



The Becket School - A Specialist College in Science and Humanities

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122896
Local Authority NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number 292535
Inspection dates 26–27 September 2006
Reporting inspector Dr. Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Ruddington Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Wilford, Wilford
Age range of pupils	11–18		Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG11 7DL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01159817742
Number on roll (school)	819	Fax number	01159817717
Number on roll (6th form)	218		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Father.Gregory Tobin
		Headteacher	Mr. A Glover
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	26–27 September 2006	292535

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Becket School is a larger than average sized Roman Catholic secondary school. The school is located on a split site, with the upper school located about a mile and a half from the lower school. The school serves a very wide catchment area and is heavily oversubscribed. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds, but with some from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is close to the national average. The main languages spoken by these pupils are Polish and Lithuanian. The school gained specialist science and humanities college status from September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides a consistently good and often excellent education across all the major aspects of its work. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the deputies and the governors, is characterised by a clear vision and strong commitment to providing an education which meets the needs of each individual, within a Catholic Christian framework. This influences all of the school's activities and is much in evidence in the school. Pupils are educated in an environment based upon clear values and principles which influence every aspect of the school, so that pupils feel secure, valued and respected. They respond exceptionally well to the school's high expectations and this creates excellent conditions for learning. Because the school sets and achieves challenging targets, pupils make excellent progress and standards have been maintained at a well above average level since the last inspection. The senior leadership team has recently been extended and restructured to draw in more talent and continue the drive for further improvement. This is seen, for example, in the achievement of specialist science and humanities college status from September 2006. It is also seen in the attention given to ways in which teaching and learning can be made most effective. Because of this, teaching is good overall and there are many examples of outstanding practice. The influence of the school's values on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils means that they are always extremely ready and willing to learn. In most lessons, pupils make rapid progress because learning objectives are clear and they are stretched by the lesson activities. However, in a few lessons pupils are not given enough opportunities to ask questions and work independently. The curriculum promotes achievement well. One of the strengths of the curriculum is the use of a broad range of accreditation and vocational opportunities to engage the interests of pupils and recognise their achievements. Staff share a desire to help pupils develop into confident, mature and caring individuals and the guidance and support given to pupils are excellent. Teachers and subject leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress so that underperformance can be tackled at an early stage. The effective monitoring of conduct and behaviour helps to identify pupils who need help and any issues are quickly tackled. The school works exceptionally well with other schools, agencies and with the community to enrich pupils' education and ensure their well-being. As a result, pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils appreciate how to live healthily and they are outstandingly well prepared for further study or employment. The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to demonstrate leadership and their self-confidence increases as they progress through the school. As one parent wrote, 'I am impressed by the quality of person the school is helping to develop I am very pleased with the school ethos and values'.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are outstanding. Standards are well above average and achievement is high. This is because the sixth form provides a very positive learning environment within which much good, and at times excellent, teaching

promotes rapid progress. Because students are keen to learn they very quickly acquire the independent learning and other study skills they need to be successful. Outstanding leadership and management of the sixth form ensure that students' progress is closely monitored and well-focused support provided where necessary. Students speak highly of the excellent guidance they receive both before entering and while in the sixth form. This guidance, together with a curriculum that is well matched to their needs and aspirations, helps to ensure that students are highly suited to their courses, with the result that very few drop out early. Students' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy and appreciate their education, and make a significant contribution to the school and wider community. As one student said, 'In this school they are not just concerned about examination results. Of course these are important, but teachers are just as concerned that we develop well as people'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or better by ensuring that pupils are actively involved in their learning in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They enter Year 7 with a wide range of starting points but overall attainment on entry is broadly average. Pupils make excellent progress and this is reflected in the rising trend in the results of Year 9 National Curriculum tests, which are well above average. Pupils' excellent progress is maintained through Years 10 and 11, and GCSE examination results have been maintained at a well above average level since the last inspection. In 2006, almost three quarters of pupils gained five or more A* to C grades, a third of which were at the highest A* or A grades. Virtually all pupils gain five or more grades in the wider A* to G range and very few pupils leave school with no pass grades. These results represent outstanding achievement given pupils' starting points and reflect the care and support given to all. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those with English as an additional language, are well supported and their progress is also outstanding. In the sixth form, students start advanced courses with attainment that is broadly average. Examination results on advanced level courses show a rising trend and are well above average, with a well above average proportion of students gaining the higher A and B grades. These results represent outstanding achievement when students' starting points are taken into account. The school sets and meets challenging targets and inspection evidence shows that standards are being maintained.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Firmly based on Gospel values, the school encourages pupils to show care and concern for each other so that all may benefit equally and fulfil their spiritual and academic capabilities. This results in a happy and safe community which helps pupils to develop the skills and attitudes appropriate for work and leisure in later life. Attendance is average and the school is working hard to ensure that all pupils and their families realise the importance of good attendance. The attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority of pupils are excellent. Pupils are able to share any concerns with staff, for example about bullying or racism, knowing that they will be taken seriously. This enables newcomers to the school and those with learning difficulties and disabilities to be fully accepted and to make progress. Many older pupils and students are given training and responsibility to act as mentors and counsellors for younger ones, and this enhances their own personal development. Pupils are able to express their views through the school council and there are plans to expand it to have a council for each year group. Many pupils take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and demonstrate their concern for others by raising large sums for charity. High participation rates in sporting activities help to develop a healthy lifestyle as does an understanding of healthy eating. This understanding is supported by a well-planned programme of personal and social education which contributes to pupils' and students' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good and in many lessons excellent. Continued improvement in teaching and learning is guided by the very active school learning and teaching group. This group has done much to promote the pupils' involvement in their learning as well as improve the quality of teaching generally. Typically, lessons have good pace, there is a high level of challenge and teachers use their subject knowledge to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through lively questioning that forces them to think. In this way, pupils develop a deeper understanding of mathematical and scientific problems, or complex social and historical issues. Pupils enjoy these lessons because they are actively involved and make rapid progress as a result. However, there are a few occasional inconsistencies in teaching and learning. In a very small number of lessons there is a lack of variety and pace and this restricts pupils' progress. Teachers do not give pupils enough time to work out an answer before providing an explanation, or provide too much information. One of the exceptional features of this school is the influence of the school's values on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils. The vast

