

# Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Sports College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124459
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380902
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Martin HMI

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>	Voluntary aided
<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>	707
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tony Downey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Bluestone Lane Stapenhill DE15 9SD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01283 749450
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@robertsutton.staffs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The team observed 28 lessons delivered by 28 different teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at planning and other documentation at whole-school and departmental level. They scrutinised students' work and school records relating both to students' achievement and their welfare and safety. Inspectors read questionnaire returns from students and staff and analysed 132 parental questionnaire returns.

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

- How good is current attainment and progress overall and for significant groups?
- Do student attitudes to learning have a positive impact on progress in all lessons?
- How effective have been the steps taken to reduce variation in teaching quality and marking?
- How well do leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and the curriculum?
- How is the school planning to improve provision in the sixth form, and what are the barriers to higher achievement?

## Information about the school

Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Sports College is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is increasing and is a little below average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is a little above average. The largest minority ethnic group is of students with Polish backgrounds, and there are a few students with a range of other ethnic heritages. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is around average, as is the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs. The school has held specialist sports status since 2005. It holds numerous awards including Sportsmark, Sports Leaders UK, London 2012 Get Set Network, Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, IAG Quality Award and Investors in People 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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Blessed Robert Sutton is a good school. Students feel extremely safe while at school and their behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is their contribution to the community. This is because the quality of care, guidance and support offered to them is also outstanding; each individual is held in high regard, and has an outstanding opportunity to care for and support others.

The headteacher brings a passionate and considered drive that is informed by his experienced and wise understanding of the purpose of education in a faith setting. This strong, outward-looking ethos is shared widely in the school and by an effective governing body. He has gathered a talented and committed senior leadership team around this core purpose. In the last two years, there has been a re-energised and successful drive to improve attainment and this indicates that the school has a good capacity to improve further. This improvement is underpinned by highly effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, and a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching across the school. This is largely driven by senior leaders and managers at present. Middle leaders, while held accountable for their subjects, are not empowered to collectively share best practice in teaching and learning.

As a result of strong leadership, attainment has continued to improve. Attainment in 2011 was above average in most key GCSE indicators, particularly the proportion of students attaining five A\* to C grades. Attainment in both English and mathematics continues to rise impressively, and is driving this improvement. At the same time, the number of students attaining five passes or at least one qualification is high, demonstrating the school's commitment to each and every individual. From broadly average starting points, the progress that students make is good and improving. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the highly targeted support that they receive. Attainment in many subjects, including the specialist subject and religious education, are also good. Performance in science, although improving, falls some way behind the other core subjects. Attainment in the sixth form is only satisfactory, despite recent changes to provision, leadership and management.

Attainment and progress have improved because of improvements in teaching and also because of the outstanding attitudes to learning among students. There was admirable consistency in lessons seen during the inspection in terms of the quality of teachers' planning. Work is well matched to the different abilities of students, and

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assessment is used effectively to reinforce and to check what students understand. Students display an exceptionally positive attitude to their work. They are willing and eager partners in the learning process in the great majority of classrooms.

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

- Improve attainment and progress in science so that it is more closely aligned to that seen in English and mathematics by July 2013, by:
  - improving consistency in the quality of teaching across the subject
  - adopting the best practice seen in other parts of the school in terms of planning, assessment, pace, challenge and support for students.
- Empower middle leaders and managers, individually and collectively, to drive forward further improvement in the school, particularly in the development of innovative and inspiring teaching and learning.
- Embed the changes introduced to sixth form provision in order to raise attainment and progress to at least a good standard by July 2013, particularly by:
  - ensuring that the curriculum is well suited to all students' needs, enabling them to achieve their full potential
  - monitoring and evaluating teaching carefully to ensure that it prepares students to be independent learners.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

In most lessons observed during the inspection, students made good progress in their learning. An example of this was seen in two physical education theory lessons, where enjoyment was high because the work was presented in interesting, challenging ways. Consequently, there was a fervent, competitive desire to complete the work to a very high standard. In other lessons, notably with lower ability groups, concentration was sustained exceptionally well and pupils were keen to answer questions, often supporting each other in providing answers.

