

Bishop Challoner Catholic College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103560
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	395469
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1189
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Keegan
Headteacher	Maire Symons
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2009
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Lee	Additional Inspector
Deloris Reviere	Additional Inspector
John Leigh	Additional Inspector
Fiona Arnison	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 45 lessons taught by 44 teachers and some were joint visits with a member of the senior leadership team. They held meetings with staff, students, and a member of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and analysed 353 parent and carer questionnaires, 63 staff questionnaires, and 150 pupil questionnaires. They scrutinised assessment records, the minutes of the meetings of the governing body, and the school's development plans and evaluations.

Information about the school

Bishop Challoner Catholic College is a larger than average specialist sport, science and training school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs at either school action plus or with a statement is broadly average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, with those from an Irish background being the largest group. There are not many students who are learning English as an additional language.

The school had a subject inspection for music in March 2011. Since the previous inspection, the school has achieved a number of prestigious awards, including lead teaching school for mathematics, initial teacher education and assessment for learning, as well as a National Support School. Results for 2011 meet the current government floor standard, the minimum expectations set for attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because, while achievement is very strong in many areas, there are areas where it remains satisfactory. Although much of the teaching is good or outstanding, some is satisfactory.
- Students respond well to the outstanding curriculum and make excellent progress in many subjects, so that attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 4. Results in physical education are very high and the performing arts support outstanding cultural development. The proportion of students who gain the equivalent of at least two GCSE grades at A* to C in science is high, but progress in GCSE science is satisfactory.
- The sixth form is good and prepares students well for their futures. Students make outstanding progress in applied A levels and good progress in other A level subjects during the first year of their sixth-form studies. However, this progress is not maintained over the full course.
- The school's outstanding spiritual climate, based upon a strong faith ethos, ensures students feel very safe and cared for. Behaviour is outstanding around school and in lessons. Even when teaching is less dynamic and engaging, students behave well.
- Teaching is often good and outstanding at times. There are very good relationships between staff and students. When teaching is of the highest quality, learning is purposeful. Lessons are pacy and students are highly engaged. When teaching is satisfactory, not all students are fully engaged and challenged.
- There is a very strong drive and ambition to improve. Performance management has held staff to account, although at times evaluation, including of the quality of teaching, is over-generous. The school has raised attendance levels and has responded well to the music inspection. Achievement in the sixth

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form has risen steadily.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching and learning, so that by January 2013 all teaching is consistently good or better by ensuring:
 - work challenges all students in a class
 - teachers use strategies so that all students are fully engaged and enthused during lessons.

- Raise achievement to consistently outstanding by:
 - building upon the success of students in Year 12, so that they make at least good progress across both years in the sixth form
 - ensuring students taking GCSE sciences make at least good progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 have been consistently above average, with students making at least good progress in the majority of subjects. During the inspection, the inspectors observed students making mainly good and at times outstanding progress in lessons. For example, in geography, students were observed being highly engaged in discussing ways of evaluating different disasters. However, there were also a number of lessons where progress was slower. There, students were not challenged fully and, while some were making good progress, others were less engaged and not fully involved. The great majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires say that their children make good progress at the school. That is supported by inspection evidence. Learning was outstanding when lessons were highly engaging and students were very active. For example, in history, students were highly motivated, discussing the issues around Tony Blair's role as prime minister. The teacher facilitated excellent learning, rather than dominating the lesson. The school has made a very good impact on raising literacy skills by ensuring a common approach to support writing across the curriculum. Lesson plans identify key words, but at times, students were observed who did not understand words they were able to read.

In mathematics, achievement is excellent and the proportion of students who are successful in meeting the standards for the English Baccalaureate is above average. The proportion of students who study three separate sciences has increased and students are successful in gaining at least a grade C in all three sciences. The school has, rightly, extended the teaching time for these groups as it recognised the students did not always make good progress from their starting points. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported well and they make similar progress to their peers. The school has been successful in closing the

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achievement gap for students known to be eligible for free school meals. Irish-heritage students achieve in line with their fellow students.

Students enter the sixth form with broadly average attainment. They make at least good progress in Year 12, so that achievement in AS level examinations is above average. In Year 13, the momentum is not maintained, so that achievement is satisfactory. In applied A levels, achievement is excellent. The proportion of students who continue from Year 12 to Year 13 is well above average, with increasing numbers being accepted to study at highly respected universities. Overall, achievement is good in the sixth form.

Quality of teaching

Inspectors found that teaching is good, with many good and outstanding lessons. However, teaching is not consistently of such high quality and, at times, it was judged satisfactory. When teaching is best, lessons are very engaging, students work at a fast pace and are enthused. Staff have high expectations and students respond well to highly effective questioning which develops understanding. All students are included when teachers question the class. Very good use is made of students' responses to identify misconceptions and use these as teaching points. Marking is frequent and informs students clearly how to improve. Lessons include a wide variety of activities. In some lessons, the pace is maintained by a number of short tasks, whereas in others, teachers facilitate very good independent learning by allowing students to work over an extended period of time. Questioning is very effective in many lessons, particularly when all students are engaged. However, in some lessons, questioning is not as effective and few students offer answers. While teachers target individual students who may not be offering answers, they do not use strategies which include all students.

