

Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Sports College

Bluestone Lane, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, DE15 9SD

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- The quality of teaching in English and science is not consistently high enough to ensure that all groups of students make good progress and achieve well.
- The gaps between the achievement in English and mathematics of disadvantaged students and other students are too wide. Assessment information on current students shows that this gap is now beginning to narrow.
- The quality of teaching overall is inconsistent. Tasks are often not well matched to the different abilities within each class. This means the most-able students are not sufficiently challenged and the least-able students sometimes find work too difficult.
- The quality of marking and assessment is inconsistent. Not all teachers are applying the new marking policy, so students do not know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.
- Subject leaders are not robust enough in their checks on the quality of teaching. This means they do not hold teachers fully to account for the progress made by their students.
- The use of a three-year Key Stage 4 curriculum, now being replaced by two-year courses, has slowed the pace of learning.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the current partnership arrangement in Year 13 has prevented close checks on the quality of teaching. As a result, students' achievement is not high enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Students behave well. They are excited by their learning and keen to do well. They are polite and courteous to adults and get on well together.
- Students say that the school keeps them safe and inspectors agree. They say that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively and that there is always someone who they can go to with a problem.
- The headteacher has brought a new drive to ensuring that students reach their potential. Since his appointment, he has rigorously tackled all the issues that were preventing this, particularly by establishing high expectations for the quality of teaching and changing the school's ineffective curriculum plan. The impact of these actions is now beginning to be seen.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is strong.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students’ learning in 27 lessons, 11 of which were seen together with the school’s senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body and staff. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at policies, the school’s own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and its plans for development, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of lesson observations, information about students’ progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students’ work.
- The views of the 72 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also took individual communications from parents into account as well as the 35 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Thomas	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector
Susan Pryor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is below the average size for a secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is average, with the largest group being of Polish heritage. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average. The proportion supported with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- Eight students follow part-time off-site alternative courses provided by the Curzon Street Trade Skills Centre and Derby County Football Club.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Until the current academic year, sixth-form provision in the Stapenhill area was jointly managed and taught in partnership with the nearby Paulet High School. This collaboration has now been formally ended so that students in Year 12 are taught wholly at Blessed Robert Sutton. Joint provision will continue for students in Year 13 until the end of the current academic year.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2013. A new deputy headteacher took up post in September 2014. Over the past year there have been considerable changes in middle leadership. A new subject leader for English began in September 2014 following a period where there was no permanent leader of this department.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teaching is consistently at least good and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan tasks that are appropriately challenging for students of all abilities, fully stretching those of the highest ability, while ensuring that those of lower ability are sufficiently well supported, so that all groups of students, particularly the disadvantaged and the most able, make good or better progress
 - frequently check, including through probing questioning, that students are not finding tasks too easy or too difficult
 - consistently apply the new marking policy to ensure that students understand how well they are doing, what they need to do to next and checking that they make the best possible use of this advice to improve their work.
- Raise standards in English and science and the sixth form by ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high quality in these areas.
- Improve the consistency with which subject and sixth-form leaders provide challenge and support for teaching that requires improvement within their areas of responsibility, fully holding them to account for the progress made by their students.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The inspirational new headteacher has been quick to establish his high expectations of all staff and students, but there has been too little time for these changes to have had a major impact on external examination results. He has established a strong leadership team and together its members are tackling the considerable issues that faced the school on his appointment. Students in the school are now making much better progress, particularly in English and science.
- The inadequate subject leadership of some key departments has been quickly and robustly dealt with. This has included appointing a new leader of English and strengthening the leadership of science. Close monitoring processes are now established to check the quality of teaching. Subject leaders are receiving training and support to ensure that they carry out their roles fully by tackling any teaching that requires improvement and holding teachers fully to account for the progress made by their students.
- Senior leaders have identified where teaching is weak, particularly within the English and science, and are providing close support and mentoring, including the sharing of good practice, from within the school. Performance management processes are now secure and ensure that teachers' performance targets relate to the school's priorities for development and, particularly, to students' progress.
- Leaders identified the curriculum as a key cause of underachievement. The previously established three-year courses in Key Stage 4 resulted in some teachers taking too relaxed an approach, causing the pace of learning to be too slow. The two-year course in Key Stage 3 did not enable students to fully develop their basic skills and prepare them for examination courses. This has now been addressed, resulting in a more balanced curriculum with an appropriate mix of academic and vocational courses.
- Assessment procedures and checks on students' progress were identified as a further area for improvement. Senior leaders have now established a more frequent pattern of assessment points throughout the year, enabling underachievement to be quickly identified and supported. A new pupil premium 'champion' has been appointed to ensure that the wide gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others in the school closes. Leaders have raised the profile of this group with staff so that all now identify these students in their planning and focus more closely on their progress. However, provision for the most-able students is not yet in place and teachers are not sufficiently aware of this group of students to ensure they make rapid enough progress.
- A new marking policy has been established that lays down leaders' high expectations for the frequency and quality of marking. However, this is not yet being consistently applied.
- The new headteacher identified that the sixth-form partnership, where students were taught at a separate site, was not enabling leaders to make sufficient checks on the quality of teaching or on students' progress. The decision was made therefore, to dissolve the partnership and to make provision within school. This has resulted in a sharp rise in numbers entering Year 12 and has enabled leaders to monitor more closely the progress and wellbeing of the sixth form students.
- A nurture group has been introduced in Year 7 to ease the transition from primary to secondary school for students facing challenging circumstances and to promote the development of their social skills. Support is also provided for students with low literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy and numeracy are well promoted across the school. Alternative provision is used for a small number of students facing challenging circumstances and great care is taken to check on their wellbeing, including their attendance.
- A wide range of enrichment activities, particularly in sport, provide good opportunities for students to develop leadership and teamwork skills and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have made the decision to continue using National Curriculum levels in their assessment and a working-party is being set up to explore alternative methods. The quality of assessment procedures across subjects is being closely monitored by senior leaders and action taken where assessment is seen to be inconsistent or inaccurate.

