

St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive School and Byron College

Westway, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 1DE

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2015

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 overall effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement.
- Too few students across the school make better than expected progress, particularly in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Not enough is consistently good or better. As a consequence, learning and progress are not yet good and students' achievement requires improvement.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the students. Sometimes the work they set does not stretch students sufficiently.
- Teachers do not always use information about what students can and cannot do to plan work that matches their needs well enough.
- Teachers' marking is not of a consistently high quality. Some does not inform students well enough how they can improve their work. In addition, teachers do not always check how well students are learning during lessons.
- The actions of leaders, including governors, have not brought about improvements quickly enough to the quality of teaching or students' achievement.
- Teachers with subject responsibilities do not all check effectively how well students are learning and progressing in their areas. Leaders do not hold teachers to account sufficiently for the quality of their teaching and students' learning.
- Many governors are newly in post and do not have the skills and understanding to be able to hold the school to account, particularly for the progress that students make.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is determined to improve the school and has a clear vision of what needs to be done. Already he is implementing plans to bring about further improvements to teaching and to leadership and management.
- Improvements in teaching and achievement are evident.
- Staff are very supportive of the school and its new leadership.
- Students' behaviour and the school's work to ensure their safety are both good. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has a very positive effect on their personal development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons in all year groups in a wide variety of subjects across the school, including the sixth form. Two joint observations were undertaken with a member of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors examined information about current students' learning and progress, as well as information about the learning from the previous year. The inspectors also looked at current work in the students' books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, including some who are in charge of subjects.
- Meetings were held with six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was held with two representatives from the local authority.
- Several meetings took place with students. In addition, inspectors took many opportunities to talk with students in classes, at breaks and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school's development plans and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- The inspectors scrutinised records of attendance and behaviour, as well as information about the quality of teaching and the performance of staff.
- The inspectors took account of the 97 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the 68 responses from members of staff to the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Graeme Clarke	Additional Inspector
William John Frain	Additional Inspector
John Downs	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is average.
- A very small number of students who have behavioural difficulties are educated off-site at The Green School, some full-time and some part-time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in staffing. This includes the interim headteacher who took up his post in January 2015.
- The governing body has recently undergone significant changes, including the Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better to raise achievement across the school, including in the sixth form, particularly in mathematics, science and languages by:
 - raising teachers' expectations and giving work that stretches students, particularly the most able
 - using accurate information about what students can and cannot do to plan lessons that meet the learning needs of all students
 - checking during lessons how well students are learning and reshaping tasks if necessary
 - marking students' work to a consistently high standard to enable them to know clearly how to improve.
- Improve aspects of leadership and management to bring about improvements more quickly by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders to enable them to hold the staff in their areas to account more effectively for the quality of teaching, the accuracy of information about how well students are learning and for the progress students are making
 - developing the skills and knowledge of governors to enable them to hold the school to account more effectively, particularly with respect to students' achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management, including governance, require improvement. This is because actions taken over time to improve teaching and middle leadership have not had sufficient impact on students' achievement. This is particularly true in a range of subjects, including mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, where achievement had declined since the previous inspection. Leaders and managers have, however, created a culture in which the students' good behaviour supports their learning.
- Despite the decline in several subjects, there have been several improvements over the past three years, including that of achievement in English, art and technical subjects. Attendance has also risen. The new headteacher has only been in post a very short time, but he has a very clear vision of how to improve the school, and has plans in place to do this with some urgency. A large number of staff returned the inspection questionnaire. This showed that the vast majority were very supportive of the new leadership and management. This view also came across strongly from the students themselves.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders in charge of subjects have not been held to account well enough for the progress that students make in their areas. In turn, subject leaders have not been holding their staff to account well enough for the quality of teaching, students' progress or the accuracy of information about students' learning. Not all subject leaders had the skills and expertise to do this as effectively as possible. As a result, the quality of teaching and achievement has not risen quickly enough
- Senior leaders have systems to track the progress that students make and these are being used increasingly well to tackle underachievement, although there is still some question of the accuracy of information about students' progress in some subject areas.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning is bringing about improvements in teaching through increasingly personalising the advice that individual teachers receive about the quality of their teaching and introducing a whole school marking policy. However, not all staff adhere well enough to the marking policy to comment on students' work how it can be improved. Teachers' pay has not always been linked well enough to their performance in the past, but the headteacher is determined to change this position.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged students and Year 7 catch-up funding are used with some success to target specific students as appropriate and to promote equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and foster good relationships. Summer school helps to boost the confidence of students entering the school and reading intervention programmes are helping those who enter school with weak reading skills to improve. The spending for disadvantaged students is increasingly effective as gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their peers are closing.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Students and their parents agree the school keeps students safe.
- The curriculum is increasing meeting the needs of the students, such as the re-introduction of separate science at GCSE for the most able students. The headteacher has plans in place to ensure further that the needs of all students are met as well as possible. The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is very strong and impacts well on students' development in these areas. The students are very knowledgeable about a wide range of religions, beliefs and cultures and thoroughly enjoy the opportunities on offer, such as participating in the sports leadership scheme to help promote sport for others. Students told the inspectors that they valued the teaching they had on Britain's democratic parliamentary system. This is helping to ensure that students have a good understanding of British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of students who attend alternative provision, through termly reports, although it is unclear what use is made of this information.
- The impact of advice and careers guidance is good in helping students make informed choices about their next steps. This is true, both in the main school and in the sixth form.
- The local authority has been supporting senior leaders in their improvements to the leadership and management of teaching and learning and in the tracking of data about students' effective progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has recently undergone significant changes, including the Chair of the Governing Body. There is a determination to improve the school and recognition that governors require training in order to do so as effectively as possible, considering the relative inexperience of many of the members. Already the governing body are becoming more involved with the school, for example there is a governor linked with each subject area. Governors, in the past, have not always been given clear, succinct information about the progress that different groups of students make in order for them to hold

