

Bishop Milner Catholic College

Burton Road, Dudley, DY1 3BY

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding		1
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Sixth form provision	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well at this academy because of the determined drive by leaders and governors to raise standards in teaching and achievement. Students' achievement is now good.
- Students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are exemplary. The highly effective relationships that exist between students themselves, and with teachers, create a calm and caring community. Older students support younger ones very well.
- The academy's focus on improving the progress of disadvantaged students is having a positive impact. These students make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is now good and continues to improve; staff are well trained and supported in developing their skills.
- Students are very proud of their academy; they are kept completely safe and say they are well cared for.
- The sixth form is good; students are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. They are excellent role models for younger students.
- Governors do a good job in supporting the work of leaders and holding them to account for their actions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all students, including those in the sixth form and particularly those who are the most able, consistently make the rapid progress they are capable of.
- The academy's focus on developing students' confidence with numbers is not as embedded as its work to improve reading and writing.
- Although these are narrowing, there continue to be gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their classmates.
- Not all leaders use information about students' achievement in their areas of responsibility to evaluate the impact of their actions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students’ learning and behaviour in 40 lessons, including some joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors observed students’ behaviour in tutor time, during breaks and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, members of the senior leadership team, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the Chair of the Academy Committee, and the Chair of the Multi-Academy Company.
- Inspectors spoke to students informally in lessons and around the building. They conducted interviews with three different student groups, including students from the sixth form.
- Inspectors considered the views of 31 responses to the parent view, Ofsted’s on line questionnaire, as well as the academy’s own parent survey. In addition to this 71 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire were also considered.
- Inspectors reviewed the academy’s self-evaluation and its improvement plan, information about performance management, and data on students’ progress, attendance and behaviour. They also checked the single central record and looked carefully at safeguarding and related policies.

Inspection team

Helen Reeves, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Delyth Davies

Additional Inspector

Christine Staley

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Daws

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bishop Milner Catholic College is a smaller than averaged-sized secondary school.
- Bishop Milner Catholic College converted to become an academy as part of the St. John Bosco Multi-Academy Company on 1st September 2013. The academy's governors make up the Academy Committee, which is overseen by the board of the Multi-Academy Company.
- The majority of students are White British, with a higher than average proportion of students from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium funding (additional government funding that provides support to disadvantaged students who are eligible for free school meals or are in the care of the local authority) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The academy meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at Key Stage 4.
- A very small number of students study courses away from the academy at Dudley College and The Cherry Tree Learning Centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the achievement of all groups of students across the academy, including in the sixth form, in particular disadvantaged students and the most able by:
 - ensuring that teachers check students fully understand before they move on to other tasks
 - ensuring the consistent use of effective questioning, to challenge students to think hard about their work
 - making sure that teachers and leaders use every opportunity to develop students' confidence with numbers in lessons other than mathematics and across the academy.
- Strengthen leadership at all levels across the academy by ensuring all leaders evaluate more precisely the impact of actions they have taken to improve teaching and student achievement in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and governors are uncompromising in their drive for all students to reach their potential. They have successfully established a culture of high expectations and aspiration underpinned by students' good behaviour and mutual respect for one another's beliefs and values.
- Through accurate and honest self-evaluation senior leaders have identified the areas for development and put plans in place that are improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Leaders have thoroughly reviewed the academy's target setting process and raised teachers' expectations of what students can achieve. Students understand this process and receive regular feedback about their progress towards their targets. Similarly high expectations are set for their attendance, behaviour and attitude to learning.
- The tracking of students' achievement, attendance and behaviour is thorough. Leaders use this information to identify students in need of support. Key members of staff, including the pastoral team put appropriate support in place to overcome any difficulties that students are experiencing.
- Senior leaders and governors are proactive in identifying future leaders and developing their skills. Succession planning is well organised and highly strategic. The creation of lead practitioner roles in English, mathematics and science has significantly strengthened the leadership of these subjects.
- Middle and senior leaders use information about students' achievement effectively to focus their leadership activities. There are many examples of strong subject leadership for example, in both English and geography; not all leaders are as good as the best in their evaluation of the information they use to analyse the impact of their actions.
- Developing teachers' skills and competence is a high priority across the academy. Rigorous systems are in place to check how good teaching is and how well students are doing. These systems identify underperformance and underachievement quickly so that leaders can intervene. A culture of coaching and learning from each other has been established. This does not prevent leaders from tackling weaker teaching effectively to bring about improvements quickly.
- The academy uses the pupil premium funding effectively and staff are focused on improving the achievement of disadvantaged students and those who join the academy with basic skills in reading and writing. A link governor works closely with leaders to check how the fund is spent and challenge the impact that it is having. This high profile strategy is contributing significantly to the narrowing gaps in students' achievement, leaders are aware that there is still more to be achieved across different subjects.
- The curriculum in the academy and across the sixth form is broad and balanced. Leaders ensure that all students have access to a wide range of subjects including the arts, modern foreign languages and design technology. Leaders are flexible and resourceful in allocating staffing and teaching time; a review of the curriculum now ensures that in Key Stage 3 all students receive an hour of modern languages and an additional hour of English and mathematics each week. This demonstrates the academy's commitment to all students having access to the same opportunities.
- Leaders are bringing about significant improvements in students' skills in reading and writing. However, developing mathematical skills and confidence with numbers in other subjects other than mathematics is not yet well developed across the academy.
- The curriculum as a whole and the personal, social and health education programme in particular, promote students' understanding of British values, such as tolerance and mutual respect, well. Regular opportunities are provided for students to explore a range of wider topics, for example, global issues, political systems, and how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Students have access to a wide range of sporting, artistic and social activities arranged in and outside of the school day.

