

St Bede's Inter-Church School

Birdwood Road, Cambridge, CB1 3TD

Inspection dates

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher and senior leaders instil a clear vision of success and implement robust and effective strategies to secure high levels of achievement in key subjects such as English and mathematics.
- Middle leaders employ experience and skill to secure high quality teaching in their areas. They play a key role in the management processes of the school.
- Teaching over time is outstanding. Careful and effective monitoring has ensured its continued improvement. The use of a range of strategies to check students' understanding in lessons is a particular strength. However, the quality of the marking of students' work is not of a consistently high standard.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support to the school. Their monitoring of finance, risk assessment and the overseeing of students' spiritual and wellbeing are particular strengths.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. They come to lessons ready to learn. They feel very safe and happy at school. Attendance is above average and improving.
- The small numbers of students with disabilities and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress. This is also true for students who speak English as an additional language and ethnic groups.
- Effective strategies and monitoring are enabling the small numbers of students entitled to pupil premium support to close the gap with their peers.
- The school's provision for supporting students' reading is outstanding.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural provision is well delivered through a range of opportunities. The school's strong religious ethos provides rich opportunities for spiritual and moral development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 28 lessons of which eight were joint observations with the headteacher or other senior staff. They conducted a learning walk to help judge the quality of social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Inspectors visited two registration sessions, two assemblies and six lunchtime or afterschool clubs. They also observed the end of school, break and lunchtime sessions and the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body which included representative of the two dioceses involved with the school.
- Inspections looked at a range of school documentation including an analysis of student achievement as well as documents about safe guarding, performance management, child protection, behaviour and attendance, self-evaluation, risk assessments and development planning. Inspectors scrutinised procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors listened to students read and evaluated their work in lessons.
- Inspectors took account of 158 responses from the Ofsted on line questionnaire, Parent View, and 48 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Michael Merva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Booth

Additional Inspector

Angela Podmore

Additional Inspector

John Greevy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Bede's Inter Church School converted to become an academy in March 2012. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2011, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The new school is a smaller than average secondary school. It is an inter-church school serving both the Roman Catholic and Anglican Christian denominations and recruits from over 50 primary schools.
- Students come from mainly one ethnic group. White British students are in the overwhelming majority.
- The proportion of students entitled to support through the pupil premium is well below average. There have been no children looked after by the local authority in Year 11 examination groups since 2012.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action plus and statements is well below average.
- The number of students who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a range of lunch time and after school clubs. These include individual subject and homework support and very comprehensive opportunities for sport, drama and music.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain students' current high levels of achievement and increase the number of outstanding lessons by making sure that;
 - in setting targets for individual students and when marking their work, teachers consistently make clear what students must do to improve, give them time in lessons to do so and ensure they act on the advice and targets they are given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students' progress overtime and currently at the end of year 11 in English and mathematics is outstanding. Their progress is consistently high when compared to national expectations.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are above national averages both over time and currently. They are also improving. The same is true for standards at the end of Year 9. High standards are achieved in almost all subjects and the school's more able students consistently perform very well.
- The school's provision to support reading and literacy is outstanding. The reading levels of all individuals and groups of students are calculated and circulated to all staff. Interventions are well designed and implemented to support improvement.
- The achievement of the relatively small numbers of disabled students and those with special educational needs is outstanding, especially their reading. There needs are very clearly defined, effective support is deployed and their progress carefully tracked. This is also true for students who speak English as an additional language and for ethnic groups.
- The Year 7 'Catch-up' funding is used well to support students who arrive with attainment lower than expectation in English and mathematics. Strategies have been put in place to help improve their literacy and numeracy, such as extra support sessions and smaller classes.
- Students who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium also make similar progress to their peers. The school's latest results indicate that gaps between their attainment and other pupils in the school are narrowing and are currently no more than half an examination grade behind their peers in either English or mathematics. Their work is carefully monitored and effective support provided. The pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support in lessons and intervention sessions to boost literacy and numeracy skills

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding. During the inspection, teaching seen was at least good with a significant amount which was outstanding. This is in line with evidence from the school's own monitoring and confirms provision is continually improving.
- Reading and literacy are well taught across the school. Students demonstrate a high level of literacy in lessons. In a Year 11 geography lesson on trade, students fluently employed a very high level of sophisticated, specialist vocabulary to demonstrate understanding. Students enjoy reading and the library is a well-used resource.
- Assessment in lessons is very well developed to check current progress and make sure students are aware of how to further improve. The use of questioning is a strong feature. In a Year 8 drama lesson on the use of imagination to create a dramatic scene, probing questions enabled students to review each other's work and progress well to the next level of learning. However, the marking of students' work is not always of the same consistently high standard and is not always informative or precise enough to enable students to improve.