the school to account well enough. They have ratified recommendations regarding teachers' pay, although these have not always been effective. Governors are now gleaning an increasingly accurate picture about the quality of teaching. They have played a role in the allocation of the budget, including that for disadvantaged students and are aware of how these students are achieving relative to their peers. The new governing body has recognised the need to change and is eager to undergo an external review of governance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

is good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. School records and older students confirm that it has been good for some time. The staff questionnaires showed that most staff agree that behaviour is good. Year 11 students rated behaviour as eight out of 10 and said that the vast majority of students behave well all the time.
- Students are polite and courteous and move around school very sensibly between lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. Litter is very uncommon. They wear their uniform with pride and only occasionally need to be asked to tuck their shirts in or to remove outer clothing that is not part of their uniform.
- The vast majority of students engage well in lessons and are keen to learn and to do well. This is apparent in the positive way that they respond when teachers add comments to their work about how they can improve it. They work well together when they are given the opportunity to do so and they give and receive advice sensitively from each other. This was exemplified particularly well in a Year 11 physical education lesson.
- Reports about students at the alternative provision indicate that the majority of students behave well.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average. Exclusions have also improved and are very low in number. These improvements are due to the better management of the behaviour of those students who are at risk of becoming disaffected.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. This view is echoed strongly by parents, staff and by the students themselves.
- The school has effective systems in place to ensure that students are kept safe, such as appropriate risk assessments for visits out of school. Students are required to sign a declaration relating to e-safety before they are able to log onto the school's computers.
- Students told the inspectors that they feel very safe and that adults in school are very supportive and approachable.
- Students were observed working very safely and sensibly during practical lessons, such as art and design and technology.
- Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. They say virtually no bullying occurs and, if people fall out, the school deals with it quickly and effectively. The school's records show very few incidences of bullying this academic year.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, including teaching in the sixth form, requires improvement. This is because it is not consistently good and thus learning is not of a high enough quality. Consequently, it does not promote good achievement. This is true in science, modern foreign languages and in mathematics. The teaching of numeracy skills is relatively new and has not yet had time to impact fully on the progress of those students who are underachieving.
- Teachers do not always use information about what students can and cannot do to plan lessons with work that meets the needs of all students well enough. As a result, this slows the progress that students make.
- The expectations that staff have of students are sometimes not high enough, and so the work provided does not always stretch them sufficiently or make them think deeply enough. This is particularly true of the most able students, who tend to find the work too easy.
- Teachers do not always check during lessons how well students are learning. Work is, therefore, not adapted well enough to maximise their learning.
- The marking of students' work is inconsistent. While some marking is very detailed and results in good

progress, too much contains insufficient feedback on how well students are doing or how to do better.