- The academy's motto 'Developing our God given talents', underpins the academy's drive for all students to develop as confident individuals and ensures they are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Leaders ensure that all students have an equal chance to succeed. This can be seen in the academy's drive to narrow the attainment gaps between different groups of students, listen regularly to the opinion of students and deal quickly and fairly with incidents where students are unkind to each other.
- Students receive very effective advice and guidance about the options available to them once they leave the academy. Students, including those in the sixth form, have many opportunities to explore different career pathways and to learn about the world of work and life at university.
- The very small proportion of students who study courses in alternative settings off-site are monitored closely by the academy. These students' achievement, attendance and behaviour are regularly reviewed to make sure they are successful.
- Keeping students safe is an integral part of the academy's caring culture. Leaders make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- Strong links have been established with the Principals of the other academies within the Multi-Academy Company. These have enabled leaders to improve the arrangements to support students when they join the academy at the end of Key Stage 2, to develop provision for modern foreign languages in the curriculum and to share professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are uncompromising in their belief that all students can achieve. They are very proud of the harmonious community that exists in the academy.
 - Governors have a very clear and accurate picture of the academy's strengths and areas for development and take an active role in the academy's self-evaluation process. Through the creation of a system linking individual governors with specific aspects of the academy's work, achievement information and teaching and learning, they check regularly on the work of leaders and the impact of their actions. Governors make regular visits to the academy, look at students' work and listen to the opinion of students.
 - Governors are well aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent. The link governor overseeing this area of the academy's work asks pertinent questions to challenge and assess the impact of this spending. Governors are aware that while previous gaps in these students' achievement are closing, there is still more to do.
 - Governors have robust and challenging targets in place for the performance management of the Principal and they take an active role in the annual review of pay awards for teachers.
 - Governors have taken decisive action to implement a number of changes to staff structures and resource allocation. Governors are committed creating leadership opportunities for staff across the academy.
 - They fulfil their statutory duties effectively, including safeguarding

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding; students have excellent attitudes to their learning. Students are polite, courteous, welcoming and very proud of their academy. Highly effective relationships between students and between students and staff contribute significantly to a culture of mutual respect and hard work.
- In lessons students show great enthusiasm for their work. They work very effectively with each other in small groups and listen respectfully to students whose opinions may be different to their own. Students are encouraging and supportive of each other. This was particularly evident in a dance lesson; boys and girls worked well together, correcting each other and encouraging and challenging each other to take risks.

- Mixed-age tutor groups contribute significantly to the excellent relationship between students of different ages, and the caring ethos that permeates the academy. Sixth form students are excellent role models for the younger students, listening to younger students read and running sporting activities.
- Students including those in the sixth form have a number of leadership roles around the academy. Student leaders in Year 10 effectively undertake duties around the building; this contributes to the calm atmosphere around at break and lunch times. Students told inspectors they welcomed the opportunity to take up these leadership positions.
- Effective behaviour management systems, built around the academy's high expectations of the way students should treat each other and respond in lessons, have improved behaviour and led to low numbers of students being excluded from the academy.
- Leaders in the academy check regularly on the attendance and behaviour of students studying courses away from the academy.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The importance of good attendance is high priority across the academy. Students' attendance is above the national average and more vulnerable students are very well supported to continually improve their attendance.
- Students are well cared for. Staff know students well and work closely with individuals and their families. The academy ensures students are able to access the additional support available from specialist agencies and organisations when needed.
- Students are aware of different types of bullying and know where to go to for support. Students know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Students say that bullying is rare; academy records confirm this and make clear that staff take quick and effective action to address these situations should they ever occur.
- A comprehensive programme is in place across the academy to ensure that students' personal, social and health education is effectively addressed. Sixth form students have all explored issues of radicalisation and extremism, and leaders and governors are now preparing for this programme to be delivered across the rest of the academy.
- Regular training for all staff, a detailed safeguarding policy and clear procedures across the academy ensures that staff are vigilant to the signs of students who may be at risk or vulnerable to harm. Staff know how to report their concerns.
- Appropriate checks are made to ensure that students attending courses away from the academy are safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the academy, including in the sixth form. As a result, students make good progress over time.
- Teachers know their students well and use the information about their achievement to plan a series of well thought out tasks that build students' understanding. For example, in a lower ability geography lesson the teacher skilfully led students step by step through their work resulting in students having a clear understanding of a difficult topic and being able to apply their knowledge to the questions set.
- The academy has made the development of students' self-evaluation skills a priority. Students are encouraged to assess their own work and that of their classmates. Regular marking and feedback provided by the teacher ensure that students reflect on their work, and complete additional tasks set by