All groups of students make good progress, but with boys slightly outperforming girls. Students learning English as an additional language are very well supported and, by the end of Year 11, make even better progress than their peers. Teaching assistants are well deployed, ensuring that those who require specific learning support can also succeed. Students with a statement of special educational needs make significantly good progress. The progress of all students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is closely tracked, and they make the same good progress as their peers.

The vast majority of parents and carers and most students feel that students are safe in school. Each student is well known to key adults, and their care and safeguarding are at the heart of everything that the school does. Students behave

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very responsibly and rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. There were striking examples of consistently thoughtful behaviour seen where students supported each other. Relationships in the school are excellent and based on mutual trust. The sports specialism means that all students know the importance of being fit and active. They have a vast range of activities that they can, and do, engage in. There is a very good range of other clubs, activities and visits that also have high take-up rates. However, although students understand how to lead healthy lifestyles, they do not always choose to do so in terms of their selection of food.

Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community, notably through the many sports leadership opportunities available. The school council and sports council are highly effective and are influential in decisions that affect students. The school is very actively involved within the local community and has links with a wide range of other schools locally and further afield. Attendance is above average and improving. This, along with good basic skills and good provision for careers and work-related learning, means that students are well prepared for the future. Many striking examples were seen of students’ spiritual development and their understanding of different cultures, religions and views. Many young people in difficult circumstances are welcomed into the school and quickly integrate with their peers.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<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>1</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>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Most lessons seen during the inspection were very productive. This was because no

<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

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time was wasted and activities proceeded at a brisk pace. The work was well matched to students’ different abilities and learning objectives were shared. Teachers checked that new learning was understood and links were made to what students had already learned. There are examples of the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in many subjects, although student access in some subject areas is limited. Other resources are used well and, combined with a good variety of activities, help to maintain students’ enthusiasm for learning. Work is regularly marked, and there are some good examples seen where teacher comments were helpful in giving students guidance in how to improve. This tended to be more prevalent in better performing subjects, for example English, mathematics and religious education. Assessment was often used well in lessons to check students’ learning, but this is not embedded across all subjects. Similarly, questioning is not always skilfully used to develop students’ thinking, although many good examples were seen.

The curriculum has been revised to both improve motivation and increase the number of different pathways open to students. Reducing Key Stage 3 and extending Key Stage 4, together with judicious early entry, has had a positive impact on attainment. Vocational additions and languages options have increased students’ choices, and the school has planned extension courses for those who have already achieved to a high standard by Year 11.

The support offered to students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable or those with particular needs, is very well targeted. For example, the use of the isolation room indicates that it reduces repeat offending. Students told us that ‘Room P’ has led to striking improvements for individuals and has helped them to reintegrate into mainstream school life. The strength of pastoral and guidance support has been recognised through external validation. All students benefit from good guidance sessions, where relevant issues such as homophobic and cyber-bullying are sensitively explored and explained. Above all, the confidence that students expressed in adults responding promptly and compassionately to all individuals was overwhelming, with the presence and counsel of the Chaplain, in particular, being warmly appreciated.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school has strengthened its tracking of student attainment so that there is early

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identification and support for those who might be in danger of underachieving. Planning has also been made more incisive through the Raising Attainment Plans. These are very specific, making clear the responsibilities for action, the timescales and the measures used to check that the intended outcomes are being met. These measures have been instrumental in making a reality of the school aim of improved performance. They are now embedded across the main school, although making more difference in some subjects than others. In tandem with this, the school is undertaking subject reviews. These reviews are very comprehensive and include sampling student and parental views, observations and scrutiny of performance. They have also resulted in some specific support, including by outside specialist consultants. The school does not currently have formal mechanisms to share the best practice within the school more widely.

Governance is good. Improved monitoring has helped the governing body to hold the school to account. The high quality of information available to it enables its members to ask increasingly challenging questions of school performance. More importantly, they are seeking first-hand evidence, for example by conducting learning walks and discussions about the areas to which each member is linked. As a result, the governing body has a good understanding of strengths and areas for development, and is ambitious to work with school leaders and managers for further improvement. It reviews policy frequently, and safeguarding procedures are good. Guidance tutor sessions have a particularly strong focus on issues that help students to understand how to keep themselves safe. The school contributes a great deal to community cohesion, but does not presently capture all of this activity within its plan. The headteacher plays a prominent role in inclusion activity in the local area and the school has a wide range of ecumenical educational links.

