

St Bede's Catholic Middle School

Holloway Lane, Redditch, B98 7HA

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| 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.

- Most pupils make good progress in nearly all their lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3. Pupils are challenged so that many go on to achieve the highest possible levels in their subjects. Pupils are well motivated to learn, even if the pace of a lesson occasionally dips.
- Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 8 compare favourably with standards nationally. Test results at the end of Year 6 have been rising over time and are now in line with the national average.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and they know how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance is above the national average and improving. There have been no exclusions this year.
- The headteacher leads the school well and is ably supported by a newly structured senior leadership team. Governors fully back the direction of the headteacher and hold the school to account for the performance of teachers and pupils.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Close checking by leaders is leading to further improvements in teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and rates of progress have generally been slower in Year 5 than in the older classes.
- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement where work is set that is too difficult for those who find learning hard.
- Leaders' checking of the quality of marking and of the additional support pupils receive is not well enough developed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher and other senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, and other staff, including senior and middle leaders. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 79 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's most recent parental survey.
- Inspectors took account of 14 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' recent progress checks and tests.
- Inspectors also looked at documentation relating to school planning, setting of performance targets for staff and the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and evidence of support for pupils identified as needing extra help.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Douglas Folan

Additional Inspector

Susan Tabberer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, and the percentage known to speak English as an additional language has risen to be above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium), is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils, those with a statement of special educational needs or those who need extra support at school action or school action plus, is broadly in line with the proportion found nationally. Their needs relate mostly to behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and moderate learning difficulties.
- All pupils are educated on site. The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new deputy headteacher has very recently been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teaching is at least good so that all pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make as much progress in their lessons as they can by:
 - setting work at an appropriately challenging level for all groups of pupils when they are taught in mixed-ability classes
 - supporting pupils in lessons to develop their learning and understanding as well as completing the tasks set
 - providing feedback through marking which shows pupils clearly what steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Develop the role of leaders at all levels so that:
 - the quality and impact of support given to pupils, including those who find learning difficult, is checked thoroughly
 - procedures for marking pupils' work and providing feedback are consistent across the school and within departments
 - pupils develop a greater understanding of cultural differences in the United Kingdom and the wider world through the work they are set and through wider experiences.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2; they are slightly above in writing, broadly in line in reading and slightly below in mathematics. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 8, standards are above where pupils would be expected to be at this age in English, mathematics and most subjects. This is due to the rapid progress that pupils make in Years 6, 7 and 8. Standards are very low in French by the end of Year 8 as a result of previous weak teaching.
- Pupils have not made as much progress in Year 5 in previous years from their broadly average starting points. In part, this has been due to the quality of teaching being better in Year 6 and above. This has now been addressed to ensure all year groups currently in school make similar rates of progress.
- In lessons, most pupils do well because they find the work set challenging. This leads to pupils who find learning easy going on to achieve the highest possible levels in English and mathematics. The percentage who achieve the higher levels compare very favourably with that found nationally.
- In the very best lessons, all groups of pupils make rapid progress because teachers are highly skilled at setting tasks and activities that make sure that all pupils progress well whatever their starting points. Pupils learning English as an additional language do particularly well as they quickly acquire English and are integrated fully in lessons.
- Pupil premium funding has enabled eligible pupils to take part in trips and enrichment activities, including music and sport. These have contributed greatly to these pupils' involvement and achievement. As a result, these pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics, especially in Years 6, 7 and 8, and they are closing the gaps between their standards and national expectations by the time they leave.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also making good progress, particularly in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3 and in writing at Key Stage 2, where lessons are planned carefully to match their needs. Their progress in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with national expectations.
- In a small number of the lessons which are taught in mixed-ability groups, not all pupils who find learning difficult make enough progress where they find the work too challenging or where there is insufficient support and guidance. A small minority of parents who responded to Parent View also felt their children did not make enough progress in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most pupils make good progress in their learning in lessons because teachers plan activities that attract pupils' interest and give them opportunities to work together in groups. Role play and tasks for a real purpose in English and practical tasks and experiments in science are particularly successful.
- Pupils themselves respond very well in lessons. They enjoy their learning and work well together, helping each other in groups. They are developing their skills at checking their own and other's work.

- Teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Role play helps them to see different points of view and they are encouraged to reflect on their work.
- Pupils' work is regularly checked and written comments usually inform pupils what they have achieved. Pupil marking is now being developed. Pupils are not always so sure about what their next step in their learning is in some subjects.
- Teaching, often in top sets, is sometimes outstanding and pupils in these lessons are making accelerated progress as result of highly skilled and dynamic teaching. In one outstanding English lesson, pupils were developing their journalistic skills in a live outside broadcast whilst the rest of the class gave feedback on how their presentations could have been improved.
- The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that teaching was good in the school.
- Teaching requires improvement in a small number of lessons. Most of those lessons seen during the inspection were when pupils were taught in mixed-ability groups. Planning did not sufficiently take account of the wide range of starting points, including those of pupils who find learning difficult. Support was not sufficiently deployed to make the best use of teaching assistants' skills or time. Their role in lessons was not always clear and, at times, were restricted to helping pupils get through the task rather than develop their understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They show respect and courtesy for each other and towards adults. They respond well in lessons and are compliant even where the pace of learning dips. No disruptive behaviour was seen in lessons.
- Pupils respond with enthusiasm to group work, discussions and role play. Boys willingly took the part of King Henry VIII's wives. All groups of pupils work well together.
- Exclusions are rare and there have been none so far this year. Effective measures are in place to make sure that any incident that is reported is dealt with well to prevent future occurrence. The school also responds well to reported incidents outside of school.
- Attendance is above average. The small percentage of persistent absences is being rigorously pursued by the school.
- Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities, for example as librarians or school council representatives. They offer their opinions and are gaining in confidence to suggest ideas. They have a very accurate view of what constitutes good teaching and why at times it is not.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know what to do in any potentially unsafe situation. They report incidents with confidence that they will be dealt with, although incidences of bullying in school are very rare.
- Themes such as 'self-reliance' which are covered in tutor groups and assemblies, give pupils the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour, and play an important part in their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

- Behaviour is occasionally boisterous on the playground, where there is not enough equipment or play activities to engage the interest of younger pupils. In a very small number of instances in lessons, pupils' attention wanders if they find the work too hard.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children felt happy and safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership and all senior leaders and other staff fully share his high expectations and ambition for the school. All staff who completed the survey said they were proud to be a member of the school and knew what the school is trying to achieve.
- The school's own identification of its strengths and weaknesses and priorities for improvement are accurate. There have already been significant changes to the structure of the leadership teams through the move to a faculty structure and a reorganisation of teaching groups to ensure good and outstanding teaching is spread through both key stages.
- Information on how well different groups and individuals are doing in all their subjects including English and mathematics is analysed in great depth to ensure that any concerns are quickly identified and action taken to bring about improvements.
- Although some senior leaders are new in post, there have been improvements in rising standards and in the quality of teaching. Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and where improvements are still needed. This gives the school a strong capacity to improve further. Performance systems ensure that only good or better teaching is rewarded.
- The school makes sure that additional funding such as the pupil premium is spent on carefully identified needs although the leaders' roles of checking the quality of support to pupils and how effectively teaching assistants are deployed are underdeveloped.
- Pupils have access to a broad range of subjects and a large number of additional opportunities through music, sport and trips. The library provides a hub for pupils to develop their interest and enthusiasm for reading and is a well-used resource.
- The school's distinct environment makes a positive contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' opportunities to understand differences in the United Kingdom and the wider world are less well developed, although a recent international languages taster day was successful and popular with pupils.
- The local authority has provided effective support for previously newly qualified teachers and for subject areas including French.
- A large majority of the parents who responded to Parent View agreed the school is well led and managed and that they would recommend it to another parent.
- All safeguarding requirements are in place and meet national requirements.
- There are some inconsistencies in the approach to marking across the school and within some subjects.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is highly supportive of the direction taken by the headteacher and other senior leaders. Through regular meetings and scrutiny of all the information provided, governors are well placed to identify any weaknesses and ask challenging questions. They know that the pupil premium is spent on those pupils with the greatest needs and which groups of pupils or subject areas are not performing as strongly as others. The governing body is fully aware of its responsibilities for safeguarding and makes sure that additional pay scales for teachers are linked to the quality of their teaching. Governors are working closely with the governing bodies of their local feeder schools.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 116998 |
| Local authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 401634 |

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

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| Type of school | Middle deemed secondary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 9–13 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 591 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Patricia Dean |
| Headteacher | Paul Heery |
| Date of previous school inspection | 23 June 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01527 525916 |
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