the teacher to further develop their understanding.

- Teachers plan effective group activities that enable students to extend their learning by exploring ideas with their classmates. Excellent relationships between students contribute significantly to highly effective group work. They are able to support, praise and question each other well. For example, in art and dance this collaboration between students improves the quality of their practical work.
- In the best lessons, teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to ask searching questions and create challenging tasks that deepen and extend students' understanding. This is particularly evident in the sixth form where students have to think hard about their learning. Providing stretch and challenge for the most-able is not yet consistently embedded across all subjects in the academy.
- Teachers' continuous focus on developing students' reading and writing skills means that teachers across all subjects plan opportunities to develop extended pieces of writing and concentrate on students' understanding of subject specific words and their meanings. Similar practice to regularly plan and build students' confidence with numbers is not developed sufficiently in other subjects outside mathematics.
- Where teaching is strong teachers check students' progress regularly at different stages of the lesson. In a small number of lessons teachers do not regularly check students' learning in order to tackle misconceptions or reshape tasks to provide additional support so that all students make progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of students gaining 5 A* to C grades including English and mathematics in 2014 was above the national average.
- In 2014, the proportion of students making expected and more than expected progress in English was above the national average. In mathematics, students' progress was broadly in line with national averages.
- Progress and attainment in mathematics was not as strong as in English in 2014. Academy records, and confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that achievement in mathematics is now good and improving. This is a result of a sustained focus by leaders and governors on improving performance in this subject.
- In 2014, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students in English compared to their classmates was half a grade. Students' attainment in English matched that of other students nationally. In mathematics, the gap compared to their academy peers was just under one grade. When compared to other students nationally the gap was three quarters of a grade. As a result of well targeted pupil premium spending the progress of disadvantaged students is now improving rapidly.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs benefit from well targeted support in the classroom at breaks and after school, as a result these students progress well in relation to other students nationally.
- The achievement of the most-able students is improving (students who achieved at least level 5 at Key Stage 2). Currently these students are making expected progress. However, too few students attain the highest grades at GCSE.
- The small proportion of students attending courses away from the academy are making good progress. The courses they are studying are appropriate and prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- Year 7 catch-up funding (additional funding provided by the government to support Year 7 students who join the academy with below average skills) is used effectively to support a range of interventions. A relentless focus on the importance of reading by training sixth form students to support weaker readers and the use of an assessed reading scheme have all contributed significantly in improving students'

reading ages.

- The academy no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.

The sixth form provision is good

- From their different starting points students in the sixth form make good progress.
- In 2014 students' attainment in vocational subjects was above the national average and stronger than their attainment in academic subjects which is in line with national expectations. Too few students attained the highest grades in their academic studies.
- Strong teaching in the sixth form ensures that students are engaged in their learning and are regularly encouraged to think and reflect on their work. This was evident in a sociology lesson, for example, where students were discussing sensitive issues concerning the approaches taken by Marxism and feminism to religion. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this effectively to structure learning activities that are both interesting and challenging.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Sixth form students are excellent role models for the younger students. There are many opportunities for sixth formers to work alongside other students in the academy, assisting with reading, delivering assemblies and organising charity events.
- All students have the opportunity to take part in high quality work experience as part of a comprehensive programme of guidance and support that prepares students for the next stage of their lives beyond the academy. A very large proportion of students leave the academy to take up university places, apprenticeships, further study or employment.
- Students' personal, social and health development is well catered for and students feel safe. Sixth form students have regular sessions to explore the challenges facing young adults in British society. Recent training around radicalisation and extremism has been put in place, alongside financial management and personal safety.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Leaders are well supported and coached by senior leaders and are developing their skills in using information about students' achievement to evaluate the impact of their work.
- All students who have not yet gained a grade C in English and or mathematics GCSE are well supported to prepare for retaking these examinations. According to academy records the majority of these students are now working at a grade C or better.

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	140126
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	450322

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	819
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Causer
Principal	Steve Haywood
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01384 816600
Fax number	01383 816601
Email address	info@bmilner.dudley.sch.uk

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