

St Bede's School

Carlton Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 2LQ

Inspection dates

18–19 January 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Outstanding |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher provides strong leadership, informed by his deeply held values. Since his appointment in 2014, he has taken decisive action to ensure highly effective teaching in the school.
- Governors have a sharp understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. They hold leaders rigorously to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in all year groups and in almost all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make rapid progress.
- Teachers go the extra mile to meet pupils' individual needs exceptionally well. Their detailed subject knowledge, clear explanations and expert use of questioning ensure that pupils make rapid progress in their learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves impeccably in lessons and around the school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and wear their uniforms with pride.
- A zest for learning permeates the whole school. Teachers' high expectations mean that pupils are ambitious for their own futures and approach their learning with determination and resilience.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently challenging. As a result, students are motivated to learn and achieve excellent outcomes.
- The school's distinctive Christian ethos sits at the heart of teachers' work to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils know how to stay safe and well-trained staff are ever vigilant.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They value the school's nurturing climate, the range of opportunities available to their children and the visible and approachable leadership of the headteacher.
- Leaders recognise that a small number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. They have put in place robust plans to address absence, and these are beginning to have an impact.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders' well-judged actions to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who are frequently absent lead to attendance rates for these pupils that at least match national averages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. Since his arrival in 2014, he has rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers are rigorously held to account for the progress their pupils make, and leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils make consistently strong progress in their learning.
- The headteacher has created an open, tolerant and ambitious culture, underpinned by the Christian ethos of the school. He is a highly visible and approachable figure, well respected by staff, pupils and parents alike. Consequently, relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong, and there is a purposeful and scholarly atmosphere throughout the school.
- Teachers benefit from well-planned training. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently high and improving across the school. Teachers value regular opportunities to learn from each other through events such as 'open door fortnight'. Teachers who are new to the profession receive high-quality support, which includes a planned programme of after-school activities and weekly meetings with a more experienced colleague.
- The headteacher has ensured that all leaders share his high expectations and determination to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Consequently, leaders provide strong oversight of all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders make effective use of additional government funding to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and enable those who enter the school with below-average achievement to catch up. Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils rigorously, and ensure that any differences between their progress and that of all other pupils are diminishing rapidly. As a result, pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently strong progress across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with a very firm foundation for the next stage of their education. The majority of pupils in key stage 4 follow a challenging GCSE curriculum, which prepares them well for advanced level study. Pupils' outcomes in a range of subjects have been significantly above the national average for the last two years.
- Leaders have put in place new systems for checking how well pupils are doing and that reflect recent changes in the national curriculum. The system is well understood by teachers, who apply it consistently across the school. Consequently, teachers' planning takes account of pupils' needs.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and pay particular attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies focus sharply on moral choices and dilemmas. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits that they talk about with enthusiasm, and which introduce them to new interests and activities.

- Pupils learn about British values both through a carefully planned citizenship curriculum and through the many opportunities they have in school to demonstrate an understanding of and respect for British values. For example, they learn about democracy through the active school council, while they show their respect for the rule of law in their impeccable behaviour. The religious education (RE) curriculum and assembly programme ensure that pupils learn about and discuss the similarities and differences between the world's main religions.
- Pupils receive high-quality and independent careers advice, in particular when moving from one key stage to the next. Students in the sixth form confirmed that the support they received in key stage 4 prior to joining the sixth form was impartial and helpful.
- There was a very high response from parents to the online Parent View questionnaire. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, with almost all saying that they would recommend the school to another parent. They reserve particular praise for the school's caring and nurturing ethos, the clarity and regularity of communication and the impact of the headteacher. One wrote: 'At St Bede's there is acceptance, opportunity and freedom to grow and learn. I am grateful to all who make it the way it is.'
- Occasionally leaders do not do enough to check that their actions have had the desired impact. This is particularly the case with attendance. Leaders work well with the families of those pupils who are frequently absent, but do not routinely check how their good work impacts on the daily attendance figures for these pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have a sharp understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They study a range of performance information and hold leaders rigorously to account for the impact of their actions. They consistently challenge the headteacher and his senior team to deliver on the priorities they have set and do not shy away from challenging conversations to secure this.
- Governors are committed to the success of the school, and carry out their statutory duties diligently, in particular in relation to safeguarding. They have an effective committee structure and ensure good communication between the committees by holding regular chairs' meetings. Governors are proactive in ensuring that they have accessed appropriate training.
- Governors rigorously monitor the impact of additional funding provided by the government to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up. They routinely challenge leaders to improve outcomes for these pupils. They also track the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils carefully and they check that the performance management policy is implemented fairly and robustly.
- Governors monitor attendance rigorously. They have rightly identified the attendance of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds as a key priority.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead teacher (DSL) has been effective in ensuring that the school's systems are fit for purpose. She has undertaken appropriate training for her role.

