

St Bede's Catholic College

Long Cross, Lawrence Weston, Bristol, BS11 0SU

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. From their relatively high starting points, students make good progress to reach standards that are above average, including in English and mathematics.
- Over time, teaching is typically good. Leaders are seeking ways of making it even better. There is very good support for teachers who are helped to meet their high targets.
- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They work together in harmony. Students have a wide range of responsibilities, such as prefects and peer mentors. Attendance is very good.
- The college ensures that it provides a very safe environment for all students and teaches them about keeping safe beyond school.
- There has been much work on developing subject leaders' expertise, which in turn has eliminated weak teaching and improved students' progress.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the college opened, leaders have carried out excellent work identifying weaknesses and addressing them effectively.
- The governing body has supported the work of the college highly effectively through a combination of providing support and challenge.
- The college opened a new sixth form in September 2013. The sixth form is good because it offers a choice of subjects and courses well suited to learners and supports students' personal development very well.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Students have many opportunities to extend their skills and talents, including work for charities, visits to places of interest, and participation in sports and performing arts.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always lead to students making rapid progress. At times teachers do not plan challenging enough work to stretch students and help them achieve the highest grades.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 teachers in 35 lessons, seven of which were observed jointly with senior teachers from the college. In addition, inspectors made some short visits to lessons and looked at the college's provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Year 11 students were not present at the time of the inspection because they had completed their GCSE examinations.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, teachers, and groups of students. An inspector had a conversation with a representative of Bristol City Council. One inspector listened to individual students reading aloud and talked to others about their reading.
- Inspectors observed the college's work, visited an assembly and tutor groups, and looked at samples of students' work while observing students in lessons. They also looked at progress data, documents about the college's development and evaluation, safeguarding information and records about attendance and behaviour. The records showing the impact of professional development for staff were also examined.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 71 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a further five parents contacted the inspectors in other ways. All members of staff were invited to contribute their views in a questionnaire and 49 responses were received.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tom Morrison

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Peter Rodin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The college became an academy in November 2011. The predecessor school was on the same site and also known as St Bede's Catholic College. When the predecessor school was last inspected in June 2007, it was judged outstanding.
- The college is an average-sized secondary school, taking students from 11 years of age. It serves the Catholic diocese of Clifton, including parts of Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. The college is regularly over subscribed.
- The college opened a sixth form for the first time in September 2013. The college has invested in a new building, which is dedicated as a sixth form centre. Current sixth form students have now completed the first year of their courses.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds, with many minority ethnic groups represented. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, as is the percentage of students who speak English as an additional language. Nearly 30 different languages are spoken by pupils in their homes.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well below the national average.
- The proportion of students entitled to receive pupil premium funding is less than half the national average. This funding provides additional support for looked-after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- In Years 7 and 8, a small proportion of students are entitled to additional help in mathematics and English, funded by the government's catch-up programme.
- The college meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of students are educated at other sites when the need arises.
- The Principal of the college is a National Leader of Education. The Principal and her colleagues provide support to other local schools across the primary and secondary phase.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that students consistently make rapid progress in all subjects by:
 - raising expectations of what students are able to achieve
 - setting work at the right level of difficulty for all students so that they achieve as well as possible.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Since it opened, each year group joining in Year 7 have had standards in English and mathematics that are consistently above the national average.
- GCSE results are above average in English and mathematics and pupils make progress that is better than typically found.
- There was a dip in the GCSE mathematics results in 2013, but the college leaders quickly identified reasons for this and put in place measures to get students' achievement back on track. Current students are increasingly confident about their mathematical understanding. In a Year 9 class, for example, students made outstanding progress in their understanding when learning about the in-depth properties of circles.
- The college has good systems to check on students' progress. It is confident that the action it has taken to address any issues with current students has secured improvement in all subjects, especially English and mathematics. Inspectors observed students making at least good progress.
- The college has a greater than average proportion of students who joined the college with high attainment in Key Stage 2. The proportion who then achieve A* and A grades in GCSE English and mathematics is increasing and now is above average. There is good curriculum provision for the most able students; for example, a high proportion gain good grades at GCSE in physics, chemistry and biology. GCSE results in religious studies are particularly strong.
- The gaps in achievement between the small proportion of students entitled to pupil premium funding and other students vary from year to year. In 2012, there was no attainment gap in GCSE English; but, in 2013, eligible students attained about a GCSE grade below their peers. The gap also increased in mathematics in 2013. The college reviewed the support given to students. It made some changes this year, so that students are making better progress and gaps are narrowing quickly.
- The small proportion of students who receive help from the government's catch-up funding has made good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Students typically make good progress and the school is confident that students will do well in the first set of national tests taken this year. The college's checks on students' progress indicate that the vast majority of students are on track to meet or exceed their targets.
- The college no longer enters any students early for GCSE examinations in any subject.
- Students develop their literacy skills in other subjects and they are confident readers. There is also good focus on developing numeracy skills across all subjects.
- The comprehensive provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs enables them to make progress that is at least in line with others. For a small number of students, work is tailored to their individual needs. This helps ensure that they remain motivated and achieve as well as they can, gaining useful and relevant qualifications.
- Students of all ethnic backgrounds make similar good progress. The college ensures that there are no barriers to learning and progress for any student, whatever their background and home language.
- Most of the students transfer to local colleges and sixth forms on completion of Year 11; but, since September 2013, students have been able to opt to stay on at the college. This is an increasingly popular option for them.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most students are achieving well because the overall quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers plan most lessons in which activities are varied and imaginative and interest the students, promoting engagement and at least good progress.
- Teaching does not yet always lead to rapid and consistent progress by all students. Sometimes

students are not sufficiently stretched and challenged. This means they do not always make rapid progress to achieve the highest grades.

