

Inspection of St Benedict's Catholic High School

Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PX

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils at St Benedict's are happy, confident and enjoy school. All pupils feel safe. Parents agree. If bullying happens, pupils told us 'staff sort it out'. Sometimes, this may not be quickly enough.

Behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes is lively, but well managed by staff. However, many pupils told us that in some lessons their learning is disturbed by the poor behaviour of other pupils. This mainly happens when they have cover teachers or non-specialist staff. We saw this when we visited lessons.

Many pupils achieve well, but some pupils with poor attendance do not do as well as they might. In addition, not all staff plan their lessons well enough to meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This hinders their progress.

Teachers have high expectations for what sixth-form students can achieve. As a result, all students go on to education, employment or training. Most go on to further education.

The school offers clubs and trips to pupils. These include clubs in a range of sports. Trips include skiing trips to America and geography field trips. Pupils value these, but told us they would like more clubs and trips in different activities, such as music and art.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. As a result, they have reviewed the curriculum in all key stages. Now all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are offered the range of subjects available in the school. Equally from September, the revised sixth-form curriculum will offer a wide range of both academic and vocational subjects. This means that pupils of all abilities will be able to stay on to the sixth form if they choose to.

Leaders plan effectively for what pupils are going to learn. Learning is planned in a logical, sequenced way. This helps pupils to learn more and remember more. For example, pupils in a history lesson were able to explain how their learning builds up over time. In a Year 10 food technology lesson, the links made between nutrition and chemistry reinforced learning effectively across the two subjects.

In lessons that are delivered by experienced staff with good subject knowledge, pupils are fully engaged in their learning. As a result, they make good progress. However, in lessons that are led by cover staff or non-specialist teachers, the work set is often too easy for most pupils. As a result, some pupils become disengaged and disrupt the learning of others. This hinders their progress.

The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is continuing to improve the provision for pupils with SEND. Parents value the meetings arranged for them to talk about their child's needs. Pupils with SEND told us they get good support in some lessons from teaching assistants. We agree.

The SENCo intends to provide staff with information in a learning passport about the needs of pupils with SEND. However, as yet, not all pupils with SEND have one. Moreover, not all staff use this information effectively in their lessons. This means that in some lessons, pupils' needs are not fully met.

Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils in school and alternative provision. Consequently, some pupils have improved their attendance from low starting points. However, attendance overall remains low. This is particularly so for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Persistent absence is high. This is hindering pupils' progress.

The introduction of a new behaviour and rewards policy is starting to make a difference. Fixed-term exclusions are reducing. More pupils are being rewarded for doing the right things. However, the new system is not used consistently by all staff. Consequently, low-level disruption in some lessons is hindering pupils' learning.

Pupils in all year groups now follow an integrated curriculum in form time. This includes personal, social, health and economic education, citizenship and careers. However, the quality of its delivery is inconsistent. This means some pupils are better prepared than others for their future. Leaders are aware of this and have acted. From September, each year group will have a head of year who will check that the curriculum is being delivered well.

The sixth-form provision is well led. Students are focused on their learning. They achieve well. As a result, the vast majority of students complete their studies. Students experience a range of opportunities to prepare them well for the world of work.

The diocese, the new directors of the multi-academy company and the reformed governing body are all fully committed to the school and its pupils. For example, they have added capacity to the leadership team with the appointment of a part-time executive headteacher.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Since the new designated safeguarding lead has been in post, there have been significant improvements in the school's safeguarding procedures. Training is now up to date for all staff. Staff receive regular briefings. The risks that pupils face in the local area are identified and addressed well. For example, pupils learn about knife crime in assemblies. As a result, pupils say they feel safe. This includes the most vulnerable pupils.

The school works well with external agencies. Extra help is provided when needed for pupils and their families.

Adults who work at or visit the school are appropriately checked.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced to ensure pupils build their knowledge over time. However, when lessons are delivered by non-specialist staff or cover teachers, the quality of implementation is weak. As a result, pupils become disengaged and make limited progress. Leaders need to ensure that all lessons are delivered by experienced, specialist staff so that all pupils make good progress and remain fully engaged in their learning.
- The school provides effective care and support for pupils with SEND. However, their learning could be better. Although leaders are working to ensure that staff receive appropriate information about individual pupils' needs, they do not routinely check how well this information is being used. Leaders need to regularly monitor and evaluate how well the needs of pupils with SEND are being met, so that they achieve their full potential.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance in school and in alternative provision. They use a range of strategies to improve attendance. For some individual pupils with particularly low starting points, this is beginning to have an impact. However, attendance overall remains low and persistent absence remains high. This negatively affects the learning of those pupils who are frequently absent. This is most notable for those pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders need to work with parents and carers to improve the attendance of pupils who are regularly absent from school, so that they are in school, learning well and making better progress.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour and rewards policy, which is beginning to make a difference. For example, fixed-term exclusions are reducing over time. However, not all staff consistently apply the policy. As a result, some lessons are disrupted by pupils' poor behaviour and this hinders pupils' learning. Leaders need to ensure that all staff, including cover staff, apply the school's policy consistently and low-level disruption is not tolerated.
- Leaders have recently introduced an integrated curriculum that is delivered in form time and assemblies. It is coherently planned and sequenced. However, the quality of delivery is inconsistent. Leaders need to ensure that all staff who deliver the programme have the appropriate skills and knowledge they need to ensure all pupils receive lessons of a high quality. Leaders need to monitor and review this regularly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143634
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10130693
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	765
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vickie Dawes
Headteacher	David Hughes
Website	http://www.st-benedicts.org/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Benedict's Catholic High School became an academy converter on 1 April 2017 and became part of The Holy Family Catholic Multi-Academy Company. When its predecessor school, also known as St Benedict's Catholic High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The multi-academy company consists of six schools.
- The school has a Catholic ethos. It had its last section 48 inspection in November 2018.
- At the time of the inspection the headteacher was absent. The deputy headteacher has been the acting headteacher since Easter 2019. An executive headteacher appointed by the diocese has been supporting the school on a part-time basis since November 2019.

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision on a part-time basis. The providers used are Positive About Young People and Escape Arts.
- Five pupils receive their education from the medical education team organised by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, the chair of directors, staff and newly qualified teachers.
- The inspection focused on: English, mathematics, history, technology and business and computing. We met with subject leaders and teachers. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. We talked to pupils about their learning.
- An inspector checked the single central records and the procedures for the recruitment of staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- An inspector visited an alternative provider.
- We considered the 126 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sara Arkle	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
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