- All pre-employment checks on staff are carried out rigorously and appropriate leaders and governors have undertaken safer recruitment training.
- The DSL ensures that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need from other agencies and is tenacious in following up any concerns.
- There is a culture of vigilance in the school. All staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They receive well-planned training in keeping pupils safe which is compliant with current legislation, including training in identifying pupils who may be at risk of radicalisation. Leaders routinely check that staff understand and know how to apply this training.
- A nurturing ethos lies at the heart of the school's work to keep pupils safe. Parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire frequently cited the care and attention staff give to individual pupils as a strength of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- A zest for learning runs through the whole school. Relationships are exceptionally positive. Teachers and pupils work in an atmosphere of shared scholarship and high expectations, combined with genuine warmth and an enjoyment of one another's company.
- Teachers' deep subject knowledge, clear explanations and expert questioning ensure that pupils make strong progress. Teachers require pupils to explain their thinking through probing questions. Pupils rise well to the challenge and provide articulate and thoughtful responses to teachers' questions. Pupils love debating ideas and relish the frequent opportunities their teachers give them to do this.
- Teachers provide effective and sustained challenge, using a wide range of teaching methods. Pupils work as hard as they can and barely a minute is wasted in lessons. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the tasks their teachers set for them. They take immense pride in their work. Their written work is thoughtful, detailed and, with very few exceptions, well presented.
- Teachers provide sharply focused feedback to pupils, in line with the school's policy, and pupils make good use of this feedback to improve their work. Pupils have a keen sense of their targets and of what they need to do to reach those targets. They talk with genuine passion about their learning, and are able to reflect with insight on the knowledge, skills and understanding they have developed. Parents receive regular and helpful information about their children's progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress, in line with that of their peers, as a result of effective teaching that is very well targeted to their needs.
- The most able pupils receive exceptionally high levels of challenge in almost all subjects. As a result, they are well motivated and achieve outcomes in line with their potential. On very rare occasions, the most able pupils are not asked to complete work that stretches their skills and understanding to the utmost.
- There are significant strengths in many subject areas. For example, teachers' exemplary use of target language in modern foreign languages ensures that pupils

make rapid progress in speaking and listening. In mathematics, teachers' rigorous checks on how well pupils are doing have ensured that they make outstanding progress. In art, pupils enjoy improving both their technical skills and their conceptual understanding. In science, teachers motivate pupils with regular practical work, and in English a wide range of challenging resources inspire pupils to do even better.

- In very rare instances, pupils' books are poorly presented and contain unfinished work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are self-confident and welcoming. They are proud of their school and wear their uniforms with pride. They are accepting of people who are different to them.
- Pupils are thirsty for knowledge and relish the challenging work their teachers give them. They are ambitious for their own futures, and understand that doing well at school is the key to achieving their goals. Teachers help pupils to raise their aspirations, for example by organising visits to the school by university admissions tutors.
- Pupils feel safe, and report that their school is a warm, tolerant community, virtually free from bullying of any sort. When bullying does occur, they consider that the school deals with it effectively. The school's own records confirm that bullying, including racist or homophobic bullying, is rare. Teachers take pains to ensure that pupils understand risk, and know how to behave responsibly and how to keep themselves safe, including from cyber bullying and extremism.
- Pupils have many opportunities to live out the Christian ethos of the school. For example, pupils in Year 10 recently held a Christmas market as part of their enterprise curriculum to raise money for local charities.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips, visits and other events. Many pupils are involved in the forthcoming school production of 'Seussical', and spoke animatedly about it.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct and self-discipline are impeccable. They are considerate to one another and respectful of their teachers. A Year 7 pupil told inspectors how welcome older pupils made her feel when she started at the school.
- Pupils move around this large school in a calm, quiet and orderly manner. They look after the fabric of the building well and the site is free of litter.
- Leaders track behaviour incidents carefully and take prompt action to address any incidents that occur. However, these incidents are very few in number. The proportion of pupils excluded from school for poor behaviour is significantly lower than the national average.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are rarely absent. Attendance overall and for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been typically high. Following a dip last year, current attendance is once again well above the national average as a result of leaders' effective work with parents. The

attendance of pupils who are frequently absent is improving, albeit more slowly than planned. Pupils confirm that the school sets great store by regular attendance.

