

Becket Keys Church of England Free School

Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9DA

Inspection dates

7–8 May 2014

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.

- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher has, in a very short space of time, established a new school with a strong ethos and a culture of high achievement. His vision, values and beliefs have created an excellent environment in which to learn. This is highly valued by staff, students, parents and carers.
- Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding, enabling students to achieve or exceed expected progress.
- High aspiration is embedded across the school. Work is suitably challenging and students are expected to write at length. They understand what they need to do and how to improve their work because the marking of their books is of a high quality.
- Students' books show that, over time, they respond well to the high level of challenge provided. Their work is of a high quality, although at times it is not well-presented.
- Careful targeting of additional resources enables students known to be eligible for the pupil premium to progress as well as others.
- High quality nurturing and intensive support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs enable them to progress as well as others because they are given additional help to read and write with confidence, and catch-up with their learning.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Students feel safe, free from bullying and thoroughly enjoy school. Students are polite and courteous. They work hard and wear their uniforms with pride.
- A broad curriculum is complemented with a wide range of enrichment activities after school. There are fewer enrichment opportunities during lunchtimes.
- Professional governance from the sponsor Trust and the diocese supports the strategic leadership of the school well and provides additional services to enable it to improve further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, taught by 22 of the 23 teachers. Seven of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, two groups of students and three representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation, attainment and progress data, lesson monitoring information and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors scrutinised a selection of students' books and listened to a group of Year 7 students read.
- Inspectors took account of 23 responses to questionnaires completed by staff and 189 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mina Drever

Additional Inspector

Brenda Watson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average. It opened in September 2012 with 125 students in Year 7. A further 150 students joined the school in September 2013, so it now caters for Years 7 and 8 students. In time, the school will provide for students between 11 and 19 years of age.
- The school is undergoing a major refurbishment of its facilities.
- It is an academy free school sponsored by the Russell Education Trust.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is extra funding provided by the government for children eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority or those with a parent in the armed services.
- The majority of students are White British. The proportion of students whose first language is not English, mostly from Black African and Asian backgrounds, is below average.
- The proportions of disabled students and those that have special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties, supported by school action, school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs are higher than average.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the arrangements to deploy additional teachers in lessons are equally effective in all subjects.
- Agree and implement basic rules to guide students on how to present their work neatly.
- Increase the amount of enrichment activities provided at lunchtime.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students from all backgrounds make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well. Students' books in a range of subjects show that they are expected to work hard, write at length and complete tasks matched to their different abilities.
- More-able students make outstanding progress due to the high-quality teaching they receive and the routine monitoring of their work to check how well they are doing. Inspectors found the quality of written work of higher-ability students in Year 8 English lessons was similar to the standards expected at GCSE level.
- The prior attainment of students joining the school last year was similar to that found nationally. This year, it is significantly higher than that. Prior attainment data are used to set aspirational targets for students each year. If students meet their targets mid-way through the year, they are set new targets to maintain their rate of progress.
- Students that did not meet national expectations by the end of Year 6 are given intensive support, including one-to-one tuition and work in small groups, to help them catch-up in Year 7, especially in their reading and writing. By the end of their first year, they have acquired the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to learn well in a wide range of subjects. Listening to a sample of students read confirmed that the school's actions to teach students how to read effectively and boost their confidence in reading are working.
- Teachers assess students' progress in all subjects every six weeks and collate this information to illustrate how well they are progressing against the ambitious targets set for them. School data show that the vast majority of students make at least expected progress in English, mathematics and science, and in most other subjects. Consistently strong teaching is ensuring that more than half of students in both year groups are exceeding expectations. These data are validated regularly by the school's sponsor, by matching it with last year's national expectations and by comparing it with the performance of students in similar schools operated by the Trust.
- Students' attitudes towards learning are exceptional. They are eager to learn, are highly attentive and responsive to teachers. They arrive at lessons organised, fully prepared and ready to learn.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because they are identified early on arrival. They are known well and are nurtured in small groups to help them gain confidence and competence in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional help from teachers working alongside other teachers in lessons, and personalised, one-to-one support, enable the students to secure basic literacy and numeracy skills. Regularly reading aloud to teachers and responding to written feedback from teachers about their spelling and use of grammar help students to improve their confidence and understanding.
- Those known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other students because they receive the same high-quality, intensive monitoring and support that other students receive. Any gaps in attainment are small and closing. In addition, extra resources are used to employ additional teachers to help them in lessons, and provide them with a range of small programmes to boost their confidence and build self-esteem, maintain their good attendance and enable them to complete homework in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently good, with much that is outstanding. The impact of this high quality teaching is clearly evident in the quality of students' work in their books, and in their positive attitudes towards learning. They arrive promptly for lessons, are orderly and respectful and share excellent relations with staff.
- Teaching is often inspiring because teachers enthuse about their subjects; they model learning for students to emulate and instil in them an appreciation of literature and art. In class discussions, students share their understanding with confidence and maturity.
- Over two thirds of students' parents or carers responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and almost all agreed that their child makes good progress in school because they are taught well. Observations of lessons by inspectors and reviews of students' work confirmed the views of senior leaders about the quality of teaching.
- School leaders have successfully recruited high-quality, motivated staff with good subject knowledge who are fully committed to the school's values and aims. All teachers are routinely monitored to check that they are teaching well and their future training needs are identified. They benefit from regular whole-school training and personalised support in their specialist subjects provided by the school's sponsor Trust.
- Students of similar ability are set suitably challenging work which captures their interest and encourages them to work hard. They thrive in practical work in science, music, drama, physical education, food technology and art because tasks are made challenging, interesting and enjoyable.
- In mathematics, students make rapid progress because they are given tasks of increasing difficulty matched to their personal targets. Teachers' excellent questioning and regular opportunities for students to discuss ideas with each other help them to learn new knowledge and skills quickly. Students work diligently. Lower-ability students' mathematical understanding of reducing and increasing proportions is enhanced, for example, by giving the students real-life tasks such as preparing recipes.
- In English, students make exceptional progress because teachers enthuse about the subject and model the standards they want students to achieve. For example, as a result of outstanding teaching, Year 7 students were able to demonstrate excellent knowledge of Shakespearean language in describing different characters by reading aloud and acting-out scenes from plays and then relating them to real-life situations.
- Teachers' high-quality marking makes an excellent contribution to students' rapid progress. Detailed, written feedback is provided regularly, and when appropriate, mini-targets are set to help students to improve their work. They are given time to respond to the comments made, make corrections to spellings and grammar or complete tasks, and write their own comments to the teacher about what they have learnt. This helps to reinforce their learning because they understand their errors and are shown what to do to improve.
- Homework is set regularly, and is expected to be completed on time. However, expectations of how students present their written work are not as high. The quality of students' work is often undermined by poor presentation because there are no common standards applied across all subjects.
- School leaders have invested in additional teachers rather than teaching assistants to provide