- Leaders have ensured that the behaviour and safety of students remains a strength, as it was in the previous inspection. They have worked to improve attendance and punctuality further. An automatic door-locking system has encouraged students to move more quickly between lessons. Students say that this attention to site safety has made them feel more secure.
- Students from Year 8 to 13 told inspectors how much they value the quality of careers advice they receive and the support that enables them to make appropriate option choices.
- The local authority monitors the school's performance and is confident that the new leadership team is tackling the issues faced by the school without the need for significant external support. It has provided specialist training to increase the capacity of leadership of the science department.
- The school works hard to ensure that parents are fully engaged in their child's learning and the use of texting and social media has improved the quality and speed of communication. Parents value this.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Students are encouraged to reflect on issues that affect them and to articulate their own opinions. Relationships are strong and students celebrate the diversity of the school community and are proud of their understanding of Polish culture. Citizenship lessons and form time provide a wide range of opportunities for students to reflect and learn about their responsibilities as citizens of modern Britain.
- The headteacher's relentless pursuit of high-quality teaching has been made clear to all. His open and honest approach has ensured that all are aware of priorities for improvement. The school therefore knows itself well; strengths and areas for development are clearly identified and these are being systematically addressed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to the school and support and challenge its leaders well. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work and value the quality of information provided for them by the headteacher. This enables them to question, challenge and fully contribute to self-evaluation and development planning. They have provided good support for the headteacher in strengthening the senior leadership team and challenging underperforming departments. The governing body checks on progress until issues are satisfactorily resolved. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and how it compares with that of other schools; they are actively involved in ensuring that good teaching is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled. They are fully aware of the issues related to disadvantaged students and are now checking closely that the additional funding is having an impact on closing the gap. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet current requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. They are keen to learn and show an eagerness to contribute even when teaching is less than good. Students say that their learning is rarely disrupted and that behaviour in lessons is typically good. When exciting activities are taking place they are quick to settle down, listen and follow their teacher's instructions. Parents and staff expressed the view that students behave well and are well cared for.
- Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. During a fire drill during the inspection, they showed maturity and behaved in a calm and sensible manner, despite their learning being interrupted. They are polite and courteous to adults and get on well with each other. They told inspectors how much they value the strong relationships between Polish and other students and celebrate the variety of cultures students bring to the school.
- The school site is kept clean and tidy and there is little litter. Students present themselves well and most take a pride in their written work.
- Discriminatory language of any kind is rare and not tolerated. Students say that they feel accepted as

individuals. They told inspectors that they were aware of the different forms that bullying can take, but that the school were very quick and effective in addressing any incidents. They spoke highly of the school's chaplaincy which provides support and guidance.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures are secure and students and their families facing challenging circumstances are well supported, including through the use of external agencies. Students have a good understanding of personal safety, including when using the internet.
- Robust systems are in place to promote good attendance, which is above average. During the inspection the large majority of lessons observed had full attendance. Punctuality to school and to lessons is also good.
- There has been a rise in exclusions over the past year as a result of the headteacher establishing his very high expectations for students' behaviour and his zero tolerance of unacceptable attitudes.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Leaders' monitoring of all aspects of teaching throughout the year and the progress that students make shows that teaching is inconsistent throughout the school, including in the sixth form. Teaching observed during the inspection, together with the sampling of students' books, confirmed this. Teaching in English and science has not been of a consistently high quality to successfully tackle the low achievement in these subjects.
- In many lessons observed, all students were undertaking exactly the same task. This resulted in some students finding it too easy and some too difficult. This was not always noticed quickly enough by teachers to enable them to provide additional support or challenge. Lesson planning is inconsistent, even within the same department, so that not all teachers provide tasks that are appropriate for the lowest ability or that sufficiently stretch the most-able students.
- Although a new marking system has been introduced, it is not being consistently applied. Students know their target grades, but too often the marking at the start of the year has been cursory and has not established teachers' expectations of presentation or the quality of work. As a result, students do not know how well they are doing or what to do to improve their work. Where the marking policy has been adhered to, students are able to respond to teacher's comments and to use this advice to improve their work. As a result rapid progress can be seen.
- Where students make the fastest progress, teachers have high expectations of their students, making the assessment criteria clear and enabling students to check for themselves throughout the lesson how well they are doing. For example, in a drama lesson observed, students in Year 9 worked in small groups to devise a scene that would contribute to a whole-class performance. Throughout, they were given opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work and to rehearse and improve their skills in light of this. As a result all students made rapid progress.
- Most teachers promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, in one English lesson, students discussed the pros and cons of Scottish independence and, making their own decisions, undertook a written task, advising Scottish teenagers voting for the first time. This enabled them to develop a deeper understanding of both cultural issues and their responsibilities as British citizens.
- Relationships between adults and students are warm and classrooms calm.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students join the school with basic skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics that are typically just above average. The proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, by the end of Year 11 has remained broadly average over the last two years. Attainment in mathematics over this period has been above average but, in English, standards have been below average and fell further in 2014. This was partly as a result of the lack of leadership of this subject

