

St Benedict's Catholic High School

Kinwarton Road, Alcester, B49 6PX

Inspection dates 22–23 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students, staff and parents are, quite rightly, proud to be associated with this school.
- All groups of students make excellent progress, regardless of their background or ability level.
- Students' attainment has been significantly above average over time, including in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding. Lesson activities are planned extremely well to ensure they are demanding and exciting.
- Very occasionally, teachers' marking and feedback do not show students what they need to do to improve their work.
- Students are calm, mature and behave impeccably. Bullying rarely occurs in any form.
- Excellent relationships between students and staff contribute well to consistently high-quality learning and progress.
- The range of subjects and courses available to the students is planned carefully to meet their individual needs and interests.
- All staff have a shared commitment to providing the very best education for all students.
- Leaders know the school very well and their planning ensures continuous improvement.
- The governing body provides a high level of challenge and successfully helps to plan and drive improvement in the school.
- The sixth form is outstanding and displays similar high qualities to the rest of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 35 parts of lessons, of which four were observed together with the school's senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, and representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, performance data, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at samples of the students' work. They also looked carefully at the school's central record of checks on staff.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 204 parents in their responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the views of staff, including those expressed in 66 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nigel Boyd, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Derek Wiles

Additional Inspector

Janet Catto

Additional Inspector

Shahnaz Maqsood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Benedict's Catholic High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in care of the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals, and students who have a parent in the armed forces) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school offers a few students additional work-related courses away from the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the amount of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all feedback to students on their work includes specific guidance on how to improve it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are broadly average. As a result of outstanding teaching, all groups of students make rapid progress. By the end of Year 11, they achieve GCSE results which are very high in comparison with national figures for students with similar starting points.
- The proportion of students making or exceeding expected levels of progress in both English and mathematics is significantly above the national average.
- The school is careful to ensure that all students are provided with the support they need to achieve well. As a result, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
- Students are encouraged to read widely. The very high standards they achieve in English and mathematics demonstrate how well students are developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding very effectively to support eligible students. It has provided individual help and guidance, additional tuition, as well as financial support to enable them to participate in out-of-school activities and courses.
- The sixth form opened in September 2011. Students study the International Baccalaureate as well as vocational courses. At the time of the inspection the school had no nationally validated data for its students to compare with national results. The school's own predictions, based on accurate assessments of how well students are doing, show that students are on track to achieve results well above the national average in the International Baccalaureate. They are making outstanding progress in lessons. The small number studying work-related courses are on track to achieve results above the national average.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Consistently high-quality teaching ensures students make outstanding progress. Many lessons are outstanding. This was confirmed by observations during the inspection, the school's records of teaching over time, the views of parents and by talking to the students.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully. Lessons are well structured, proceed at pace and are interesting. This ensures that students' enthusiasm is captured well.
- Teachers have high expectations and they set challenging work for their students, which helps them to achieve and progress to high standards.
- There were numerous examples of inspirational teaching seen during the inspection. In many lessons, passionate teachers used a variety of stimulating teaching methods to generate exceptionally high levels of excitement and engagement.
- Students are given clear individual targets to aim for in their work. Progress is carefully checked by teachers to identify any students who are not on track to achieve their target grades and levels. When necessary, additional help is provided to ensure that students do not continue to fall behind.

- Most teachers mark students' work regularly and provide high-quality constructive feedback so students know what to do to improve their work. Several examples of exemplary marking were seen by inspectors. This is not consistently the case. A few teachers do not provide clear advice to students on what they need to do to improve their grades.
- The school makes very good use of homework to reinforce and extend students' learning. Students value homework and say it makes a valuable contribution to their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students enjoy coming to school and take great pride in their school.
- Students' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning are particularly strong features of the school. Students behave well at all times and are extremely courteous and considerate.
- The systems to manage inappropriate behaviour are widely understood by students and used consistently by staff. Incidents of exclusion are very rare.
- Rewards are appreciated by the students, particularly the effort the school makes to inform parents of their successes.
- Students understand how to keep themselves safe and are made aware of different forms of bullying. They say that bullying of any kind is rare, but when it occurs it is dealt with highly effectively.
- Attendance is above average and students are punctual to lessons. The school chases up any students with a history of poor attendance relentlessly.
- The responses to Parent View and the school's own parental surveys confirm that they believe students are well behaved and kept safe in school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership at all levels is highly effective in ensuring that students do as well as they possibly can.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. It has a strong track record of improvement based on well-formulated plans and action taken.
- Senior and middle leaders are skilled in making judgements on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Specialist training has helped them to become more confident in checking how well teachers are teaching in their subjects. Consequently, they have an accurate view of the quality of lessons and are effective in helping teachers improve.
- The leadership and management of teaching are very effective in improving the quality of learning. There is a particularly close link between the current teaching standards, teachers' performance and the well-planned training and support provided for staff.
- Teachers are held to account for their performance. Performance management targets are

closely linked to the school's priorities and the achievement of their students. Teachers' pay progression is directly linked to a close assessment of their performance.

- The well-balanced range of subjects and courses available to the students is particularly strong. The school goes to great lengths to meet the needs of the students by providing courses outside the normal school day or at other locations. The work-related courses away from the school site are well run and produce similarly high results to the on-site courses. A well-planned early entry policy for a small number of courses enables students to study subjects that the school is unable to accommodate on the normal timetable.
- Students enjoy many opportunities to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. This is addressed in subjects and is also supported by the wide range of clubs and activities beyond lessons.
- As it is an outstanding school, the support provided by the local authority is appropriately minimal.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors know the school very well. They keep their skills up to date through regular training, receive regular and comprehensive information from the headteacher, and visit regularly to monitor the school's work. As a result, governors are in a position to contribute strongly to school development and improvement planning. Governors set ambitious performance management targets for the headteacher and hold the headteacher to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers. Governors have a firm grasp of the finances available to the school, and ensure that resources are well managed and pupil premium funding is targeted at the right students to raise their achievement. They have a good understanding of data and use it to compare pupils' performance against that achieved in similar schools across the country.

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	125755
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	400212

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark O'Connell
Headteacher	Tim Sara
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
Telephone number	01789 762888
Fax number	01789 400192
Email address	admin@st-benedicts.org

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