

St Bede's Catholic Middle School

Holloway Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 7HA

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal is relentless in his determination to provide the best possible education for all pupils. He commands the support of pupils, parents and staff.
- Senior leaders and governors have created a school culture where pupils are encouraged and supported in order to achieve well academically and develop emotionally and socially. As a result, pupils are confident learners.
- Pupils benefit from teaching that mostly engages and stimulates them across subjects and year groups. Some teaching in key stage 2, however, is less effective in challenging pupils to do their best.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and, as a result, they are effective in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and or/disabilities.
- Senior leaders are thoroughly involved in checking the quality of teaching and they have high expectations. As a result, middle leadership has improved and a strong emphasis is now placed on improving teaching within subject teams.
- Pupils leave Year 8 having made good progress in a range of subjects. They are well prepared for upper school.
- Pupils are happy and are proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school and, as a result, attendance is above average.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective. Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school provides a safe learning environment. Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe in school and well cared for by the adults who work there.
- The considerate behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school creates a calm and orderly environment where pupils can work and socialise together harmoniously.
- Leaders use accurate information on how well pupils are doing to identify who needs extra support, which is then provided swiftly and effectively.
- The overwhelming majority of staff expect pupils to work hard and take care with the presentation of their work. However, some teachers do not always ensure that pupils' handwriting is neat and that their work is well presented.
- Differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, although still evident at the end of key stage 2, have considerably diminished by the end of Year 8.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to secure consistently rapid rates of progress for all groups of pupils by ensuring that:
 - all teachers, particularly in key stage 2, set tasks that stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to help them reach their full potential
 - pupils take more care with their handwriting and presentation of work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal's clear vision and strong leadership have united the staff in a common goal to improve the progress of all groups of pupils at the school. Staff feel valued and supported by senior leaders and appreciate the time they now have to plan activities together and share good practice. Teachers are, therefore, motivated and keen to improve. Consequently, teaching is improving strongly. Teachers benefit from many opportunities to develop their skills through training that is tailored closely to their needs.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They are honest about its weaknesses and are prepared to tackle these. For example, they acknowledge that published key stage 2 outcomes have not been good enough over recent years. Leaders have set about rectifying this weakness through strengthening the quality of teaching. This is closely monitored and support is given to teachers whose practice needs to improve. A more rigorous approach to the evaluation of teachers' effectiveness now takes into account how much progress pupils make over time as well as the quality of teaching and assessment. Evidence seen in classrooms during the inspection and school pupil progress information indicates rapid improvement for current pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Senior leaders regularly consult external and nationally recognised organisations to support their work to improve the school. They work closely with other middle schools in the area to check that they are assessing attainment accurately. They have also established fruitful relationships with the lower schools their pupils come from and with the upper schools they go on to.
- Leaders regularly check the progress that pupils are making. They use other schools in the Our Lady of Lourdes MAC (North Worcestershire) to verify internal school assessments. This process builds a detailed and accurate view of how each pupil, class, year and pupil group is progressing. Teachers and leaders use this information well to identify any pupil who is beginning to fall behind with their work. They then ensure that extra support is provided to help them catch up.
- Heads of faculty, subject leaders and subject coordinators form a united team who lead the development of teaching in their areas. Their practice is consistent because senior leaders provide effective support and guidance. They keep a close eye on pupils' achievement and they ensure that teachers are held to account for the progress that their pupils make.
- The curriculum is varied and well designed to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, at key stage 3, pupils study religious education and science to a standard that prepares them well for their move to upper school at the end of Year 8. Pupils are enthusiastic about all of their subjects and enjoyed sharing details with inspectors of what they had been studying.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and improving. The school uses the funding received for these pupils well. Leaders accurately identify pupils' additional needs and provide teachers with detailed information. Teachers are using this information increasingly well when planning

lessons. Additional support from teachers and teaching assistants helps to ensure that pupils make good progress. Leaders are now carefully evaluating the impact of individual intervention strategies to determine which are being most effective and which need to be amended or discarded.