Equality of opportunity lies at the heart of the school, and the vast array of opportunities are available to all, and are carefully monitored. Discrimination is not tolerated and is actively countered in the guidance programme. A huge range of partnership working, not least in the specialist and faith aspects of the school, contribute greatly to students’ academic and personal development. The effectiveness with which the school uses its resources for the benefit of students means that the school offers outstanding value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>



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<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

Performance over the last two years in A and AS level courses has been improving and is now close to the national average. Current, secure assessment data indicates that improvement is sustained and, in many areas, moving forward quickly. Success rates are also broadly average with fewer students failing to complete courses than has been the case in the past. Changes to the curriculum have been made to ensure a better match of courses to current students’ needs. Attendance is improving rapidly and punctuality to lessons is good.

Discussions with students indicate that they are taking greater responsibility for their own learning and well-being. The lessons observed during the inspection were mainly good, with some notable opportunities for students to work more independently. Wider evidence suggests that this is not the case in all subjects or in all teaching. The recently introduced sixth form council has quickly become well established and its members are ambitious for what it will achieve. Students in the sixth form are rapidly engaging more fully in the life of Blessed Robert Sutton and in the community.

Although provision is currently satisfactory, leaders and managers have taken significant steps to strengthen the curriculum, teaching and assessment. There are indications through monitoring that these are already making a difference but they have yet to have an impact on final examination results. The school has widened its sixth form curriculum to include vocational courses that are more in line with the abilities and aspirations of some students. As a result, the school has reviewed and made more stringent its entry policy at A and AS level. This is expected to have a positive impact on success rates in these courses.

The quality of support, guidance and care for sixth form students is good. Students feel that they are given particularly good support and guidance in choosing university places. As a result, students who go on to university achieve good results. Students fully understand the support structures available to them and are particularly well supported if they encounter difficulties or fall behind with their studies.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	3

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Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	

## Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was lower than that found in most secondary schools. Those who did respond were generally very positive about the school. They were particularly positive in terms of students being safe, the progress that they make, meeting individual needs and the leadership and management of the school. Feedback was a little less positive in terms of whether the school takes account of their concerns, and how the school helps parents and carers to support their child's learning.

Many written responses concerned individual matters that would need to be raised directly with the school, although some were discussed, anonymously and in general terms, with the headteacher. A number of parents and carers were concerned about the variability in teaching, particularly in science. Inspectors confirm that this is the case. A small number of parents and carers did not like the changes to school reports, but a larger number praised the changes made.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Sports College 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 707 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	51	54	41	7	5	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	71	54	58	44	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	60	45	59	45	11	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	39	69	52	7	5	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	48	36	73	55	6	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	47	36	62	47	15	11	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	26	83	63	7	5	1	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)	49	37	69	52	9	7	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	38	71	54	10	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	40	64	48	7	5	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	33	58	44	9	7	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	68	52	58	44	3	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	68	52	56	42	4	3	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.**



9 December 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Sports College, Stapenhill, DE15 9SD**

I am writing to tell you what inspectors found when we visited your school recently. Firstly, though, I must thank you for being so friendly and helpful, and for sharing your own positive views of the school with us. We found that yours is a good school, with too many strengths to fit on to this one page! You may wish to read the full report to see more details. Several things, however, are outstanding. These include your own behaviour and attitudes to learning, which are first rate. You also told us that you feel safe, and your parents and carers agreed. This is because adults at the school know and care for you superbly. Your school offers lots of opportunities to show that you also care about and support others, for example through your roles as sports leaders, but in lots of other ways too.

We found that you are taught well and now have a better choice of subjects as you move through the school. The adults who lead and manage your school are ambitious for you and make sure that you are safe, healthy and achieve well. Even good schools can improve, and we have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure that you achieve as well in science as you do in mathematics and English, by making teaching more consistently good in the subject
- help subject leaders to find ways to share even more widely the excellent teaching and learning approaches seen in the school
- check that the changes made to courses and teaching in the sixth form help you to achieve good standards by the time you take your examinations.

You can help by making your own views about improving the school known to leaders and managers through the school council. You can also work with the school to help you to choose healthy food options. I know that you will continue to work hard. I would like to thank you once again for your kindness, and wish the school and every one of you success and happiness in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Martin  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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