

# Thomas Becket Catholic School

Becket Way, Kettering Road North, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 6HT

## Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress. Boys make weaker progress than girls.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils lag behind that of other pupils.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough. Too often teachers do not take sufficient account of pupils' needs. The school's feedback policy is not followed by all teachers.
- In many A-level subjects progress is not strong enough and attainment is not high enough.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Leaders have not established a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils do not receive good careers guidance or a good personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Opportunities to learn about fundamental British values are limited.
- Staff do not consistently apply the new behaviour policy. Some pupils are uncooperative and disrupt learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not achieve as well as they should.

### The school has the following strengths

- External support from a partner diocesan school, arranged by the trustees, is improving the leadership capacity of senior and middle leaders.
- Senior leaders have established a positive ethos founded on the values of faith, justice, compassion, truth and respect.
- Leaders know pupils and their families well.
- There are pockets of effective teaching in school. In these subjects, pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations.
- Progress in applied general qualifications, including BTECs, in the sixth form is strong.
- Senior leaders have a clear vision for the school to be inclusive and successful.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - supporting senior and middle leaders to bring about sustainable improvements in the areas they lead
  - developing a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, with a clear focus on PSHE and fundamental British values
  - ensuring that the allocation of additional funding improves the progress of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, and those eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that teaching:
  - consistently meets the needs of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, boys and pupils with SEND
  - provides appropriate challenge and support
  - enables pupils to consolidate learning over time.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - establishing and maintaining consistently positive attitudes to learning
  - increasing attendance and reducing persistent absence
  - improving careers guidance.
- Improve provision and outcomes in the sixth form by:
  - raising the quality and consistency of the teaching of A-level subjects
  - developing the sixth-form curriculum to include an effective programme of enrichment with further opportunities for personal development and well-being.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since joining the school, the executive headteacher has been instrumental in developing a positive ethos. The recent appointment of a headteacher has further strengthened the school's leadership. After a period of decline, the school is beginning to improve.
- Over time, leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is good enough for pupils to make consistently good progress. Until recently, pupils' attainment and progress were below national averages.
- The link with a partner school has brought much-needed expertise and skill to the senior leadership team. Senior leaders show a moral purpose and a commitment to make a positive difference to the lives of pupils.
- The leadership of SEND is not good enough. Frequent changes of leadership, and insufficient support and challenge mean that many pupils with SEND underachieve. Continued support from the partner school is helping leaders to respond to a SEND audit. This work is in its early stages and the impact of this work is yet to be seen.
- Leaders have not ensured that the funding for disadvantaged pupils has had a positive impact on the attainment and progress of these pupils. Following an external review of the use of this funding, leaders have made changes to how this money is spent. It is too early to say whether these changes are making a difference to how well these pupils achieve.
- Improvement plans are focused on the right areas. The actions taken in the last 18 months are beginning to show improvements.
- Middle leaders are keen to bring about improvement. They value the training provided to support them. Some are beginning to have an impact, as seen in improved progress in English and mathematics. Others who are relatively new are beginning to address weaknesses. However, the impact of their leadership is limited because many changes are recent and are yet to bring sustained improvements in provision and outcomes.
- Leaders have introduced a new system to track pupils' attainment and progress. The accuracy of this system is improving as departments standardise their assessments. However, not all of the information collected by leaders is reliable and accurate.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum provides breadth and balance. Opportunities for developing an understanding of life in modern Britain and fundamental British values are limited. Some pupils who spoke with inspectors recognise that opportunities for extra-curricular activities are limited.
- Leaders provide teachers with regular professional development opportunities. These training sessions are welcomed by staff and are beginning to improve the overall quality of teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are supported through the school's values. Charity events and links with the local community are beginning to add to pupils' experiences and learning.

## Governance of the school

- Trustees understand their responsibilities well. Members of the trust board are knowledgeable and have a broad range of experiences and skills. They are ambitious and have a clear vision for the school to be inclusive, successful and founded on distinctive values. However, this vision is yet to be fully achieved.
- Members of the trust board have worked with diocesan officers to bring about much-needed change and improvement. Since becoming an academy, trustees have set about establishing strong leadership through a support programme with a partner diocesan school.
- The trustees and trust officers hold senior leaders to account for the educational provision and performance of the school and its leaders. They have clear structures in place to both support and challenge leaders. The work of trustees and trust officers has been instrumental in addressing significant historical weaknesses.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and trustees ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.
- Senior leaders and trustees are thorough in checking the suitability of all adults and work with the pupils. The single central record was amended during the inspection to ensure that all checks undertaken were accurately recorded.
- Designated safeguarding leaders receive regular training. They work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and are kept safe. They readily challenge other agencies to provide the right care and support when needed.
- Staff are trained and understand different aspects of safeguarding. They are clear about how to report their concerns to designated safeguarding leaders.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are taught about the risks involved in online activity. Pupils who spoke with inspectors say that they feel safe at school, and this view is supported by many parents.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teaching is not consistently effective across and within subjects to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations are sometimes too low, and learning is not sufficiently demanding. Too much teaching fails to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' attitudes become indifferent and this often leads to low-level disruption and uncooperative behaviour.
- Teachers' questioning is not always sufficiently probing. However, there are examples of effective questioning. For example, in a biology lesson, pupils were challenged to explain variable glucose levels in the bloodstream when exercising. The teacher's well-

structured questions helped pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the subject.

- Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge and support for boys and disadvantaged pupils. Too few of these pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- The school's marking and feedback policy is not implemented consistently.
- There are pockets of effective teaching in the school. For example, some strong teaching in English and in practical subjects, such as art and technology, is raising attainment in these subjects.
- In the more effective examples of teaching, teachers have higher expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. As a result, relationships are respectful, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, respond well and make good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are inconsistent. Many pupils are self-motivated and work well. However, when teaching fails to meet pupils' needs, behaviour deteriorates and it hinders learning and progress.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors understand what bullying is and say that it is not an issue at the school. They are confident that teachers would deal with any concerns or worries they may have. Pupils also told inspectors that they feel safe at school.
- The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance does not meet statutory requirements. Currently, the guidance offers is focused on supporting older pupils make informed decisions about their futures. However, key stage 4 pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they would benefit from more career guidance and work-related learning.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision on a part-time basis are well cared for. School leaders receive regular feedback and are assured that each provision meets the needs of each individual.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Overall attendance has improved but is still below the national average for 2018, as it was in 2017.
- Leaders' actions to reduce persistent absence are effective in improving the attendance of some pupils. However, too many pupils continue to be regularly absent from school.
- Some pupils lack self-discipline and disturb the learning of others through low level disruption and poor behaviour. This is especially the case when teaching does not meet pupils' needs sufficiently well.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions for poor behaviour has reduced slightly.

Disadvantaged pupils and boys have higher rates of exclusion than other pupils.

- The proportion of permanent exclusions was above the national average for secondary schools last year.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well around school. They are polite and respectful. A minority are boisterous, rude and behave inappropriately.
- Many pupils who spoke with inspectors commented that behaviour in lessons and around school had improved over the course of the last two years. Most parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, commented positively about behaviour. However, a small number did not share that view.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4 in 2017 were poor when compared with pupils nationally with the same starting points. Pupils at the school underachieved.
- In 2018, Year 11 pupils' progress and attainment improved when compared to 2017. In general, pupils made average progress. Girls and pupils who speak English as an additional language made stronger progress than their peers.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils were lower than for other pupils in the school and nationally in 2018. This is partly because of poor teaching in the past and because additional funding had not been used well in previous years.
- In 2018, boys' attainment was lower than that of girls, especially in English. Their progress scores were generally lower than those of girls. However, in mathematics, the proportions of boys attaining grade 4 and 5 or above were equal to, or slightly higher than, those of girls.
- Pupils currently at the school make steady progress. Improved teaching in some subjects is leading to improving progress. However, this is not consistently the case.
- Pupils with SEND do not achieve their full potential. They continue to make less progress than their peers. In 2017 and 2018, almost all pupils moved onto further education, training or apprenticeships at the end of their Year 11.
- However, some of these pupils, especially some disadvantaged pupils and boys were not prepared well enough for their next steps in education and training because they did not achieve their full potential.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Requires improvement

- There are differences between students' achievement on applied general programmes and academic programmes. Students taking applied general courses, mainly BTECs, make better progress than those who study A levels.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form shows the same inconsistencies as in key stage 3 and 4. Some teaching reflects high expectations, strong teacher knowledge and consistent challenge. However, in some subjects, students' experiences are not as positive because teaching is not sufficiently well

planned to meet students' needs.

- Leaders of the sixth form are aware of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. A focus on recruiting high-quality teachers is bringing about improved A-level provision.
- The provision for students who have not gained suitable English and mathematics qualifications prior to joining the sixth form is not consistently effective. Some students resit the examinations several times before they complete their sixth-form studies. Not all are successful.
- Leaders have not ensured the delivery of a well-planned enrichment programme this year. Students have, however, benefited from opportunities to work with younger pupils and lead community projects and charity events. These opportunities are not taken up by all sixth-form students.
- All Year 12 students complete work experience. However, those who spoke with inspectors said that they would welcome more opportunities for work-related learning. Likewise, they do not believe that they are given sufficient opportunities to deepen learning in PSHE.
- The proportion of students who remained on their courses Year 12 to 13 in 2017 was well below the national average. This was also the case in 2018 due to the number of students who left when a sporting academy relocated to a different sixth-form provider.
- Students are well supported in their move to the next stages of education, training or employment. In 2018 all students who applied to higher education institutions gained places at their first choice of university.

## School details

Unique reference number	142747
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10057635

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	634
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	103
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Chris Atkin
Headteacher	Mark McLaughlin
Telephone number	01604 493211
Website	<a href="http://www.thomasbecket.org.uk">www.thomasbecket.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@thomasbecket.northants-ecl.gov.uk">head@thomasbecket.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is part of the Saint Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Academy Trust. The trustees are the appropriate authority.
- Thomas Becket Catholic School works in partnership and is supported by St Joseph's Catholic High School, Slough.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than national average. The percentage of

pupils with an education, health and care plan is also below the national average.

- The school uses three alternative providers for some of its pupils. These include Rushmere Academy, Northampton Schools Tutorial Centre and The Seeds of Change.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.
- The school has not had a Section 48 inspection since it became an academy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies as well as morning registration periods. Some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised work in books and sampled pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- The lead inspector met two trustees including the chair of the board of directors. The lead inspector also spoke with the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, headteacher, senior leaders, heads of year, subject leaders, members of staff and spoke with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils around the school. In addition, they evaluated the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 15 free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures related to the special educational needs, pupil premium funding, Year 7 catch-up funding, safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised several documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, the minutes of the governing body meetings, improvement plans, reports of various audits, and information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.

## Inspection team

Chris Davies, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Shepherd	Ofsted Inspector
Laurence Reilly	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019