

# The Becket School

The Becket Way, Wilford Lane, West Bridgford, NG2 7QY

**Inspection dates** 10–11 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students start at school with standards which are above average and make good progress to achieve highly in GCSE and A level examinations. Results in the school's specialist subjects of science, history and geography are outstanding.
- The sixth form is good and it prepares students well for their futures. Many leave to study at very good universities.
- Teaching is mainly good or outstanding. At its best students are fully engaged, enthused and enjoy their lessons. Teaching helps students to develop a good understanding of what they are learning and marking shows students how best they can improve.
- Behaviour around school and in nearly all lessons is excellent with very few incidents of poor behaviour. Students feel safe and well cared for. They say the school supports them in their faith which is very important to them.
- Leaders and governors have a very good understanding of what the school needs to improve. They have worked well to improve the quality of teaching and achievement in mathematics which has not been good enough for a few years. This shows that the school is able to carry on improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not do as well in all subjects. For example, results in music are not good with very few students taking either GCSE or A level examinations.
- Teaching is not always set at the right level for students of different abilities.
- Marking not does always tell students how they can get better.
- In a small number of lessons students are not fully interested in their work.
- Some teachers who are responsible for subjects do not consistently identify how best to improve the quality of teaching in their subjects and then check to see how well it has improved.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 44 lessons. Some observations were joint visits with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- They took account of the 74 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They observed the school's work and analysed 47 staff questionnaires.
- They scrutinised examination results for 2012, assessment records, the minutes of the meetings of the governing body and the school's development plans and evaluations.

## Inspection team

Michael Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alicia Welsh-Kuligowicz	Additional Inspector
Steven Goldsmith	Additional Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Becket School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011 and retained its science and humanities specialisms. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is an average-sized Catholic voluntary aided academy.
- About a sixth of students are known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional government funds); this is average.
- Below 3% of students are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs; this is below average. Approximately a sixth of students are supported through school action, which is above average.
- A new headteacher started at the school in September 2012.
- The school has received a number of prestigious awards including Healthy Schools and International Schools. It is a member of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Reduce inconsistencies and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning throughout the school by ensuring:
  - teachers have frequent opportunities to see how the best teachers in the school work
  - all teaching is interesting and work is matched to the needs of all students so that they work hard in all lessons
  - marking consistently tells students how well they have done and gives them clear advice on what they need to do next to improve
  - time is allowed in lessons for students to respond to this guidance
  - subject leaders are trained to identify consistently how teaching can be improved and enabled to check that the support they give is effective.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Standards in both GCSE and A level examinations are high. Students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points. Teaching challenges students in the majority of lessons, although at times work given to students is either too hard or too easy.
- Achievement in mathematics, which has been below average for the last few years, has improved greatly in 2012 and is outstanding. The proportion of students who make and exceed the expected progress is above the national figures. Lessons in mathematics help students' understanding. Good opportunities are provided for students to develop their reasoning and investigation skills in mathematics lessons.
- Students often successfully complete a GCSE course in one year during Years 10 and 11 by having twice as much time as usual each week. Results for last year show that standards in art and design, which had been low, improved greatly. Students enjoy their art and are challenged by some of the topics, for example, developing Picasso-like sculptures in paper. Achievement in music is low with few students studying music after Year 9.
- Pupil premium money has been used effectively to support targeted groups. Funds have been used for additional classes for mathematics and English in Years 10 and 11 and additional support for students who are having difficulty with the workload in Year 11. It has also been used for extra support for students in French in Year 9, support for younger students for their writing and reading and an additional support worker for students' and families' welfare. The proportion of these students who gain five or more A\* to C GCSE passes including English and mathematics has doubled over the last three years and is now above the national average.
- A-level results are mainly high. There is some significant variation between subjects with results in geography, sociology, psychology and general studies being particularly good. Students comment that they receive very good advice in school. They are helped to achieve well, decide which A levels to study and how to apply to university. Consequently, the school is very successful in supporting students in gaining entrance to their first choice university, many being highly prestigious universities.
- Students have good literacy and numeracy skills and develop these across a variety of different subjects. They discuss work before writing, have opportunities to write longer pieces of work in subjects like history and geography, and practise calculation and graphical skills in subjects such as science. Younger students who are not as good at reading as others receive good support from sixth form students, who are keen to volunteer as 'reading buddies'.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is good. It ensures students make good progress across a wide variety of subjects. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent and students often enjoy their lessons. At times, some students are not fully involved in their learning and do not take as active a part in the lesson as the majority.
- Teachers' questioning is a strength. Students are asked to explain answers and to justify what they have said. Consequently, they develop a good understanding of their work as well as develop their speaking and listening skills.

