

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College

Whitchurch Road, Wellington, Telford, TF1 3DY

Inspection dates 9–10 May 2013

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.

- By the end of Year 11, attainment is broadly average in almost all subjects, which represents good progress from students' starting points.
- As a result of good, enthusiastic teaching and very positive relationships, students enjoy school and want to do well. All groups of students make good progress in their learning.
- Students are proud of the school. They are respectful and behave well. This contributes to the purposeful and calm atmosphere in lessons and around the school.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students value the range of sporting and cultural opportunities that are available to them.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are dedicated to improving all aspects of the school's work. They have successfully raised the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are committed to improving standards and provide appropriately high levels of support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough; some teaching still requires improvement, particularly in the sixth form.
- In a few lessons students are not sufficiently challenged. The teacher over-directs rather than letting students take responsibility for their own learning.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the quality of teaching for some subjects is inconsistent and this leads to variability in achievement.
- Some teachers do not always mark students' work often enough, give students enough guidance on how to improve their work, and check that they act on the advice given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, 10 of which were seen together with senior staff. They examined students' books, talked to students about their work, and heard students read in lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, four groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 15 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, a letter from a parent, and 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a wide range of documents, including: the school's own data on students' recent examinations and current progress; its self-evaluation records and development plan; information on the work of staff, training arrangements for teachers and other staff; checks on teaching, students' behaviour and attendance; responses to concerns raised by a parent; the safeguarding of students; and details of governance.

Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robin Sidaway

Additional Inspector

Hilary Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College is a smaller-than-average secondary school and has a falling roll.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are slightly above national averages.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and the proportion of students supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are average.
- Four students in Key Stage 3 and 66 in Key Stage 4 receive part of their education away from the school site. They are following vocational courses provided by the local authority through the 'Travel to Learn' scheme in conjunction with Telford College of Art and Technology.
- The school collaborates with New College to provide a wider range of subjects for sixth form students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement further, especially in the sixth form, through teaching that is always good or better by ensuring that:
 - all teachers plan lessons that meet students' different learning needs well and adapt their teaching according to students' progress during lessons
 - all lessons are demanding and well paced so that students are able to maintain good levels of concentration and enjoyment in their learning
 - there is a balance between teacher-led activities and students being given opportunities to work by themselves or collaboratively researching their own ideas
 - work is marked to a consistently high standard in every subject, giving students clear guidance on how to improve, and allowing them time to discuss and reflect on the advice given
 - students in the sixth form make consistently good progress in all subjects and courses, particularly in Year 12.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- GCSE results are improving. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English and mathematics has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now close to the national average. This represents good achievement given students' starting points.
- The school has an early-entry policy for GCSE mathematics and some students take the examination in Year 10. This has had a positive impact on results in mathematics and the percentage of students achieving grade C has improved since this policy has been introduced. Some of the most-able students have gone on to achieve higher grades at the end of Year 11.
- Disabled students, those who have special educational needs, and students who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other students because the school provides additional support for each student tailored to meet their particular needs.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium to provide intervention and extra staffing to help students who are eligible. These students attain better than similar students across the country. They attain approximately a third of a grade lower than other students in the school in English and half a grade lower in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4. Current school records show that they are making good progress in line with other groups, and that this gap is starting to close.
- School records on students eligible for Year 7 catch-up premium show that they make good progress in developing their basic skills in numeracy and literacy because of the effective teaching and support they receive.
- The students who study off-site for part of their education make good progress because of the good-quality well-tailored provision. Arrangements for monitoring their progress, attendance and punctuality are good.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Students enter the sixth form with attainment that is broadly in line with students nationally. Students achieve well in some subjects, but their achievement requires improvement in others. The variation in their depend on the consistency and quality of teaching. Progress is better at GCE A level than at GCE AS level.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the online inspection questionnaire believe that their children are making good progress and inspection evidence supports this.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and now much teaching is good; there are examples of outstanding practice, particularly in the main school.
- Evidence from lesson observations, from looking at the quality of students' work and teachers' records shows that good teaching has helped all groups of students in the main school do well. However, inconsistencies in teaching in the sixth form have led to variations in achievement across subjects and students make better progress in Year 13 than in Year 12.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers plan and set work that is challenging and provide a variety of activities to engage students' interest. This was seen in a religious education revision lesson in Year 11 on 'Matters of Life and Death', where the teacher had planned timed activities which gave students opportunities to present ideas orally and in writing, work independently and collaboratively, and reflect on their own and others' views. The teacher's expectations were high, students were provided with excellent prompts to extend their learning, and progress was outstanding.
- A small number of lessons still require improvement. In these lessons, teachers do not always plan lessons that are at the right level to meet all students' needs or that capture and maintain students' attention, and there are missed opportunities to challenge students to achieve at the highest levels. In some lessons, students spend too much time listening to the teacher and have too few opportunities to work on their own or in groups to research and solve problems for themselves.
- Regular and thorough marking in many subjects provides helpful guidance to students on how to improve their work and gives them opportunities to reflect on and respond to advice given. However, this is not uniform across all subjects. In mathematics and science, written feedback is often vague and does not contain enough detail on how to improve work to the next level.
- Support for disabled students, those who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is a second language is consistently good. Their progress is checked regularly and extra help is provided when it is needed. The skills of additional adults are used well to help these students and, as a result, they make at least good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Students are courteous and polite and treat others with respect. They say they enjoy school, feel safe, and are proud to be part of a caring community.
- Students respond well to good-quality teaching and show positive attitudes to learning. They cooperate with staff and each other, and work well in teams and in groups. Evidence indicates that students attending off-site provision behave equally well.
- In assemblies, tutor time, special days and lessons, teachers give students a good understanding of how to stay safe. They cover a variety of themes about the importance of healthy lifestyles and the dangers and adverse effects of drugs and substance abuse.
- Students are aware of different kinds of bullying including racist behaviour and homophobia. They told inspectors that bullying is rare and, on the few occasions that it happens, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.
- Students are encouraged to use modern technology safely and are well informed about the dangers of the internet and cyber-bullying.
- Sixth form students provide good role models for younger students and make many positive contributions to the school community.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and is improving. The school has been active in raising attendance and reducing persistent absence.

- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire feel that students are safe, well behaved and well cared for, and that the school deals with bullying effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led and managed well by the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They are clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and have worked hard and effectively to improve teaching and raise students' achievement.
- Since the previous inspection, rigorous systems have been put in place to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning and these have had positive effects on the quality of teaching. Joint observations with members of the senior leadership team confirmed the accuracy of their judgements. However, not all subject leaders are being consistent in checking the quality of teaching in their areas, particularly in making sure that marking of students' work is regular and to a high standard.
- Senior staff meet regularly with teachers to discuss progress towards meeting annual objectives. Training has been closely linked to improving teaching and learning, and improving leadership and management of middle leaders. Any underperformance is dealt with quickly, and salary increases are not awarded unless performance over time warrants them.
- The curriculum has been adapted well to suit the range of students' needs and to accommodate falling student numbers. The school uses off-site education well to provide vocational and work-related courses for students in Key Stage 4, and collaborates with a local college to give a wider range of options for students in the sixth form.
- A wide range of opportunities and experiences are provided in assemblies, in lessons and tutor time, and through a variety of clubs and activities beyond the school day which contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- Additional funding received through the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up programme is used sensibly to make sure that students get the help that they need.
- The school is effective at ensuring equality of opportunity for all students, in fostering good relationships within and beyond the school community and in tackling any form of discrimination robustly. Arrangements for safeguarding are good.
- There is a positive working relationship between the school and the local authority. At the previous inspection, the school was receiving intensive support but this has reduced to light-touch monitoring. This includes regular review of the school's performance, support for newly qualified teachers and advice about performance management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Leadership of the governing body is strong and well informed. Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and of the quality of teaching and learning. Through the training that they have received, they are able to analyse outcomes of examination performance, and ask challenging questions about students' progress and achievement when compared to similar schools nationally. They are involved fully in ensuring that there are close links between performance management, salary progression, and the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of students' achievement. They monitor expenditure closely, including the way

pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up money is spent, and ensure that financial and other resources are used to raise standards of teaching and achievement. They have successfully managed to turn a deficit budget into surplus through rigorously controlling spending.

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	123598
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	406178

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	548
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maggie Langdale
Headteacher	Robert Hall
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2011
Telephone number	01952 386100
Fax number	01952 417501
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