over the past academic year.

- Similarly standards in science, identified as a relative weakness by the previous inspection, have continued to fall. This was partly as a result of inappropriately entering some students for the three separate GCSE examinations in sciences. This has now been changed and current assessments show the current Year 11 to be making better progress towards their targets in science subjects.
- Rates of progress in different subjects vary, reflecting the inconsistencies that exist in the quality of teaching. In 2014, students made good progress in mathematics but slower progress in English. There is no significant difference in achievement between students of different ethnic backgrounds or between those who speak English as an additional language and other students.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is likewise inconsistent, particularly where teaching does not provide the support that they need. They achieve well in vocational courses at Key Stage 4 but less well in the academic courses.
- There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy throughout the school, including the expectation in most subjects that technical language for each subject it will be used and understood. The Year 7 'catch-up' funding is now used appropriately to provide support for those students who join the school with low basic skills in numeracy and literacy. Further catch-up sessions are provided throughout Key Stage 3 and into Key Stage 4, ensuring that students have the skills they need to succeed. Sixth-form students support younger ones in their reading.
- Over the past three years the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students in the school and this group nationally has widened. In 2013 they were a grade behind in English and mathematics and this widened still further in 2014, with the proportion making and exceeding expected progress in these subjects being well below national figures. As a result of the strong focus by new leaders on the achievement of this group, current assessments show that gap is expected to halve for the current Year 11 and is closing further in Year 10.
- New leaders have also increased the expectation of the achievement of the more-able students. Current assessments for Year 11 indicate that an increased proportion of students will gain the highest grades in a range of subjects. The school makes special provision for its most-able students in science by providing challenging courses for individual students to enable them to reach their potential. Outstanding teaching here has enabled the exceptional progress for these few students. However, the most-able students are not yet identified as a special focus group in all subjects.
- In 2014, students were entered for GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10, having followed a two-year course. Achievement in mathematics has been consistently above average. Following the changes in the school's curriculum plan, entry will be at the end of Year 11.
- Students are set by ability for English, mathematics and science and religious education. In other subjects they are taught as mixed-ability groups. Students throughout the school show their eagerness to do well. They concentrate well and show excitement at their achievement.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Leaders have taken action to tackle the problems posed by having off-site sixth-form provision in partnership with another school. Historically, retention rates between Year 11 and the sixth form have been low and leaders have recognised that the main school was not benefiting sufficiently from having a sixth form, because students were not able to act as role models for younger ones or raise their expectations as to the importance of sixth form study. Leaders also found it difficult to monitor the quality of teaching and learning sufficiently effectively. This situation has not yet been fully resolved and the leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form, as in the main school, is inconsistent. As a result, students achieve much better in some subjects than in others. Leaders have taken action to address

underperforming subjects for all groups of students and this is now having a positive impact on achievement.

- Over the past three years, standards have been variable in both academic and vocational courses. Students have entered the sixth form with below-average attainment in GCSE courses but they have made average progress. All students are expected to re-sit their GCSE English and mathematics examinations until they achieve a grade C.
- Over the past two years, disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieved above national levels in vocational courses but less well in academic courses.
- Since September 2014, Year 12 courses are provided in school with a refurbished sixth-form area, including study rooms. The impact of this move can already be seen in the increased motivation of students, the increased ability of sixth-form staff to monitor their progress, supervise their study and to offer support and guidance. Retention levels have also increased dramatically.
- The sixth-form curriculum offers an appropriate variety of academic and vocational courses and includes compulsory religious education and citizenship classes, where there is a strong focus on improving employability skills. All students went on to further or higher education, employment or entered apprenticeship schemes in 2013.
- Sixth-form students told inspectors how much they enjoy school and the opportunities they have to develop leadership through acting as prefects and supporting younger students. Attendance and punctuality in the sixth form are above average.
- Students say that teachers provide good support, both in the feedback they provide on their work and their willingness to spend time providing one-to-one support. They value the careers guidance they receive including the opportunity to attend careers fairs. They say that they are well supported and cared for.

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	124459
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	449270

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
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	716
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Thomas
Headteacher	Martin Cain
Date of previous school inspection	07 December 2011
Telephone number	01283 749450
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