnaires completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

Bishop Milner Catholic School is smaller than the average sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is high, and these are mostly of Indian or Pakistani heritages. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of students with special educational needs who are supported with a statement or at School Action Plus is about average and the proportion supported at School Action is below average. The proportion of students entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is below average. The school is above the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The headteacher joined the school in September 2011. Most other members of the the senior leadership team are also relatively new to the school. The school has gained a number of awards including the Tribal Group Quality Mark for continuous improvement, Healthy Schools status and the Quality Mark from the National Association for Able Children in Education.

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 | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school that demonstrates evidence of significant recent improvement. Students make satisfactory progress. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is actively promoted within the curriculum and also by the ethos of the school. Students' progress, however, is hindered by a lack of options within the curriculum to fully meet the needs, interests and aspirations of students between the ages of 14 and 16.
- Teaching is satisfactory. It is most successful when teachers plan lessons where students are active and independent learners, and where lessons are adapted well to the abilities of groups of students. It is less successful when the teacher talks for too long or plans work that does not meet the needs of all students.
- Students feel outstandingly safe in school and behave well. All the procedures to ensure that students are safe in school are implemented extremely well. Since September 2011, the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen sharply and attendance has improved and is now above average. The school works very well with external agencies to ensure the welfare of students.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. Students have a wide range of options available to them, and make satisfactory progress. There is some variation between subjects in the progress that students make in the sixth form, with good progress when students develop as independent learners.
- The headteacher has already achieved a great deal since his appointment. Senior and middle leaders work well and are accountable for performance against clear objectives. Good programmes are in place to improve teaching. The progress that students make is carefully monitored, and teachers are held accountable for the outcomes. New systems have significantly improved attendance and reduced exclusions.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by
 - giving students more opportunities to work as active and independent learners
 - making more use of prior assessment data in planning lessons and ensuring that the starting points for lessons are better matched to each student's current attainment.
- Improve the curriculum by making more choices available to students between the ages of 14 and 16 so that there are coherent pathways available that fully meet students' needs, interests and aptitudes.
- Ensure consistency in the delivery of sixth form teaching so that students have more opportunities to develop as independent learners.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with attainment that is above average. They make satisfactory progress and achieve GCSE results that are above the national average. Those who stay on to the sixth form also make satisfactory progress and they all move on to higher education, employment or training. Students with special educational needs make good progress. The progress of these students is monitored very carefully and they receive high quality support in class and in further interventions, including excellent multi-agency support.

In class, students respond particularly well when they have opportunities to work actively and independently. In a Year 9 English lesson, for example, students of low ability made outstanding progress as they developed their skills in speaking and listening, with high levels of participation as they analysed the characters in a story. Students in Year 9 described projects in both science and geography when they had been able to exercise considerable choice over a project or extended essay and the enjoyment and progress that they experienced. They also spoke of the way many aspects of the taught curriculum had inspired or moved them, such as studying the situation facing lower caste groups in India. This illustrates the strong impact of the promotion of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum.

In some lessons, however, students take on a more passive role. They behave well and answer the teacher's questions but sometimes all do the same tasks irrespective of their prior attainment. Their progress is limited by the narrower range of skills they develop as a result of less active engagement in their learning. The progress of some students between ages 14 and 16 is also limited by the curriculum as there are relatively few opportunities for vocational learning.

Some students know their level of attainment well and can describe clearly what they

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need to do to improve their grade. For example, GCSE religious education students in Year 11 could describe precisely the skills they needed to improve their written work.

Students who enter the school with low attainment in reading make good progress as a result of close monitoring and regular support, with phonics teaching up to three times a week. Much of this is provided by a large group of sixth form students who are themselves trained up to level 3 teaching assistant standards.

The progress that students make in the sixth form varies according to the subject and is good where students have more opportunities for independent learning, particularly in geography and film studies. Sixth-form students are now benefiting from much better information about their progress. Over 50 sixth-form students are working towards the Duke of Edinburgh gold award.

Overwhelmingly parents agree or strongly agree that their children are making enough progress. Inspectors judged that students' progress is satisfactory. They do not have enough opportunity to plan their own learning and access to wider curriculum choices.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory. In all lessons observed the learning objectives were communicated to students, although these were sometimes a little vague. Teachers have good subject knowledge and relationships are strong. Teachers mark work regularly, but the extent to which they annotate students' work with clear information about how they can improve varies.

Opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of students are taken well. This is true also of the learning environment itself. The history department corridor, for example, contains a display of original artefacts, including original newspapers from the jubilees of previous monarchs, and original ration books from the second world war. The quality of teaching is improving as new initiatives are implemented: a new approach to literacy across the curriculum is being implemented and was observed in a Year 8 lesson improving the quality of speaking and listening.

