

St Bede's School

Carlton Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 2LQ

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most students make good progress in the majority of subjects. The high level of attainment seen at the last inspection has risen; this includes the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics.
- The sixth form is good. The dip in achievement since the last inspection has been addressed so that success rates are high and considerably more students are achieving the highest grades.
- The quality of teaching and students' learning is typically good with some outstanding teaching in many subjects. Teachers' excellent knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject enable teachers to deliver content-rich lessons that engage students. They use questioning skilfully to promote students' learning.
- Students take great pride in their school, behave exceptionally well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are highly respectful and courteous towards visitors, staff and each other. Students feel extremely safe because they are very well cared for in this harmonious community. Attendance is high.
- The headteacher is supported well by the senior leadership team and, together with middle leaders, they are effective in sustaining and driving improvement. Robust performance management and focused professional development for all staff underpin the good and improving quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While some students both within groups and across subjects make outstanding progress, this proportion is not high enough.
- Teaching in some lessons does not always fully extend students' learning, develop their ability to learn independently or consistently use a wide enough range of teaching approaches.
- There is occasional inconsistency in the marking of students' work and in how feedback ensures students know precisely how to improve it.
- The school's approach to self-evaluation lacks sufficient precision in order to give leaders a sufficiently deep understanding of the school's performance in all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons taught by 45 teachers, of which eight were joint observations with members of the school's senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made some short visits to lessons, visited the school's inclusion unit and conducted four learning walks, which included tutorial time on the second day. They observed one assembly and listened to a small group of students reading.
- The inspectors held meetings with four groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. They met with school staff, including senior and middle leaders, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's monitoring and planning documentation, internal student progress information and records relating to behaviour and attendance, together with documents relating to safeguarding.
- They took account of 73 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and analysed questionnaires completed by 66 staff.

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tom Gibson	Additional inspector
Una Stevens	Additional inspector
Gill Walley	Additional inspector
Colin McKinlay	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This ecumenical church school, serving a very wide geographical area, is larger than average, with an above average sized sixth form. The school aims to bind together all denominations, including the Free Churches, to provide a common Christian education.
- The majority of students are White British. Almost all minority ethnic groups are represented in very small numbers, but few students are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- A much smaller proportion of students than found nationally is eligible for the pupil premium. Similarly, the proportion of students identified as disabled or with special educational needs, including those supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs, is below average. This covers a wide variety of needs but increasingly those with a physical disability.
- Since the last inspection the school has gained specialist status in music and considerably enhanced its sports facilities, which now include a sports hall, all-weather pitch and dance studios. In addition, part of the school has been converted to become the sixth form centre and the main hall has been refurbished to become a performance centre.
- Around 10% of students in Years 10 and 11 follow part- or full-time courses at a local school, further education college or the Surrey Alternative Learning Programme.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expected for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to accelerate students' learning so that a higher proportion makes exceptional progress by:
 - extending students' learning through more effective and challenging questioning
 - developing students' independence in order for students to take greater responsibility for their own learning
 - improving the precision of marking and feedback to students so that they are clear about the next steps in their learning journey
 - making consistent use of a wide range of teaching approaches so that students have greater opportunities to learn in ways that suit them best.
- Fine tune the systems for school self-evaluation so that staff and leaders at all levels have a deeper understanding of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, by:
 - making more efficient use of data information to monitor all aspects of the school's work
 - more carefully targeting actions and evaluating their impact on students' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment by the end of Year 11 is consistently high and has risen over time; in particular, the proportion attaining the highest grades is increasing.
- Most students enter the school with levels of attainment at or well above the national average and, regardless of their starting points, most make good progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Some students make outstanding progress within subjects, including in English, mathematics and science. Students achieve particularly well in practical subjects such as art and photography. Any lower subject performance, for example in business studies in 2011, is swiftly addressed, as indicated by the significantly improved, but unvalidated, results for 2012.
- Girls generally perform better than boys, with higher ability girls achieving particularly well. However, no group significantly underperforms, and the few boys whose achievement is lower are from across the ability range. The school has taken effective action to address this by refocusing teaching and broadening the curriculum to engage and support these students, for example music technology, engineering and photography courses have been introduced. Boys are performing particularly well in these subjects and the unvalidated GCSE results for 2012 indicate a small narrowing of the overall gap.
- The few students who follow full- and part-time courses, for example hair and beauty, in off-site provision make good progress because these placements are carefully planned and monitored.
- The relatively small number of students supported by the pupil premium, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other students. Their attainment is above their peers nationally and close to overall national averages.
- Attainment on entry to the sixth form is slightly above average and students follow appropriate academic-based subjects. Standards and success rates have risen over the last three years and were high in 2011. Progress has steadily improved over the last three years and is now good overall, although some variation within and between subjects remains, which the school is targeting for improvement. The few students who undertake the extended paper qualification perform well, but the school recognises a higher proportion should be aspiring to this.