specialised support for students in lessons, and to reduce class sizes by increasing the ratio of teachers to students. This works well in many subjects because lead teachers plan how to use them to enhance the learning and progress of students of different abilities. However, sometimes it is less effective because additional teachers simply support, rather than teach. As a result, not all students fully understand what they need to do and become too reliant on the lead teacher for help.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour in classes and around the school is impeccable. The school's teaching of Christian values of respect, responsibility and forgiveness make a strong contribution to the students' attitudes and personal development. All students are expected to be self-disciplined and take responsibility for others. In lessons and in assemblies they are orderly, respectful and show great self-discipline. They move calmly around school, and behave well in pinch-points such as staircases and catering areas. Outside areas at lunchtimes are crowded as there are only a few enrichment activities provided, but behaviour remains remarkably good.
- School records show there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and few exclusions. No students have been permanently excluded. Students say that 'behaviour is really good', but a few older boys spoil it for others by being silly in lessons. Senior leaders are aware of this and are taking action to help them to become more mature. They can also point to clear examples of how the school has modified the behaviour of some students to re-engage them in learning and enable them to meet their challenging targets.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. As a result, students feel completely safe in school. They describe school as 'a community where we all know each other well'. They are aware of the different forms of bullying and say that it happens very rarely. When it does occur, it is mostly name-calling and they know which teachers to approach to help them to stop it. Students talked positively with inspectors about recent assemblies held to raise their awareness of cyber-bullying and what to do to minimise the risks involved.
- Since the school opened, students' attendance has remained above the national average and continues to rise. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure that students attend school regularly.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's inspired leadership has quickly established a vibrant, orderly community which enables students to thrive. He ensures that a family atmosphere is fostered across the school in which all students feel cared for, and valued. Daily tutorials and weekly assemblies provide opportunities for staff and students to sing and pray together, to reflect on their own lives and those of others. This and the wide range of curricular and enrichment opportunities make an outstanding contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher's evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and detailed. He and the governors use this knowledge to measure the school's effectiveness at regular intervals and determine what further action is needed. Improvement plans have steered the school through its initial set up and expansion over the past two years. These plans have served their purpose well. Senior leaders have rightly prioritised updating them to enable the school to sustain its rapid progress.

- The school's small size means that senior leaders are responsible for managing each core subject and lead teachers take responsibility for developing foundation subjects and supporting senior staff with pastoral duties. These arrangements work effectively. Plans are in place to add further capacity by appointing new senior and middle leaders as the school grows in size over the next five years.
- The school is increasingly popular with parents and carers, and is heavily over-subscribed. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire feel that the school is well led and managed. The headteacher, ably supported by the team of senior leaders, has the full confidence and respect of staff and governors. Emerging partnerships with local schools and other similar schools managed by the sponsor enable the school to share good practice.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding students are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The sponsor Trust, the diocese and the Anglican Primary Schools' Trust provide a wealth of knowledge and experience that adds significantly to the school's capacity to make improvements. They are professional and business-like. Their monitoring and evaluation of the school's growth and performance have been instrumental in enabling it to establish itself so quickly. They hold the headteacher to account for the school's development through regular reviews of the school's performance data. They know where the strengths and weaknesses lie in teaching and manage the performance of all staff appropriately, using pay increments to reward effective performance.

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	138239
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425166

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	284
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Ian Jorysz
Headteacher	Andy Scott-Evans
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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