Good individual support given to disabled students and those with special educational needs by teaching assistants ensures they are able to engage in lessons. When teaching is satisfactory, lessons do not challenge all students. Students complete a wide range of assessments, which are used well to identify and inform them about how to improve; however, in some books, similar attention is not given through frequent marking. Just about all parents and carers say teaching is good, with half strongly agreeing. Inspectors confirm this.

Teaching allows students to be highly reflective on spiritual matters, for example in the use of a three-dimensional image when considering how to calculate the height of Mount Everest. Students gain an excellent insight into different cultures through the performing arts, for example learning about Brazilian music. They consider moral aspects, for example when considering the impact on an athlete's performance of taking performance-enhancing drugs. Students gain social understanding, for example in games, when they work exceedingly well in groups.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Behaviour around school is excellent with students being polite and courteous and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. This was demonstrated during the inspection, when students showed great maturity in the way they evacuated the school buildings after a fire alarm went off and gathered, orderly, in the appropriate place. At the time, it was raining hard. When students returned to their lessons they got back down to work quickly. The vast majority of responses from parents, carers and students say behaviour in lessons is good. The small amount of less-than-perfect behaviour observed was when students were not fully involved with their work because teaching was not sufficiently engaging, but even then, behaviour was good.

Just about all students say they feel safe and this is confirmed by responses from parents and carers. Students have a good understanding of the dangers of substance abuse and the different types of bullying. They have received very well-informed advice on how to deal with examples of cyber-bullying, including that from mobile 'phones. The school responds quickly to ensure issues like gang culture do not impact upon the very well-ordered running of the school. Students like being part of a strong fellowship within the school, including the sixth form, whose members are working well to build a peace garden within the school. Attendance has improved significantly and is above average.

Leadership and management

There is a very clear strategic direction to the school and it is well led. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they were proud to work at the school. The school provides excellent support to other schools within the locality through its teaching school activities and staff have been seconded to an academy for which the school acts as a sponsor. However, when undertaking joint observations during the inspection, inspectors did not always agree with the school's judgment on the quality of teaching. The school identifies key aspects of good and outstanding teaching, but does not always look at the quality of learning for all students and use this whole-class overview to judge the quality of teaching. Consequently, the school is over-generous in its evaluation of teaching. Other aspects of its self-evaluation were also over-generous because they did not take full account of achievement in the sixth form and in science. The school has a comprehensive system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and performance management is well established, to hold staff and departments to account. Professional development is well established, to support staff to improve the quality of teaching, including opportunities for staff to contribute to the teaching school programme or completing masters or higher degrees.

The curriculum is outstanding because in Key Stage 4 it is based around GCSE options, with some vocational courses as appropriate, along with excellent extra-curricular activities. Many students enjoy those, particularly sport and the performing arts. The school makes very good use of notebook computers to engage younger students better. The school development plan is very detailed and includes 16 areas for development, but the success criteria within the plan are not always sufficiently challenging or related to the impact of actions on raising standards. The curriculum

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supports students to develop outstanding spiritual and cultural development and good moral and social understanding in individual subjects. Artwork around the school is highly inspirational.

Analysis of data is used well to identify any groups who are underachieving and to ensure equality of opportunity. However, the school does not analyse exclusions in a similar way so that the governing body can ensure equality. The gap between the achievement of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and other students has reduced.

The governing body supports the school well and receives regular updates from the headteacher and departments. The updates enable it to challenge the school, identify underperformance, evaluate the impact of initiatives, and hold the school to account. The governing body, along with all staff, ensure all aspects of safeguarding meet current requirements.

The school has been successful in increasing the proportion of students who continue with musical lessons after Year 7, in response to the music inspection, and improved attendance in response to the previous full inspection. Achievement has risen steadily in the sixth form over the last few years and demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



4 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Bishop Challoner Catholic College, Birmingham, B14 7EG

When I visited your school recently with my colleagues, we met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation. We were impressed with your courtesy and manners and how well you get on with each other. We were very impressed with your behaviour during the fire alarm and how well you got back to your work. This helped us to judge behaviour as outstanding and your school as good overall. Well done!

Our observations showed that achievement is good and that you reach above-average standards at the end of Key Stage 4. We have asked the school to make achievement outstanding by helping you do even better with GCSE science and ensuring that you make as much progress in Year 13 as you do in Year 12. The school makes sure that you follow an excellent curriculum, which helps prepare you for your next phase of education or the world of work. You enjoy a very wide variety of extra-curricular activities also, particularly in sports and the performing arts. You enjoy the strong fellowship of belonging to a school where faith is very important. You told us how much you enjoy your educational visits and you want to help improve the school. We hope you are able to develop the peace garden.

We observed 44 teachers and saw that you enjoy many interesting lessons. We judged that teaching is good overall and often outstanding. We have asked the school to make sure that you are always challenged fully and that all of you are always fully involved in lessons.

Staff care for you very well, which is why nearly all of you who filled in the student questionnaire said that you enjoy school and feel safe. Your headteacher and other senior leaders are providing strong leadership and have identified what needs to be done. They are very determined to carry on improving and are supported very well by staff and the governing body. We wish you well at this good and improving school and hope you carry on helping it to get even better.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

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