The quality of teaching is good

- The typical quality of teaching across the school is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Teaching enables students, including those in the sixth form and those who have special educational needs or who are disabled, to learn well because:
 - teachers use their excellent subject knowledge well to plan individual and series of lessons that are well structured to meet students' needs and to ensure learning moves at a good pace
 - questioning is used well to check students' understanding and adjust teaching as the lesson progresses
 - subject language is used effectively to develop students' literacy.
- Teachers are highly committed to ensuring their students achieve well; consequently, relationships between staff and students are strong and attitudes to learning are very positive. However, at times students become over reliant on their teachers because lessons are too teacher led or there are too few opportunities for students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Students' learning across the ability range accelerates when teachers:
 - set very high expectations, in particular for the higher attainers
 - adopt a wider range of approaches to suit students' differing learning styles, including the use of imagery and active or practical-based tasks
 - use questioning very successfully to challenge students' thinking and extend their knowledge and understanding
 - promote independent learning skills, for example through paired or group work.
- Such features are routinely seen within good lessons, although with less consistency than in

outstanding lessons. For example, in an outstanding science lesson very high expectations, brisk pace, highly skilful questioning that extended understanding and students organising the practical work enabled them to take control of their own learning and make excellent progress.

- Teaching assistants are generally well used, although they have less impact on students' learning when teachers' explanations are lengthy.
- Attainment in reading and writing is generally high with some help given to weaker readers and those at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- Teachers regularly assess students' progress in lessons and through marking their work, providing both verbal and written feedback. However, there is occasional inconsistency in the precision with which the next steps of learning are identified.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students across the school have very positive attitudes to learning. Students' high level of respect for each other, staff and their school is evident in their exemplary behaviour around school. Consequently, students are trusted to have open access to the school site at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Students are clear about the high standards of behaviour expected of them, and reflect these in their attitudes to learning. They say behaviour in lessons is typically very good and that any disruption is rare, at low level and calmly managed by teachers.
- Inclusion unit staff have a very positive impact on those students who require help in managing their behaviour or who need support with their learning.
- Students' understanding of different types of bullying is excellent because they are well informed. For example, they have learnt about cyber bullying through citizenship lessons, recent assemblies and discussions within tutor groups. An information session for parents and carers was provided to extend this understanding beyond school. Students are confident about what to do if any bullying should occur and feel that it will be speedily and effectively dealt with.
- Students with one voice spoke of how safe they feel at school and the trust they have in teachers, support staff and the chaplain to help them should they have concerns. Students, including those supported by the pupil premium, who have special educational needs or are disabled are extremely well cared for. The school also takes careful regard of the behaviour and safety of those attending off-site provision.
- Students' enjoyment, pride in their school and its standing in the local community are reflected in their high level of attendance and punctuality. Inspectors observed students moving rapidly and with enthusiasm to their lessons.
- This very positive view of behaviour, safety and the care provided to students is supported by: school records; the staff spoken to during the inspection; the staff questionnaire responses; a high proportion of parents and carers through the Parent View responses; and the school's own survey data.

The leadership and management are good

- The highly committed headteacher has successfully communicated his vision of excellence and a harmonious community well to staff, students, parents and carers. He is ably supported by senior and middle leaders who have worked with determination to sustain and improve students' achievement. Underperformance has been tackled resolutely and successfully, such as in the sixth form where attainment and recruitment have considerably improved, demonstrating the school's good capacity for improvement.
- The use of data to monitor students' progress has developed significantly so that students' progress is carefully tracked by both subject and pastoral leaders. However, the considerable volume of data on students' performance is not always used with sufficient efficiency to consistently provide clarity and ease of use.
- Self-evaluation is embedded at all levels, so that leaders and managers have an accurate overview of the school's performance to ensure the equality of opportunity for all students.

However, the systems for self-evaluation do not always ensure that identified areas for development are sufficiently fine tuned to precisely target improvement planning and monitor and evaluate the actions taken in depth.

- The professional development of staff is based on effective routine monitoring of teaching across the school by leaders at all levels and the robust performance management of staff. Induction for new staff, including those new to the profession, is well planned to ensure an effective start.
- The curriculum is good and very effectively provides an appropriate balance of academic, practical and vocational subjects to match the needs and interests of students of all abilities. Consequently, it supports high academic achievement and progression routes beyond Key Stage 4 into the school's sixth form as well as other education providers, employment and training. New courses to improve the engagement of boys have been introduced and, at Key Stage 3, provision has been enhanced with opportunities to study a second language and a variety of 'electives' in which students choose topics to study that embrace all the elements of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as improving literacy.
- All subjects are expected to incorporate literacy and mathematics development within their teaching; nonetheless, new approaches are being established. The use of alternative provision for a small number of Key Stage 4 students is very carefully planned and managed, and successfully secures their engagement in education.
- Opportunities abound across all aspects of school life to develop students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The high focus on performing arts, particularly through the music specialism, and examples of students' high quality work, notably in art and technology, raise students' aspirations and develop cultural awareness.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

governors are committed and well trained, for example in child protection and how to link and work with subject staff

governors gain a good understanding of the school's performance through reports and presentations from senior and middle leaders and in routine visits to look at all aspects of the school's work; as a result, they are able to provide effective support and challenge with key decisions as well on students' achievement and the quality of teaching

governors are robust in monitoring the school's use of resources, meticulously ensure that statutory duties are met and that performance management systems are robust and support school improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125278
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	395652

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
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	1669
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Townsend
Headteacher	Christopher Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2006
Telephone number	01737 212108
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