

Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College

Terry Road, Coventry, CV1 2BA

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although many students make good progress and overall standards in English and mathematics are above average, the school has not done enough to make sure all groups of students achieve equally well.
- Students supported through the pupil premium make slower progress than other students. In 2013, their Year 11 results were on average over a grade behind other students in English and mathematics.
- Similarly, the students who speak English as an additional language do not achieve as well as other groups.
- Teaching is not good because the work set in lessons is sometimes too easy or too hard, particularly for students in these groups.
- Teachers do not check carefully enough to make sure all groups of students learn well during lessons.
- Marking is not used effectively to help students improve their work.
- Leaders have not compared the progress of different groups of students rigorously, so they have not quickly identified necessary improvements.
- Governors have not challenged school leaders robustly on the differences in achievement of different groups of students.

The school has the following strengths

- Most students do well in many subjects, particularly mathematics and science.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good and often outstanding progress.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress in their studies because teaching is more often good than in the rest of the school.
- Students have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 45 lessons, 12 of which were jointly observed with one of the senior leaders. The inspection team also made several short visits to other lessons, some with a senior leader, to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with five groups of students from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects.
- Inspectors analysed 191 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and data on students' progress.
- Inspectors listened to some students in Year 7 reading.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
William Morris	Additional Inspector
Thomas Campbell	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector
Terence Payne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic heritages is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College converted to become an academy in July 2011. When its predecessor school, also called the Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school has specialisms in music, science and mathematics.
- The headteacher is a national leader of education, and provides strategic support to another school.
- 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?

- Improve teaching to make sure all groups of students progress equally well, by:
 - carefully monitoring progress during lessons, and adjusting work if it is too easy or too hard
 - ensuring that teachers' marking and comments help students to improve their work.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - checking the progress of all groups of students rigorously so that any underachievement and variations between different groups can be tackled quickly
 - using the school improvement plan as an effective tool for improving teaching and the achievement of different groups of students
 - making sure that achievement in the sixth form is consistently good or better.
- Improve governance by ensuring that:
 - the pupil premium has a positive impact on the achievement of the students it supports
 - leaders are robustly held to account for the achievement of the different groups of students in all year groups, including the sixth form.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Although the vast majority of students achieve well, those supported by the pupil premium and students who speak English as an additional language do not do as well as their classmates and the gap between the achievement and that of others is getting wider.
- The achievement of students who are supported by the pupil premium and their classmates has widened since the academy opened. In 2013, Year 11 students supported through the pupil premium achieved, on average, just over one grade lower in English and mathematics than other students in the school. When compared to other students nationally, these students achieved two thirds of a grade lower in English and half a grade lower in mathematics.
- The school spends the pupil premium funding in a variety of ways, for example on additional staff in English so that students can benefit from one-to-one support, and opportunities for students to benefit from mentoring and smaller classes. In recent years these resources have not been used effectively in improving the teaching or achievement of these students.
- The school's own data for this year and the current work in books indicate that the gaps in achievement between different groups of students in all year groups are beginning to narrow. Students who are supported by the pupil premium are making better progress than they have in the past. However, their achievement, and particularly that of the more-able students within this group, is still inconsistent across subjects and year groups.
- Students who speak English as an additional language have not achieved as well as other students since the academy opened. The difference between the proportion of these students who have achieved five good GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, and other students widened in 2012 and this did not improve in 2013. This is because work has sometimes been too hard or too easy for them. Their achievement is improving this year because teachers are adapting lesson activities to help them to make better progress.
- Most students, including those from minority ethnic heritages who speak English as their first language, make good or outstanding progress by the time they complete Year 11 in a range of subjects, including mathematics and science. In mathematics, the proportion of students who make or exceed the progress expected nationally is usually much higher than average. In English these proportions are also above average, although not as high as in mathematics. As a result, students gain above-average results in many subjects including English, mathematics, science and music.
- Some students are entered for GCSE mathematics at the end of the autumn term in Year 11. This is an effective strategy because students of all abilities achieve well in this subject.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have an accurate understanding of students' particular needs and make sure that work challenges them without being too difficult.
- Students make good progress in the sixth form. Most students achieve their target grades because teaching is typically good. Achievement is not outstanding in the sixth form because it is not consistently good across all subjects, and different groups of students sometimes achieve less well than others.

