



Blessed George Napier Catholic School and Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123270
Local Authority Oxfordshire
Inspection number 292630
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Daniel Towl HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Addison Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Banbury
Age range of pupils	11–18		OX16 9DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01295 264216
Number on roll (school)	840	Fax number	01295 277952
Number on roll (6th form)	106		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Paul Concannon
		Headteacher	Mr David Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	18–19 October 2006	292630

© 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Blessed George Napier School is a mixed voluntary aided Catholic school and sports college with 840 pupils. Most pupils come from the Banbury area but a significant number come from five different surrounding counties and from mixed social backgrounds. While most pupils are Catholic, other denominations and faiths are represented. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils with statements of special educational need is similar to the majority of schools. Overall the number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly less than most schools. The school has a sixth form with 106 pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Blessed George Napier School is a good school. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior team are an effective group and know what needs to be done to raise standards.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. No pupils have left the school without a qualification in the last two years. Standards in the main part of the school and in the sixth form are above average. The most recent 2006 results show an improvement in Years 11 and 13 with GCSE and A levels. This follows a dip in performance in 2005 which led the school to introduce significantly better procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning, especially in subjects where the performance of pupils was relatively weaker. These measures had a positive effect on standards and the achievements of pupils. The senior leadership team is fully aware of the need to develop these procedures more consistently throughout the school at all levels.

The personal development of pupils is outstanding. The behaviour and conduct of pupils in and around the school is impressive. The headteacher, senior leaders and all staff have created, and work effectively to maintain, a caring school with a significant community spirit rooted in its Catholic ethos. Pupils are happy in school and this is a reason cited by many of the oldest students for choosing to enter the sixth form at Blessed Gorge Napier rather than go elsewhere.

Teaching and learning are mostly good in lessons and in other activities provided by the school. All teachers have good and respectful relationships with pupils. There is some inconsistency in teachers' on-going assessment and marking and in the way that higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged and engaged.

The school provides a good and wide ranging curriculum to meet pupils' needs and interests and is developing additional opportunities in order to widen the choices in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The curriculum has been successfully enhanced by the additional resources derived from the sports college status. Good numbers of pupils take part in the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities including music, productions, sport and extended visits. The quality of care and guidance pupils receive is good throughout the school but there is not enough consistency in the way that pupils receive guidance about their academic performance and next steps. This is an area for improvement the school had already recognised. The school has a number of successful partnerships which contribute effectively to the pupils' development. Links with local schools especially related to sports provision, post-16 colleges and other community groups serve to enrich provision.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. However, the staff have not yet developed rigorous procedures for analysing results from tests and examinations in order to provide more detailed information about pupils' progress. The school has successfully addressed issues raised in the last inspection and recent improvements in evaluation introduced by the senior leadership team have been successful. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The sixth form is effective and efficient and provides well for its students. The proportion of students achieving A to C grades at A level is above average and all students achieved at least one pass. Standards in 2005 were below average but in 2006 there was a marked improvement due to more rigorous procedures for checking and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning introduced into the school as a whole. At AS level standards are broadly average.

Students enjoy being in the sixth form and most make good progress. They enjoy their studies and nearly all stay on to complete their courses. Students say that their teachers are helpful and provide good support. They are pleased about the courses available at the school. Students make a significant positive contribution to the life of the school for example most recently leading activities for a breast cancer awareness week. The curriculum is good, providing a wide range of opportunities including extra-curricular activities. There are successful partnerships to broaden opportunities for students with other local 16 - 19 providers.

Recent changes to sixth form management have built on and extended a number of initiatives to provide more help and guidance to students for example, individual interviews to check that students' personal timetables make the best use of time for both directed and independent study.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are rigorously and consistently used at all levels of management
- Develop a more detailed and coherent approach to analysing results from tests and examinations to better measure pupils' progress in all year groups
- Improve assessment and target setting to give more guidance to pupils on how to improve their academic achievements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The standards reached by pupils are above average and pupils make good progress. The most recent examinations at Key Stage 4 show that pupils achieved well. In the 2006 national tests the standards pupils reached were above average at Key Stages 3 and 4 in English, mathematics and science.

At Key Stage 4, standards in English, mathematics and science have been high over a number of years but there were relatively weak results in some subjects compared with others in 2005. Following very successful intervention by senior managers there were significant improvements in attainment in art, drama, French and religious education in 2006. The group as a whole made good progress from entering the school

and achieved well. Since becoming a sports college, results in physical education have risen at all levels and there is now an option for an accelerated GCSE in Year 10.

Many pupils who enter the school with lower than average attainment make good progress and achieve well by the time they reach Key Stage 4. Pupils with more significant learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress with reading and spelling, and most gain two or more GCSEs at the lower levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The outstanding behaviour of pupils makes a valuable contribution to the school's calm atmosphere. They are reflective about the needs of others and show a well-developed sense of moral responsibility. Pupils' extremely good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is clearly reflected in the school's strong positive ethos. Pupils say that assembly themes have given them a much better understanding of important issues. Recently Y11 pupils considered and developed their understanding of the work of Amnesty International.