- The support for students with special educational needs is variable. Occasionally teaching assistants are too directive in their questioning and give too much help, meaning that students do not have to think for themselves. This means that the progress that students with special educational needs make overall requires improvement.
- Some teaching is good or better, for example, in English, history, physical education and art. This has resulted in students making good progress in these subjects. Teachers plan well using accurate information about what students can and cannot do, in order to give work that takes account of the different abilities of the students. Students are given clear guidance about how to improve their work, both during lessons and in the marking of their work.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in many lessons, from discussions around dialect in the poems of Robert Burns in Year 7 to very mature discussions around different types of sexual relationships in novels in Year 12.
- Positive relationships between teachers and students are evident in most lessons.
- Parents generally feel that teaching is good, as determined from the online questionnaire. However, the inspectors judged that teaching requires improvement as too few students are making better than expected progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students enter the school in Year 7 with broadly average attainment and leave at the end of Year 11 also with broadly average attainment. Therefore, achievement requires improvement because too few students make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been in line with or just below average over the past four years. The percentage of students attaining a C grade or better has been increasing in English, but decreasing in mathematics and science. In 2014, the results in mathematics, science and languages were significantly below those found nationally. However, inspection evidence and the school's data for this current year show that there is some improvement in these subjects.
- There is some difference between the progress made by different groups of students and across different subjects. Progress in science requires improvement and also that in modern foreign languages. This indicates that students' progress requires improvement overall so it becomes consistently good. This inconsistency was seen during the inspection in lessons, in work in students' books and in data provided by the school.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students requires improvement. While the progress that disadvantaged students made in 2014 compared to the previous year increased in English, it decreased in mathematics. However, it did not decrease nearly as much as the progress of non-disadvantaged students. Disadvantaged students progress less well overall than non-disadvantaged students nationally. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged students in the school was nearly one GCSE grade behind non-disadvantaged students in the school in both English and in mathematics. Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in 2014, disadvantaged students in school were about half a GCSE grade behind in English and just over one grade behind in mathematics.
- The achievement of students who are disabled or have special educational needs also requires improvement, particularly in mathematics, science and languages. The work they are given does not always match their needs well enough. Sometimes it is too difficult for them or not made accessible for them to tackle without a lot of help.
- The progress of the most able students requires improvement. Too few students reach the higher standards of which they are capable. This is because the work that they are given is sometimes too easy and the expectations of the teachers not high enough. As a result, they are not challenged to think deeply enough about their work.
- Literacy is reinforced increasingly well throughout the curriculum, including the promotion of reading, and accounts for the students making good progress in English. This is also true of information and communication technology, but numeracy is not reinforced quite as well. The new leadership recognises this and is taking steps to redress this issue.
- The school no longer enters students early for any examinations.
- The achievement of students who attend the off-site provision is generally good.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because teaching is not yet good enough to result in a sufficient proportion of students making good progress. Performance at the end of Year 13 is slowly

improving, but it is still below average. Progress in vocational subjects, however, is good.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Students enter the sixth form generally with below average attainment and leave at the end of Year 13 with attainment that is still below average. Consequently, achievement requires improvement, as it is not yet good. Underperformance occurs in some academic subjects, such as mathematics and science, as in the main school, especially at AS level. Achievement in vocational subjects, however, is good. Courses are particularly suited to the aptitudes of the students. In addition, there are good links with local businesses and these help to motivate the students to do especially well. Students on vocational courses are particularly well prepared for life beyond the sixth form.
- Teaching, learning and students' progress in the sixth form is not yet good across all subject areas. In 2014, few students who resat GCSE English gained a C grade or better and even fewer gained a C grade or better in mathematics. In some lessons, there is a lack of challenge and students do not have enough opportunities to think deeply or work out things for themselves.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement. As in the main school, subject leaders are not held to account well enough for the performance of the students, nor do they hold staff well enough to account.
- The proportion of students who stay from Year 12 into Year 13 is below average, although many of those not staying go on into employment. There are effective partnerships with local universities and employers and these contribute well to higher education applications and uptake of apprenticeships and employment.
- Behaviour and safety in the sixth form are both good. Students in the sixth form are good models for younger students and enjoy supporting them in lessons. They have good relationships, mature attitudes to their work and rise to challenges when those are presented to them.

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	114327
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	453303

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	858
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilda Barnes
Headteacher	Thomas Brendan Tapping
Date of previous school inspection	11 April 2011
Telephone number	0191 587 6220
Fax number	Not required
Email address	enquiries@st-bedes.durham.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