- Additional adults are very well employed to support students' learning. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson involving the use of indices, an additional adult was very well deployed to support students' independent learning. This helped to secure high quality engagement resulting in outstanding progress. Additional adult support in a literacy intervention session was also of a very high standard. A wide range of strategies including one-to-one and group support were used to address individual learning needs. These secured a high standard of student engagement and progress.
- Students are actively encouraged to work independently. In a Year 9 English lesson on persuasive language, activities were well structured to enable all students to work independently and evaluate a speech by Martin Luther King. Appropriate support and encouragement were given by both the teacher and the additional adult to make sure that all made better than expected progress including a student with special educational needs.
- Teachers' high expectations of what students can achieve are evident across a wide range of lessons and most teaching is designed to support learning at the highest level. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson on stem and leaf diagrams, work was well planned to meet all needs and allow students to make significant progress. Very effective delivery and support ensured all students were highly motivated and enthusiastic learners who confidently addressed the increasingly challenging tasks they were set, resulting in outstanding progress being made by all.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are always fully prepared to engage in challenging tasks and work together well. They believe that they are well taught and particularly appreciate the level of challenge they receive. They feel this prepares them well for their next steps in their education.
- Behaviour around the school is of a very high quality. Students respond fully to its positive, friendly environment and always behave in a courteous, support way. Behaviour at break, lunch time and end of school is calm, responsible and well supervised. Students move very purposely to their lessons.
- The views of parents clearly indicate that they feel behaviour is very good and their children are safe and well looked after. They would overwhelmingly recommend the school to other parents.
- Students fully understand what constitutes bullying and its different forms. They indicate that bullying is virtually unknown in the school. They feel that if it does occur, it would be swiftly and effectively dealt with. School initiatives such as teaching about e-safety informs them well of potential dangers.
- Students feel very safe at school. They know for example that the school implements clear protocols to keep them safe from outsiders. Students display considerable pride of and loyalty to the school. A Year 9 student said, 'This is a very good school' and a Year 8 student commented, 'I don't want to leave St Bede's'. They also feel they are personally valued. One commented about the headteacher, we 'see the head about the school a lot, he comes to our lessons, has lunch with pupils and likes us'.
- Behaviour is well managed by the school. The school's behaviour policy emphasises moral responsibility and sense of community. Its expectations are clear and a useful system of rewards

and sanctions is well understood by students. The school has had no permanent exclusions overtime and small number of fixed term exclusions is dropping.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school's very strong religious ethos creates a very supportive and welcoming environment for students coming from a very wide range of primary schools. Its emphasis on high academic achievement successfully ensures all students succeed at the highest level.
- The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher and senior leaders are dedicated to the promotion of high levels of student achievement. They devise and implement strategies to ensure all students achieve well. Middle leaders are experienced and well focused. They fully share the school's emphasis on outstanding achievement and manage their areas of responsibility with skill and purpose.
- Teachers' performance is carefully managed and linked closely to salary progress and training. Termly formal lesson observations, departmental reviews and staff training have resulted in increasingly impressive teaching. The process involves all school managers and governors, who also monitor teaching quality. Any underperformance, however, infrequent, is quickly identified and rectified.
- Teaching programmes broadly follow traditional academic lines to ensure examination success. The need for high achievement at GCSE defines the curriculum structure at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and ensures all students have every chance to succeed at a high level. The emphasis on academic subjects and achievement is fully supported by parents.
- The wide-ranging provision for sport ensures all students can take part. Activities such as girls' hockey are organised to accommodate all ranges of ability. Given its size, the school has been very successful external competitions notably at rugby, basketball and football. It also provides opportunities for students to participate more varied sports such as American football and rowing. Music is also a major element of the enhanced provision. The school uses its proximity to Cambridge to take advantage of the wide range of cultural opportunities it provides, such as visits to art galleries and theatre events. International links are strong. Examples include a recent trip to Berlin and engagement with a primary school in Uganda.
- The school employs carefully considered and thorough processes to engage parents and inform them of their students' progress. It provides progress reports on all pupils five times a year as well as an annual formal report. Students receive timely and appropriately independent advice about the opportunities open to them when they leave.
- The provision for social, moral, spiritual and social education is impressive. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring a balance between the contributions of the two Christian denominations contained within the school. Assemblies and lesson topics also enable students to contemplate moral and spiritual issues. For example the moral implications of stem cell development were discussed in a biology lesson. The local area provides a richness of cultural opportunities including visits to Art Galleries and theatre visits. A range of musical and dramatic activities such as the choir and the jazz band enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- There has been no involvement yet by the local authority in this new and highly effective school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors' are well-trained and their clear understanding of their role and knowledge of the school enables them to provide effective challenge and support. They take pride in its achievements and its inter-denominational nature. They also understand where it needs to improve. They monitor achievement and the teaching well by carefully analysing data regularly. They know how staff performance is evaluated and are very clear about the link between expertise in the classroom and pay progression. They understand how the pupil premium is used to support achievement and are further strengthening their procedures for evaluating its impact. Governors' oversight of school finance is robust and efficient. They also very rigorously monitor risk assessments. They ensure that policies are regularly reviewed and are using their link roles to test their implementation.

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	137924
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	49982

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	776
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Cook
Headteacher	Alistair Day
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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