

Inspection of Becket Keys Church of England Free School

Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9DA

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Andy Scott-Evans. This school is part of Russell Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Colin Mackinlay, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Lynch.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since May 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Becket Keys is a school where pupils flourish academically, socially, and spiritually. Strong relationships with staff, and excellent pastoral support, mean that pupils feel valued and well looked after. New pupils settle in quickly, welcomed warmly by their peers. They quickly form secure friendships that positively shape their time at school.

The school's Christian ethos is at the heart of everything it does. Pupils live out the Gospel values to 'love one another' (John 15:17), treating others with care and respect. Their behaviour is exemplary. Lessons are calm, focused and free from disruption. Pupils listen attentively. They work hard and encourage one another to do their best. Beyond the classroom, pupils continue to uphold the school's high expectations. During social times, they are considerate and friendly, creating a positive atmosphere in which everyone feels included.

Pupils benefit from an exceptional quality of education. They enjoy work that challenges them to think deeply and apply their knowledge. Teachers have high expectations, and pupils rise to meet them. As a result, they develop a love of learning, achieve highly, and leave the school ready for their next steps.

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

The school has high academic expectations for their pupils. From Year 7 to Year 13, pupils follow a carefully designed and ambitious curriculum that equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to excel. At key stage 4, most pupils study a modern foreign language – Spanish or Mandarin – which broadens their cultural understanding and global awareness.

Teachers are subject experts, including in the sixth form. Their explanations are clear and precise, ensuring pupils grasp complex concepts with confidence. Every lesson begins with a 'do now' activity, which reinforces key knowledge and deepens pupils' understanding over time. Teachers use questioning with precision, checking pupils' understanding and extending their thinking. Across the curriculum, teachers skilfully probe students' initial responses, challenging them to refine their answers and secure a deeper grasp of the topic.

From Year 7, pupils take ownership of their work, engaging fully with their learning. Pupils regularly apply their knowledge through well-designed tasks that develop their independence. They respond well to teachers' feedback, refining and improving their work with confidence. As a result, they build secure academic resilience and achieve highly.

The school's approach to inclusion is exemplary. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are swiftly identified and benefit from expert support. They access the full curriculum alongside their peers and achieve exceptionally well.

The school provides excellent support to help pupils develop their reading. Those at the early stages of learning to read receive expert guidance to develop their vocabulary,

comprehension, and fluency. As a result, they become confident and capable readers. Sixth-form students value the opportunity to mentor younger pupils, helping them to progress rapidly and develop a love of reading.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They listen attentively, remain highly focused, and approach their work with determination. Pupils support one another and celebrate each other's successes. This courtesy and maturity extends beyond the classroom. Social times are calm and positive, with pupils showing genuine pride in their school community. They embrace diversity and enjoy opportunities to celebrate different cultures, such as through the popular culture day. Sixth-form students play a significant role in shaping the school's ethos. They take on important responsibilities as prefects and peer mentors, run clubs, and support younger pupils in lessons.

A strong sense of community is at the heart of the school. Staff set high expectations, and pupils consistently demonstrate caring and respectful attitudes. Collective worship reinforces the school's values, deepens pupils' faith, and encourages pupils to reflect on their responsibilities to others. Pupils are eager to make a difference. They actively support meaningful charitable initiatives, such as fundraising to support education in Uganda, particularly for girls.

Pupils' personal development is enriched through a wide range of leadership roles and extra-curricular clubs, including rugby, a tabletop battle game, and Christian Union. They enjoy trips to destinations such as Norfolk, Seville, and China. These opportunities broaden their cultural experiences and build their confidence beyond the classroom. Pupils receive high-quality careers guidance, take part in employer visits, and benefit from well-tailored advice that broadens their aspirations.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are highly effective. They have a clear vision and ensure consistently high standards. Staff feel well supported and valued. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, praising the excellent opportunities available to their children. Pupils share this view, speaking enthusiastically about their experiences and the support they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	138239
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345338
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,142
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	276
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Lynch
CEO of the trust	Colin Mackinlay
Headteacher	Andy Scott-Evans
Website	www.becketkeys.org
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 May 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2023. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision and one unregistered provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, art and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of governors, and the CEO. She also reviewed documentation relating to governance and school improvement.
- Inspectors reviewed attendance records, held discussions with leaders about pupils' behaviour and observed pupils' behaviour around site.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the school's approach to pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for careers and sixth-form provision.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans relating to supporting pupils with SEND.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils from different years to hear their views about school, including single-sex groups.
- The inspectors considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also reviewed responses to Ofsted's staff survey and Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

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His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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