Pupils enjoy school, which is evident from their outstanding attendance and extremely positive attitudes. Pupils talk confidently to each other and adults. All pupils, including the older ones, have a secure understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle they take enthusiastic advantage of the opportunities offered to them to increase their levels of physical fitness which has been increased since the school became a sports college. Pupils appreciate the steps taken to introduce more healthy options in the canteen but this is not reflected consistently in their menu choices. Pupils are well prepared for the world of work through the development of their enthusiasm to take part in activities, contributions to the wider community for example contributing to the breast cancer campaign, the development of numeracy, literacy and conversational skills, and self-confidence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good in both the main school and in the sixth form. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress enabling them to meet their targets. Teachers are confident and well prepared. The inspection confirms the school's own evaluation of teaching and learning although procedures to check quality in all departments are not sufficiently in place to enable all lessons to be at the level of the best. Where teaching is less effective there is inconsistency in the way that teachers challenge and engage pupils to do as well as they can, especially the more able.

Most teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well. Pupils say that their teachers are helpful. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and pupils enjoy their lessons. The use of information and communication technology in teaching is increasing and, when used, is effective in supporting learning. Not all teachers regularly keep pupils informed about what level they are working at and how to improve, including through marking of their work. The smaller groups in some subjects in the sixth form enable teachers to provide good individual support during lessons and give appropriate encouragement and guidance. This helps the students to develop independent study.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good. The provision of extra-curricular activities is outstanding. The school provides good opportunities for all learners, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to achieve well. Pupils are well served through the curriculum because courses are well matched to their needs.

The school has developed a very good programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Conference days supported by reinforcement in different subjects ensure that all areas are covered well.

The flexible choices of courses in Years 10 and 11 provide a range of opportunities within the school and at the local college. The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) enables pupils to link work at the local college or a work placement with studies within the school's mainstream curriculum. The school has good provision for pupils who need additional support for their literacy and numeracy development.

There are good systems to ensure that students make appropriate option choices and through good links with the Connexions service they are well prepared for the world of work. The school does not fully cater for pupils who require a more vocational and applied approach, including a personalised work related programme. Gifted and talented pupils are able to take appropriate GCSE subjects in Year 10 so that they are able to embark on extension or additional courses in Year 11. In the sixth form there is a rich mix of qualifications including AS and A levels, and advanced vocationally orientated courses. Students may follow various combinations of these courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school has recently developed, and is continuing to refine, robust procedures to identify pupils who are in danger of underachieving or who are likely to have their education disrupted because of unacceptable behaviour or irregular attendance. The school makes thoughtful use of both school staff and outside agencies to offer them additional support which meets their particular needs. Pupils whose personal

circumstances mean that they need additional monitoring are well supported. The academic guidance offered to all pupils is also developing effectively. A range of successful activities is used to engage and support pupils. Pupils have opportunities to refer to a school nurse for personal health issues and advice. An emphasis on pupils' academic and personal targets, the provision of 'expectation' evenings for parents and pupils, and mentoring form part of the guidance pupils receive. A current priority for the school is to ensure that all pupils are given consistent opportunities to understand how well they are doing and how they can achieve more. The guidance given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good, which is reflected in their academic achievement and personal development.

Pupils are well cared for and feel safe in school because they know that staff work hard to help them resolve their difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school provides a warm, caring environment where the excellent welfare of each pupil ensures the outstanding development of their personal qualities. The emphasis last year by the senior leadership team on checking the quality of teaching and learning was very effective, and brought about improvement in pupils' achievement in the most recent examinations and tests. Members of staff with leadership and management responsibilities are developing good systems to monitor their areas and now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are starting to use this information more effectively to improve standards in appropriate curriculum areas but procedures to monitor teaching and learning are not used consistently in all departments. The school is at the early stages of developing rigorous analysis of test and examination results and therefore does not have to hand, clear and detailed information about how well pupils are progressing in all year groups.

Pupils and parents are consulted on issues well, for example the "Pupil Voice" gives them a say on a range of issues and the school has undertaken parental surveys. Governors carry out their role well especially in promoting the ethos of the school, challenging managers and ensuring the prudent management of resources. These are planned and used very effectively to help the school successfully meet its aims. Outside agencies and sources of funding are used very productively to enhance provision. The school and especially the senior leadership team is well placed to continue improving standards of achievement.

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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
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	2	

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	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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

Thank you very much for helping us so willingly during the inspection. All the inspectors enjoyed talking with you both in lessons and in the other meetings we held. It was lovely to be welcomed by sixth formers in the morning. All your comments tell us that you like the school and that it is a caring and safe place to be. Your behaviour is outstanding.

We agree with your judgements about the school. It is a good school and the way in which it helps you in your personal development is outstanding. Most of you make good progress with your studies and gain the qualifications you need. You have good relationships with your teachers and in our meetings you said how helpful they are. The range of subjects you study is good and the opportunities for activities outside lessons are excellent.

The head teacher and senior leadership team lead the school well and have introduced some procedures that have helped you to improve how well you achieve. We have asked the school to continue with these improvements and to undertake the following three tasks.

- Check even more thoroughly that teaching and learning is good in all lessons to make sure that all of you are doing as well as you can.
- Make sure that all of you have enough of information about how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve further.
- Analyse more thoroughly information about your examination and test results.

You can all help by ensuring that you make the most of the opportunities in lessons and take part enthusiastically in the activities that your teachers provide for you.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl HMI