majority of lessons are characterised by mutual respect and the willingness of pupils to comply with the requests of teachers. This explains why pupils' progress can be excellent even when teaching is only good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is good and enhanced by the school's recently acquired specialist college status in science and humanities. It is excellent in the sixth form. Provision for information and communication technology has improved across the school since the last inspection and there are plans to make further improvement as part of the school's specialist activities. The move towards a broader range of vocational subjects, in addition to a wide range of academic subjects, is proving popular and better suited to the needs and aspirations of pupils across the full attainment range. This is contributing to the school's overall performance and helping to foster positive attitudes to school in pupils less suited to more traditional GCSE courses and A level courses. Productive links with local businesses support work experience and the school plans to build on these links to further extend the work-related curriculum. There is a well-constructed personal, social and health education programme which contributes successfully to pupils' understanding of responsible citizenship. The curriculum is complemented by a wide range of enrichment activities. Pupils of all abilities take advantage of the various sporting activities, clubs, educational visits and residential opportunities offered. These activities make an important contribution to pupils' personal development and the sense of teamwork that permeates the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school takes its duty of care very seriously and child protection and health and safety procedures are well established. Discussions with pupils revealed no worries about their personal safety, and many expressed their appreciation of the readiness of teachers to listen to their concerns. As a result, the school provides a well-ordered and a secure place for learning. In this safe and supportive environment, pupils develop very well as confident young people with a clear sense of values. This environment is very supportive of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Their self-esteem is raised and, with the support of detailed individual education plans, their progress is greater than would otherwise be expected. The school takes a clear stance against any form of bullying and, although incidents are few, all are treated seriously. Pupils' academic progress and behaviour are monitored closely by subject teachers and form tutors, and parents and carers are well informed on their children's progress through annual reports. Pupils are guided to courses which best suit their abilities and aptitudes and there is a comprehensive programme for careers advice. Students in the sixth form are extremely positive about the excellent

help they get. Excellent links with local colleges and the community extend the range of options available to pupils and help them to move on to further study or employment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school evaluates its leadership and management as good but inspectors judge them outstanding. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have established a calm and productive climate for learning and set high expectations for staff and students alike. Their drive to take the school forward is fully supported by all staff and is seen, for example, in the achievement of specialist college status and in securing approval for the building of a new school which it is planned to occupy in 2008. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are exceptionally rigorous and highly accurate. As a result, the school knows its strengths and identifies the right areas for improvement. This makes a significant contribution to standards. Surveys of the views of parents and pupils show a high level of support for the school and its leadership. Links with other schools, colleges, businesses and the community are excellent and there are plans to strengthen these through the school's specialist activities. Governors play a full strategic role in guiding and supporting the school's work and provide challenge for further improvement. There has been outstanding improvement since the last inspection and the school has excellent potential for further improvement. Resources are managed extremely effectively and the school provides excellent value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 September 2006 Dear Pupils and Students The Becket School - A Specialist College in Science and Humanities, Ruddington Lane, Wilford, Nottingham, NG11 7DL As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your politeness and co-operation during our visit. We greatly appreciated your comments and opinions and were very impressed with your enthusiasm and excellent attitudes to school. The inspection found that your school has so many strengths that it is outstanding. You are encouraged to learn and aim for high targets. The results of the tests you take in Year 9 and the examinations in Year 11 are well above those in most schools. Your excellent behaviour in lessons is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why you make such outstanding progress from the time you join the school. There is a really friendly and positive atmosphere in the school and relationships between yourselves and the staff are excellent. Teachers look at your progress carefully and give you excellent support when it is needed. Because your teachers know you well they are able to give you very good advice when you have to make choices about the courses that are best suited to what you want to do when you leave school. You told us, and we saw for ourselves, how much you enjoy lessons in which you are actively involved and we have asked the school to try to increase the number of lessons in which this happens. We were very pleased to see you that so many of you are keen to make the most of the opportunities the school is providing for you. We wish you continued success in the future. Yours sincerely Dr K C Thomas Lead inspector