- The college has examined the way it uses additional funding to help pupil premium students make rapid progress. While this is helping current students make more rapid progress, it has not always been the case.
- The progress of students in other subjects, such as science, is good because teachers ensure that there is a focus on acquiring the skills and knowledge required for success. In science lessons, for example, students examine evidence in ways which help develop their critical thinking.
- In the last year, the college has further improved its assessment processes with regular end-of-term tests. Increased rigour in the way the information is used has helped students to acquire skills more quickly. Teachers have more detailed information about what their students can do and understand. Teachers then take increasingly effective actions to address any gaps in students' knowledge and understanding.
- During lessons, teachers effectively check students' understanding in a variety of ways, and give further explanations if they are necessary. Guidance to students helps them to improve.
- In the sixth form, it is evident that all teachers have excellent subject knowledge. In a psychology lesson, the teacher used a wide variety of engaging resources and set work with challenge for all the students. As a result, every student made rapid progress.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are used well to help students to make progress. Students with special educational needs have good support, as do those who do not initially speak English fluently. This helps ensure they make progress that is in line with other students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students arrive punctually at lessons with the correct equipment, and settle rapidly into lesson activities. Their response to teachers' requests is quick, with very few reminders needed to keep students on task. Lessons run very smoothly and students make good progress. Students generally present their written work well.
- The college works closely with students and parents to ensure that learners develop excellent study skills and highly positive attitudes to learning, with a very strong impact on learning.
- The relationships between staff and students are excellent, promoting good learning. Students get along together very well.
- The college has very clear expectations about standards of conduct and behaviour, which are extremely well managed. The need to use exclusion to deal with extreme bad behaviour is very rare. Across all subjects and year groups, students are typically keen to learn.
- When moving around the buildings and at break times, students are courteous and polite to each other, staff and visitors. They are proud of their college and treat the facilities with respect.
- Students' attendance has improved steadily over time and is well above average. The rate of persistent absence is well below the national average.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Few instances of bullying are reported and on the rare occasions when there is an issue, the college deals with it swiftly and effectively. The students who spoke to inspectors said that they have complete confidence in the college to deal with any matters that are reported. Parents have similar views.
- Students are well informed about different forms of bullying and the college takes active steps to ensure that anti-social behaviour is minimised. Advice is given to students and their parents in order to equip them to avoid cyber bullying. Students are sensitive about issues such as racism and homophobic bullying and they have a good understanding of potential hazards, including alcohol and substance abuse.
- The college makes sure that all students have equality of opportunity and it actively tackles potential sources of discrimination. Inspectors looked carefully at information concerning the acknowledgement of good work and effort, and found that the college ensures that all students,

where possible, are recognised for their contributions.

- When students attend courses at other centres, their attendance and behaviour are carefully checked, as are all aspects of ensuring their safety and well-being.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal, senior post holders and the governing body provide exceptionally strong leadership for the college. They strive to ensure 'that each student is challenged intellectually and given every opportunity to flourish and grow spiritually within a Christian environment'. Leaders are determined to improve the school's effectiveness even further.
- The school's leadership has worked incisively and with great determination to maintain and improve standards of teaching. The professional development of staff is underpinned by target setting that challenges and supports teachers to improve. The college has secure systems to link the pay progression of teachers to the good progress of their students.
- The Principal and other teachers make an excellent contribution to education across Bristol and beyond; for example, the college has trained many teachers from other schools.
- The college has made considerable investment in developing the skills of the middle leaders. This is in order to use their expertise more effectively and work well with their teams to bring about improvements. They have identified more ambitious targets for current groups of students to help contribute to improving achievement to outstanding levels.
- There are many eye-catching displays around the buildings to focus on mathematics and capture the interest of students; these are helping to raise awareness about mathematical functions.
- There are excellent policies underpinning practice that ensure high levels of literacy, and the college lending library is well used. The college ensures that students who do not speak English as their first language quickly resolve any language barriers to their learning.
- The college's range of subjects provides a wide range of opportunities for all students. Students are interested in their lessons and have outstanding attitudes towards learning.
- Good leadership and management of the new sixth form are establishing its success. The leaders have worked very successfully to make sure that all students can follow the programmes of their choice. There is good capacity to extend the curriculum further as the number of students in the sixth form grows.
- The college has rigorous systems in place to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements. Record keeping is exemplary.
- The provision of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students may participate in a very wide range of clubs and activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, visits to other countries, and fundraising for charities. Acknowledging that many of its students travel a long way to the college, the leaders and governors effectively keep in touch with parents in a number of ways. These include by information passed on through the parish churches. Representatives of the governing body make themselves available to meet parents on numerous occasions each year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works very closely with the Principal and other senior staff. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress. They use a range of opportunities to monitor the work of the college carefully. Governors keep up to date with appropriate training and study information about the college's performance so that they can evaluate progress compared to others locally and nationally. They are well aware about its relative strengths and weaknesses, and challenge senior staff to help improve the college's effectiveness still further. The governing body consults other experts to ensure that actions are effective in raising standards.
 - The governing body sets targets for the Principal. It has an overview of the targets set for other teachers to ensure that their salary progression is related to the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
 - Governors carefully monitor the college's finances and make sure that extra government funds

are directed to raise standards. Through judicious financial planning, the governing body was able to fund the building of the new sixth form centre. The governing body seeks to engage parents and representatives of the community so that their views help to inform its decisions.

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	137627
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	439824

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	960
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Michael McAndrew
Principal	Catherine Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0117 3772200
Fax number	0117 3772201
Email address	contact@stbedesc.org

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