

Inspection of a good school: Bishop Milner Catholic College

Bishop Milner Catholic College, Burton Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 3BY

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

Outcome

Bishop Milner Catholic College continues to be a good school.

The head of school is Siobhan Foster. This school is part of the St John Bosco Multi-Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by a board of trustees, chaired by Phil Hancox. There is also an executive principal, Richard May, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bishop Milner Catholic College leaders and pupils share the same high aspirations. Pupils understand and follow the values to 'inspire hearts and minds'. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils work hard and achieve very well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typical parental comments are that 'staff are friendly, approachable, confident in their roles and often go above and beyond for their students'.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils say they can focus on their learning well. Most pupils work hard and want to do well. On the rare occasions when there is low-level disruption, teachers act quickly and efficiently to address it. During social times, pupils walk and mix in a calm and orderly manner. Pupils feel safe. They say they know who to talk to about any concerns they have.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development exceptionally well. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Pupils regularly take part in a range of clubs such as art, chess and computing. Opportunities, such as the recent trip to France for modern foreign languages and history, enhance the curriculum. Pupils on the leadership team are proud to support others.

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

The school has developed a highly ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum, including in the sixth form. All pupils follow the same curriculum, including pupils with SEND. Leaders' actions to continually improve the curriculum have led to consistently improving pupils' outcomes by the end of key stages 4 and 5.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. Many teachers carefully check what pupils know and remember. The majority of pupils remember their previous knowledge well, which helps them to understand new learning. For example, pupils in Year 9 recalled their learning from Year 8 about rivers and mountains to evaluate the Russian environment. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check what pupils remember consistently enough. Some pupils do not remember the key knowledge sufficiently well. Pupils then struggle to build on their previous learning. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND. Teachers use pupils' information effectively to adapt their teaching. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same, ambitious curriculum, adapting the curriculum to meet all pupils' needs. This means that pupils with SEND successfully access learning and achieve well.

The school is developing a lot of strategies to support pupils who are not confident readers. Specialist teachers rapidly address weaknesses in pupils' phonics, grammar and comprehension. Teachers encourage pupils to read during tutor sessions. Teachers model reading by highlighting key thematic words and ideas. Teachers also discuss pupils' views on these themes. However, not all pupils read widely and often in school and at home. Leaders are continuing to encourage and develop pupils' reading and seek ways to engage all parents in supporting their children to read.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is highly effective. Pupils understand about healthy relationships and to respect other people's opinions. Pupils voice their opinions about the school. This encourages them to have a strong sense of belonging. The pupil leadership team, including student ambassadors in the sixth form, are role models for younger pupils.

All students receive unbiased information on potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance. Pupils and students in the sixth form discuss careers, university aspirations and apprenticeships. This prepares them well for the next stages of their lives.

All leaders, including those responsible for governance, know this school well. They understand how the local context impacts pupils' learning and attendance. Leaders review and develop all aspects of the school effectively. This includes their robust and rigorous focus on safeguarding. Governors both support and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken. Leaders have implemented a well-thought-out professional development programme for staff. Staff feel very well supported and consulted about policy changes. Leaders carefully consider staff's workload, which staff are appreciative of.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, some teachers do not consistently check that pupils understand what has been learned and what pupils can remember. This means that some pupils may not fully understand the key knowledge they need to know as effectively in some subjects compared to other subjects. The school must ensure that all teachers further embed and consistently check pupils' understanding and recall at regular points in their learning, and adapt their teaching accordingly to ensure that all pupils know and remember the key knowledge they need.
- Some pupils do not read widely and regularly in school and at home. This means that they do not make sufficient progress in developing their reading, and lack an understanding of what they are reading. The school should further embed the current reading strategy to carefully monitor and support pupils and parents in engaging with regular and wide reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2015.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140126
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10294593
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	848
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	108
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phil Hancox
Principal	Richard May (Executive Principal)
Head of school	Siobhan Foster
Website	www.bmilner.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the St John Bosco Catholic Multi-Academy Company, Archdiocese of Birmingham, which contains eight schools.
- The school does not make use of any settings for alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Bishop Milner Catholic College is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school received its last section 48 inspection of church schools in July 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: English, mathematics, geography and physical education. Inspectors looked at leaders' curriculum planning, visited lessons, heard pupils read to a familiar adult, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with a representative of the local diocese, trustees, governors, the headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. Inspectors also talked informally to pupils, staff and parents to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Wakefield

His Majesty's Inspector

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