- Leaders place emphasis on the performance of disadvantaged pupils and use the pupil premium grant effectively. They know pupils as individuals and so have a clear understanding of the challenges they face. As a result, the performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving. Differences in attainment between these pupils and others in the school and nationally are diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum strongly promotes the personal development and welfare of pupils. The school has developed its curriculum around its religious ethos, for example acceptance, honesty and caring, that touch upon every aspect of school life. When asked about British values, pupils explained to inspectors that they are 'things that should be treasured' and 'things we should live by'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively, preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders have introduced regular progress meetings where teams meet to discuss how well all pupils are doing, particularly in English and mathematics. The intense scrutiny means that the progress of all groups of pupils is considered. This has helped leaders to identify where there is a need to provide extra challenge for the most able, as well as support for those who need to catch up.
- Many extra activities are open to pupils, both before and after school as well as at lunchtimes. Many of these involve sport, but there is also a breakfast club and a homework club. This means that pupils are offered a rich curriculum that helps them to develop interests beyond the classroom.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They have a detailed understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and they provide rigorous challenge, alongside appropriate support, to school leaders. They adopt a 'no excuses' philosophy. For example, having been designated as a 'coasting school', governors have refused to use the fact that the school is a middle school, with key stage 2 tests being taken just a little over five terms after pupils join the school, as an excuse. Instead, they have tackled the issue of pupils' performance in key stage 2 tests head on.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties diligently. They check that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. They ensure that additional funding, including the pupil premium, the physical education (PE) and sport premium, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding and special educational needs funding, is used effectively to have maximum impact.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors with responsibility for safeguarding ensure that all staff are up to date with the latest information and responsibility. This includes training in the government's 'Prevent' duty to counter radicalisation, and in child protection. Appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers. The identity of all visitors is carefully

checked before they are allowed into the school. Leaders have created a safeguarding culture where pupils look out for each other and are confident about reporting concerns to staff. Effective relationships with parents and outside agencies ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are well met.

- Procedures for referring child protection concerns are robust. Leaders keep detailed and accurate records of concerns, contact with parents and other agencies.
- Parents agree that bullying is dealt with effectively and that pupils are safe.
- The school's curriculum teaches pupils how to manage some of the risks they face in modern society such as keeping safe in the street and keeping safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and continues to improve. In most lessons, teachers provide well-planned activities for pupils that engage and stimulate them.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Many pupils told inspectors that their teachers make lessons interesting and that they feel involved in their learning.
- Teaching assistants provide constructive support to a range of pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching assistants work well with teachers in class, questioning and prompting targeted pupils to help them to develop their understanding. They also work with small groups or individuals to provide specific literacy or numeracy support to help pupils in danger of falling behind their peers.
- Positive classroom relationships mean that pupils feel able to ask for help and are not worried about making mistakes. Pupils cooperate well with one another and support each other in their learning. The vast majority of classrooms are industrious places as pupils want to learn and achieve. Pupils are developing resilience and inspectors witnessed pupils persevering with their work. This ethos is summed up by the following pupil's comment: 'Many of our lessons are good because our teachers challenge us to find out things for ourselves'.
- Reading has a high profile in the school, with pupils telling inspectors that they read all the time. A number of pupils read to inspectors with confidence and were keen to read aloud in class when given the opportunity by their teachers. Pupils visit the library regularly to change their reading books and have time to read at length in a quiet environment.
- Teachers' expectations are usually high. However, not all teachers, particularly in key stage 2, set tasks that stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to help them reach their full potential. Inspectors observed occasions where teachers did not expect pupils to work hard. Instead, pupils did less work than they ought, without being challenged. Similarly, although pupils usually take great pride in their books, inspectors observed some instances of teachers accepting incomplete or untidy work.
- Teachers generally follow the school's feedback and assessment policy. As a result, most teachers provide their pupils with precise feedback on the strengths of their work and areas for improvement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils like their teachers and feel that their teachers know them well. Parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, agreed.
- All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school, as did all who responded to the online inspection questionnaire. They said that bullying is very rare indeed and they trust the school's adults to deal with any bullying, or other problems which might arise.
- The school is fully inclusive and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or other additional needs are fully integrated into the school community. These pupils said that the school is welcoming because pupils and adults 'accept you for who you are; they don't try to change you'.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take on posts of responsibility such as pupil support leaders, where Year 8 pupils support Year 5. Visits, after-school and lunchtime clubs, sporting competitions and school discos all contribute to pupils' health, social development and well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils meet the high expectations set by the school and move around the school site sensibly, showing consideration for others. Pupils are proud of their school, look smart in their uniforms and take good care of their environment. For example, there is no litter around the school building or grounds.
- In class, pupils are able to work successfully on their own as well as with others. They want to do well and show this by arriving at lessons ready to work, meeting teachers' high expectations of behaviour and the majority presenting their work neatly in their books.
- Attendance for all groups is tracked carefully and is above the national average. Persistent absence is low because the leaders identify patterns quickly and take action to support families. Pupils enjoy coming to school and do not want to miss their lessons or time with their friends.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- School leaders effectively establish the standard of attainment on entry of Year 5 pupils with an assessment programme used by schools nationally. This accurate and externally validated information helps to demonstrate that pupils, now in Year 6, made

rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics last year. Information from teachers on how well pupils achieve, observations in lessons and a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work by inspectors shows that the progress of these pupils continues to accelerate this year.

- Inspection evidence, including externally moderated assessment information, demonstrates that pupils make rapid progress in Years 7 and 8. By the time they leave the school, many pupils have made good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils arrive at their upper schools well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Published information about pupils' progress at the end of Year 6 shows weaknesses in English and mathematics. This is because, historically, the school placed insufficient emphasis on preparing pupils for key stage 2 tests. In 2015 and 2016, the appointment of new staff in English and mathematics, together with the introduction of new accelerated reading and mathematics teaching initiatives, ensured that preparation for external tests was much more rigorous. The school's assessment information, supported by inspection evidence, indicates pupils are now making rapid improvement.
- Pupils read well. Inspectors listened to a group of pupils of varied ages reading. Lower-attaining readers are able to use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. Their fluency is also developing. The most able readers read with accuracy, fluency and expression. All pupils read a wide range of books. The support strategies for pupils who did not reach the required standard in reading at the end of key stage 2 are highly effective. As a result, these pupils are making rapid progress and catching up quickly.
- Recent changes to the way mathematics is taught are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Work seen in pupils' books indicates that pupils, including the most able, are challenged by more-demanding work and lower-ability pupils receive support that enables them to make good progress over time.
- The quality of pupils' writing, displayed in English books, is good because of most teachers' high expectations. Most pupils' writing skills are well developed in English lessons. Year 6 pupils are able, for example, to explain how specific techniques such as similes and alliteration can be used to influence the reader.
- Specialist teaching in both key stages 2 and 3 ensures that pupils make strong progress in all year groups in science, history, geography, computing, technology, art, physical education and music. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared to begin Year 9 in high school, with a secure base of knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are now making similar good progress from their starting points to other pupils nationally. Leaders have addressed historical weaknesses in key stage 2 published results through a whole-school focus on raising standards for these pupils. Regular checks on progress trigger extra help if any pupil begins to fall behind with their work.
- The most able pupils make good progress. Apart from a dip in progress in 2016 in key stage 2 results, historically, achievement in writing has been slightly stronger than in reading and mathematics. Work in pupils' books indicates that the majority of current pupils are now making rapid progress in a range of subjects. Pupils are able to write accurately using spelling, punctuation and grammar correctly. In subjects such as

science, by the time they leave school, pupils are able to make accurate conclusions based on scientific enquiry and to research topics in depth.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have detailed information that they use in planning their lessons and teaching assistants provide effective support both in lessons and at other times.
- Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. They are fully integrated into the school and receive the same level of support as other pupils where needed.

School details

Unique reference number	141064
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10032646

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.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Noel Burke
Principal	Lloyd Roberts
Telephone number	01527 525916
Website	www.st-bedes.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	lroberts@st-bedes.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its most recent key stage 2 results on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Bede's Catholic Middle School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2014. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is now part of the Our Lady of Lourdes MAC (North Worcestershire).
- This middle deemed secondary school has pupils in Years 5 to 8 and is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The

proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin.

- A below-average proportion of pupils is eligible for additional government funding known as the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school does not make any use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils learning in 26 lessons or parts of lessons. The majority of lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding; child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the deputy principal, the special educational needs coordinator, assistant principals and middle leaders. The lead inspector met governors including the vice-chair of the governing body and representatives of the Our Lady of Lourdes MAC (North Worcestershire).
- The inspectors took account of the 65 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 39 parents who completed the online free-text survey. Inspectors also looked at the 41 responses to the online staff questionnaire and 12 pupil responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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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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