Some good and outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. The best teaching engages students and harnesses their enthusiasm. In a Year 11 geography lesson, for example, students worked together in groups and assessed each other's work as they explored the situation faced by refugees in Afghanistan. On some occasions teachers plan for active learning but lack the skills to enable this learning to flourish. For example they intervene to take over the activity or curtail it too quickly. On occasion, as in a sixth-form lesson for example, the teacher did not appreciate that the students' lack of understanding limited the way they tackled an activity, with the result that their progress was slow. Conversely, in some lessons teachers did not accommodate students with higher level skills in a particular area, planning exactly the same activity for all students. As a result, here too progress was

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slow.

The overwhelming majority of parents in the survey indicated that their children were well taught. Inspectors judged teaching to be satisfactory and that it would improve if it involved students more actively and was more carefully targeted to meet the range of attainment of the students so that all are challenged to make good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school has an outstandingly positive ethos. Students generally behave well and are courteous to each other and their teachers. Parents and students both have a positive view of behaviour, although both student and parent questionnaires indicate that there are rare occasions when lessons are subject to low-level disruption. School behaviour records confirm that poor behaviour does occur but that it is not frequent.

Students indicate strongly that they are safe, and that on the rare occasions that bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively. Students have a good understanding of risk, and all are aware of how to keep themselves safe on social networking sites.

Since the school was last inspected, the management of behaviour has improved steadily. The most significant gains however have been made since September 2011, with fixed-term exclusions declining rapidly. The school has very good links with other agencies including pupil referral units. Close work with these has enabled preventative work with students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and this has been effective in keeping them in school. Improved systems have also been adopted to manage attendance, and this has also improved sharply in the same period. Students are punctual to their lessons.

Leadership and management

There is evidence of recent significant improvement in the school. In some areas such as attendance and exclusions, the impact of new procedures can already be measured in published data. Progress is evident in the high-quality systems put in place to track the performance of students and to report regularly to parents; in new systems to improve teaching through improved professional development for teachers; in targeted work to improve results in particular departments; and in tightly focused whole-school initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, with a successful current emphasis on literacy across the curriculum. The new headteacher has secured wide support for the current rapid pace of change from teachers and the governing body and morale within the school is high. Senior and middle leaders have a new framework of delegation with accountability to which they are responding with enthusiasm. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

The promotion of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. This is true within the curriculum and also in the wider school.

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Relationships throughout the school are highly cohesive, and the contribution of the lay chaplain is significant. The school is also committed to the spiritual development of students who follow non-Christian faiths, and a new 'Faith Room' is provided for their prayer needs.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has major strengths as described in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students and in its breadth in the sixth form. It is weaker, however, in the lack of vocational choices from ages 14 to 16 and this is a constraint on the progress of students. The new headteacher and his senior team understand the need to broaden this aspect of the curriculum.

Leaders and managers are effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This is evident in the way that student performance data is analysed to check on the progress of groups of students. It is also evident within the curriculum. There are many instances where the needs of minority groups are emphasised and where students understand and deplore the consequences of discrimination. Procedures and processes for keeping students safe are exemplary and there are excellent links with external agencies to make sure that potentially vulnerable students receive high-quality support.

Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and guide its strategic direction. Their monitoring of the curriculum and of standards is, however, underdeveloped.

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 | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Bishop Milner Catholic School, Dudley DY1 3BY

Thank you for your welcome and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection, and for the many of you who filled in questionnaires.

We have judged your school to be satisfactory. Over the past few years students at the school have made progress broadly in line with the national average. Your school has significant strengths. Your behaviour is good and you told us in the questionnaire that you feel outstandingly safe in school. Also, the way the school promotes your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In discussions with some of you, you told us that you particularly found lessons useful where you are active in your learning and have the responsibility to make choices. We noted that when this does happen your progress also improves. We also noted that your curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has fewer vocational options than in most schools, although you have a wide curriculum in the sixth form. Progress in the sixth form varies between subjects and is good when you are able to develop as independent learners. The inspection team has therefore made these recommendations:

- In lessons teachers should plan for you to take an active role more of the time, and the activities you undertake should reflect the differing abilities in the class.
- Your curriculum should be developed to include more vocational choices in Years 10 and 11.
- Sixth-form students should have consistent opportunities to develop as independent learners in all your subjects.

Your new headteacher and the senior team have worked hard and effectively to improve the school over the past few months, to your benefit. You can all play your part by continuing to work hard, continuing to behave well and maintaining your good attendance and punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour
Her Majesty's Inspector

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