- A small number of students are supported through additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding, which helps those who join the school with attainment below the expected levels in English and mathematics. The school uses this funding effectively to provide eligible students with additional support for reading and mathematics through smaller classes. Most students are quickly catching up with their classmates and many make very good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Since the academy opened, teaching has not been sufficiently effective in helping all groups of students to achieve well.
- Sometimes teachers do not check effectively how well students are doing in lessons. This means that students make slower progress because their work is either not challenging enough or too hard. Where teachers keep a close check on progress and change the difficulty of the work if necessary, students make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- More-able students make good progress in many subjects. However, teachers do not always ensure that these students make the rapid progress they are capable of. The work set is not always hard enough to stretch them, and they are asked to spend too long doing work at the same level of difficulty as other students before moving on to more challenging work.
- The comments that teachers write in students' books and folders are not always useful in helping students to improve their work. Sometimes students are not given enough time to correct their mistakes. Consequently, marking and feedback do not have a full impact on improving students' achievement.
- Teaching is improving this year as a result of school leaders prioritising the need to tackle the lower achievement of students supported through the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language. Leaders have provided relevant training for staff.
- Most teachers make sure that disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Teachers have a good understanding of these students' skills and abilities and they set challenging work which students enjoy. Teachers work well with teaching assistants who have a similarly good understanding of how to tailor their support to students' specific needs.
- Many teachers use very good knowledge of their subject effectively to ask probing questions which require students to think hard. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher skilfully engaged the whole class through challenging questions that related to using mathematics in a real-life context. As a result students were thinking about mathematical problems and working out solutions for themselves very well.
- Teaching in the sixth form is more often good or better than it is in the main school. Teachers have a detailed understanding of their students' strengths and weaknesses and they usually plan learning which helps students to develop their weaknesses and build on their strengths well. However, teaching in a small minority of subjects is less successful. Sometimes in small teaching groups, work is not matched well enough to students' ability to get the most out of them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The majority of students have good attitudes to learning and most are keen to try their best and achieve their full potential. Even when the teaching is not as good as it should be, they continue

to try hard, maintain good relationships with their teachers and provide support to their fellow classmates. These positive attitudes make a significant contribution to their achievement.

- The behaviour of students is good. Most students behave well in lessons and around the school at break times. Students work well with their teachers and value both the academic and pastoral support they receive. Relationships in the school are strong and they are effectively underpinned by the school's values and ethos. A small minority of students do not behave as well as they should in some lessons and at break times.
- Students dress smartly and wear their uniform with pride. Most are polite, well mannered and courteous.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Regular safety themes in assemblies, as well as topics covered in lessons, reinforce the importance of keeping safe and students value these opportunities. Students feel safe at school and they have a strong understanding of safety issues, including how to keep safe when working online.
- Bullying is rare. When such incidents do occur, students are confident that staff will deal with matters swiftly. Students have a clear understanding of the various forms of bullying. Consequently, they are well equipped with the appropriate skills to manage such situations, should they happen.
- Students in the sixth form also behave well and those who spoke with inspectors were also proud of their school. They value the opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the positive school ethos.
- Attendance is above average and has been for the past few years. Students attend school regularly and the vast majority arrive on time. Exclusions from school are much lower than they are nationally for secondary schools.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The key reason why leadership and management require improvement is that leaders, including governors and subject leaders, have not acted quickly enough to make sure that students supported by the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language have achieved as well as other students. Despite improvements this year, the gap in the achievement has not yet narrowed enough.
- Senior and subject leaders monitor the progress of all students regularly throughout the year. In the past they have not given sufficient attention to the difference in achievement between different groups of students. Consequently, they have not always ensured that these groups of students have reached the high levels of achievement enjoyed by most others.
- The school improvement plan identifies the most important areas which need improvement. However, it does not contain clear targets to help evaluate the improvements in teaching and the relative performance of different groups of students during the year.
- The targets set for teachers to help them improve their work and guide decisions about pay increases have not had the necessary impact on improving the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language. They have not sufficiently focused on ensuring that these groups of students achieve at least as well as other students.

- The curriculum provides students with a wide range of activities and subjects which foster good attitudes to learning and promote good behaviour. Additional activities, trips and visits enhance the curriculum very well and help students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through multicultural themed music activities and visits to religious sites, for example.
- Students have access to good independent advice and guidance regarding their future careers. Older students benefit from very good support to help them make informed decisions about examination subject choices as well as further and higher education, employment and training opportunities.
- Leaders are now beginning to improve the way students supported by the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language are catered for. However, this has only happened in a focused way since the start of the current academic year and has yet to have a sustained impact on their achievement.
- Teachers and teaching assistants working with disabled students and those who have special educational needs are led well. The leader of this area of the school's work has a strong understanding of students' needs and makes sure that teaching assistants and teachers are appropriately skilled to help students make good progress.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Students' achievement is regularly monitored and any underachievement among individual students is tackled quickly. It is not outstanding because too little attention has been paid to ensuring achievement is consistently good across all subjects and between different groups of students. The curriculum has been revised to meet the expectations of the new 16-19 Study Programme and now provides a suitable range of courses. The school supports students' future career aspirations well.
- The headteacher has been able to provide opportunities for some staff to share and develop their teaching and leadership skills with staff in the other school she supports. This is also having a positive impact on teaching and achievement at The Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not held the school to account for the differences in the achievement of between different groups of students. They have not always ensured that they receive enough relevant information to do so.
 - The governing body has not made sure that the school has received good value for money in its use of the additional pupil premium funding.
 - Some governors have an appropriate understanding of students' achievement data, and this is used well to maintain the good achievement of most students.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching and the management of staff performance, and they are appropriately involved in making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises in relation to meeting their targets. However, they have not connected the effectiveness of these targets to their impact on achievement for all student groups. They are aware of how any staff underperformance is tackled and are appropriately involved when this is necessary.
 - Governors make sure they are informed about how the school spends the Year 7 catch-up funding, and they know that it is having a good impact on the achievement of eligible students.
 - Governors have made sure that the school very effectively fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are trained appropriately to keep

students safe and free from harm.

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	137272
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	440680

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1488
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Robinson
Headteacher	Julie Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	024 7622 3542
Fax number	024 7655 0927
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