- A very small number of pupils are educated for all or part of their week in appropriately registered off-site provision to meet their specific needs. Leaders track their attendance and progress diligently. These pupils attend regularly and achieve well.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Published results for Year 11 in 2015 and 2016 show that pupils achieved outcomes well above national averages in a wide range of subjects. For example, progress overall, as well as in mathematics, science and humanities, was in the top 10% nationally in 2016.
- Progress in English was well above average in 2015 and in line with the national average in 2016. However, leaders' actions to improve staffing this year have meant that the progress in English of pupils currently in the school is outstanding.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils at key stage 4 was well above the national average compared to all pupils in 2015, and broadly average overall in 2016. Leaders rightly identified that the progress of a small number of disadvantaged pupils was variable across a range of subjects in 2016, and were able to explain in detail the causes of this. As a result of a sharp focus on this group of pupils, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is exceptionally strong. Any small differences in the progress they are making in comparison with all other pupils across a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, are diminishing quickly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made progress well above the national average in 2015. In 2016, their progress was in line with national averages, and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities currently in the school receive well-targeted support, including from well-deployed teaching assistants. Consequently, they are making strong progress in their learning.
- Current progress of the most able pupils is exceptionally strong in almost all subjects. This strong progress is evident in English and mathematics, but also in science, history, geography, modern foreign languages and art.
- Pupils in all year groups talk about their learning with confidence. As a result of their scholarly attitudes, they are able to identify accurately the next steps in their own learning.
- There is a strong culture of reading in the school. In all subjects, pupils read and understand challenging books and extracts. They read aloud frequently and with fluency. They read willingly for pleasure, and value the school's gold, silver and bronze reading awards. They make good use of the library and one pupil said: 'I read much more here than I did at primary school.'
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps. A higher than average proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress to further education, employment or training. These destinations match pupils' career plans closely.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The leadership of the sixth form has successfully raised expectations and improved outcomes since the previous inspection.
- All sixth form students currently follow academic or applied courses and they have access to appropriate work experience or work-based learning. All students participate in a well-designed and effectively delivered citizenship and enrichment programme. Almost all students progress to higher education, with a small number moving on to further education or employment.
- Between a half and two thirds of Year 11 pupils typically enrol in the sixth form, and retention from Year 12 to Year 13 is very high.
- Students benefit from high-quality and independent careers advice. They confirm that the advice they received before joining the sixth form, their induction into Year 12 and the advice they receive about post-19 destinations have all been effective.
- Through their citizenship and enrichment programme, sixth form students are prepared exceptionally well for their next steps and for life in modern Britain. They benefit from opportunities to carry out voluntary work, take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, and engage in charitable activities linked to the school's Christian mission. For example, in July 2016 students took part in an expedition to Tanzania, where they helped to build goat sheds, install water tanks and work with local schoolchildren.
- Students' conduct is impeccable. They play a valuable leadership role in the school. For example, they act as mentors to key stage 3 form groups, organising various educational and community building activities with younger pupils.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are consistently outstanding. In both 2015 and 2016, progress overall at A level was above the national average. However, leaders are not complacent. They have carried out a thorough analysis of outcomes in all subject areas. As a result, they have a sharp understanding of where progress can be further improved and have set challenging targets to ensure that this happens.
- Disadvantaged students made similar progress in their chosen studies to all post-16 learners nationally in 2015.
- Students currently in the sixth form make very strong progress in almost all subjects as a result of teaching that is consistently challenging. For example, in English literature and mathematics, exceptionally rigorous assessment and a sharp focus on examination requirements mean that students know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 125278 |
| Local authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 10024627 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,701 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 332 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Victoria Clifford |
| Headteacher | Stephen Crabtree |
| Telephone number | 01737 212 108 |
| Website | http://www.st-bedes.surrey.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | info@st-bedes.surrey.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 18–19 September 2012 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Bede's was formed in 1976 as an amalgamation of Bishop Simpson (CofE) School and St Joseph's (RC) School. As a voluntary aided school, it benefits from the support of the Arundel and Brighton Catholic Diocese and the Southwark Anglican Diocese. The local Free Churches joined the partnership in 1992.
- Pupils enter the school from key stage 2 with significantly higher attainment than the national average.

- It is a much larger than average school, with a much lower proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals than that found nationally.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Almost all ethnic minority groups are represented in small numbers. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is around two thirds of the national figure.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than average and has dropped significantly since 2014–15, when the proportion of pupils receiving SEN support was in line with the national average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision, including that at Route 4 in Redhill, Chart Wood School (Merstham Campus) and East Surrey College.
- The school met the government's floor standards for attainment and progress in 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 79 visits to observe teaching and learning, 27 of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors and other staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke on the telephone with the chair of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the Anglican Diocese of Southwark.
- Interviews were held with groups of pupils in key stage 3, key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including the school’s self-evaluation report, the school development plan, the single central register, the school’s website and published performance information.
- Inspectors considered 248 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. These included 245 written responses. Survey responses from 241 pupils and 92 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gary Holden, lead inspector | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Jennifer Bray | Ofsted Inspector |
| Mike Walters | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jon Whitcombe | Ofsted Inspector |
| Frederick Valletta | Ofsted Inspector |
| Peter Swan | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alan Powell | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sue Bzikot | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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