- Teachers often check on students' learning during lessons and adjust their teaching as a result. They use students' responses as teaching points or to take learning further as appropriate. However, in some lessons work does not meet the needs of students of different abilities because the same work is set for all students.
- Marking is variable. In the very best marking, teachers identify what students need to do to improve their work and then give clear advice on how they could achieve better. Students then respond to the teacher's comments. Sometimes, marking is not very detailed and it does not explain how a student could improve their work.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to work in carefully-organised groups in some lessons. This allows students to be more in charge of the way in which they work and give them opportunities to develop good skills to work when not under the direct control of the teacher. However, in some lessons teachers are too much in control and students do not have opportunities to learn how to work and think effectively for themselves.
- Responses from parents and carers showed that the very large majority believe that their children are well taught in school. Students said that they enjoy lessons but are aware of differences in their quality. For example, some lessons are very exciting and interesting to some students because they can work in groups. Other students said that they sometimes spend too much time filling in worksheets.
- Students are provided with excellent opportunities for their spiritual development. As well as the typically outstanding religious education lessons, form sessions, assemblies and subjects such as science often allow students to reflect upon spiritual matters. Students also appreciate the support of the school chaplain.
- Students often discuss moral issues. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students considered the impact of not neutering cats. They understood that this would lead to a huge increase in cat numbers and realised the difficulties this would create.
- Cultural development is very evident around the school. Display is used well and students enjoy taking part in a wide variety of activities after school, including many musical bands and groups.
- Social development is excellent. Students all take part in a residential visit at the start of Year 7. Many students attend retreats and there is excellent support for the trip to Lourdes. Activities such as these make an important contribution to students' sense of community.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour is good. Behaviour around school and in the vast majority of lessons is of a very high quality. Occasionally, behaviour falls below these very high standards. At times, students do not become fully engaged in discussions or in giving answers during their lessons.
- The school's very strong family and faith atmosphere means that students have a sense of belonging and that they feel safe. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to Parent View said that their children feel safe in school. There are excellent procedures to ensure students are safe. For instance, the school works very well with a variety of different external agencies to support students, and sometimes their families, who are experiencing personal problems.
- Students have a good understanding of the key issues of keeping safe, appropriate to their age. This includes aspects of sexual health and of substance abuse, including both cigarettes and alcohol. Bullying incidents are rare. Students know about the different types of bullying. They

understand the consequences of bullying to the victim and also the person doing the bullying. Students in Year 7 said that they felt very well supported before they started at the school and that they have settled in well.

- Attendance is high. Only a few students have too much time off school.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Senior leadership is strong. Clear purpose and ambition are shared by all staff. Senior leaders have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and those areas in need of improvement.
- The leadership to improve the quality of teaching has been successful in reducing the amount of teaching which is not yet good. Teachers commented that they feel well supported and that they can get additional help to improve their teaching when required. The school does not make enough use of sharing widely the best examples of teaching.
- Teachers who are leaders of subjects have been successful in improving the achievement in a variety of these, including mathematics and art. However, the impact of this work is not consistent. Although the leaders know how good the teaching is in their department, they do not always know what needs to be done to help teachers improve. Consequently, there is still too much variation in quality of teaching and not all is at least good.
- Performance management is effective. Teachers have clear targets for improvement. The governors ensure that those teachers who successfully meet their targets are suitably rewarded.
- The subjects students study offer excellent opportunities for them to achieve well. In Years 10 and 11, students often successfully complete a GCSE in one year by having twice as much time as normal. This is successful in reducing the final examination burden at the end of Year 11 but still allowing students to achieve as well as possible. All A-level students complete a general studies course.
- There are a wide variety of clubs and sports which students enjoy. Many students enjoy music outside lessons by playing an instrument in the many musical clubs and groups. Sport is enjoyed along with the wide variety of educational visits and visitors to the school.
- The school has used pupil premium money well to reduce the group size for identified students. Consequently, the proportion of these students who meet the standards for the English Baccalaureate has risen to well above the national figure. The gap between the achievement of these pupils and that of others is being successfully narrowed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - is good and challenges the school to improve constantly
  - checks to make sure safeguarding is of the highest quality within the school
  - is supportive and contributes well towards the school's pastoral and spiritual development
  - checks how well different groups of students achieve to ensure equality of opportunity
  - holds leaders to account for the use of pupil premium funds.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137409
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	395702

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1085
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	James McGeachie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 982 4280
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