

St Bede's Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118119
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	379547
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	James Kilner HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	685
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Coyle
Headteacher	Michelle Travers
Date of previous school inspection	04 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 35 lessons taught by 33 teachers as well as conducting shorter observations in various departments. They held meetings with staff, groups of students and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised assessment information, students' books, records of students' progress and school improvement plans. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 198 parents and carers, 100 students and 44 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's actions to raise attainment and accelerate progress for all students.
- The extent to which the quality of teaching and use of assessment secures good learning for all students, particularly those who are more-able and those from minority ethnic groups.
- The effectiveness with which the school's leaders analyse performance data and monitoring information in order to identify weaknesses and secure improvement.
- The impact of the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development on the rest of their outcomes.

Information about the school

St Bede's is a Catholic secondary school which holds mathematics and computing specialism. It is much smaller than average-sized secondary schools. Students attend from a wide catchment area and some travel a long distance to get to school. The proportion of students known to be entitled to a free school meal is low. The large majority of students is of White British heritage and very few from the other groups represented speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is around average, although high for those with a statement of special educational needs.

The school has achieved Healthy School status and holds the Artsmark, Sportsmark and an Eco-certificate for work with regard to sustainable development. It is the regional centre for gifted and talented education.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Bede's has made significant improvements since the last inspection and is now an effective school which provides a good quality of education. Self-evaluation is accurate, identifies weaknesses accurately and subsequent action-planning is clearly focussed on improving provision and outcomes for students. Under the resolute and dedicated guidance of the headteacher, the school has developed several outstanding features, most notably in the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the levels of care, guidance and support which students receive. One student said, 'The school encourages and celebrates cultural difference and supports lots of different languages, religions and backgrounds, we are all part of one community and work for and with each other.' Attendance is consistently higher than the national average. Of particular note is the work of the recently-introduced 'Faith in Families' initiative where support is brokered for families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Students feel exceptionally safe and are comfortable in one another's company as the school is outstanding in the promotion of community cohesion. Everyone in the school is deeply committed to the mission statement of 'love respect and serve'. Behaviour in lessons is good but around school during changeover times this can, on occasions, slip and students need reminding of the school's code.

From average starting points, students are now making good progress in their learning so that their attainment is above average. A marked improvement in attainment in mathematics demonstrates that the previous underperformance in the subject has been tackled successfully and any remaining gaps have now been closed. While also making noticeable gains, this rate has not been as rapid in English. Indications are that GCSE results will improve further in 2012 in both English and mathematics. Students, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable make progress similar to, and sometimes better than that of their peers. However, the rates of progress are more variable for students of higher ability. The school has only recently identified this as an area requiring attention and it is a priority in the development plan.

The large majority of teaching is at least good and occasionally outstanding, ensuring that students make progress at a rapid pace. During lessons, students relish the opportunities provided to act as tutors. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students confidently showed their working out in front of the class, which helped

them and others to progress well. However, some weaker teaching remains. In these cases, lesson objectives are of a general nature and not sharply-focussed on moving students to the higher levels in their learning. While behaviour in lessons is good, students' independent learning skills are not fully utilised so that there is an over-reliance by some students on the teacher directing them. Also, questioning is not always used with skill by the teacher to engage the students, assess their learning and extend their thinking.

The school's specialism in mathematics and computing ensures strong and effective partnerships with universities and colleges which broaden the students' learning experiences. The school works effectively with parents and carers and has recently introduced a headteacher's forum on the school's website designed to improve communication between home and school.

The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well, particularly in relation to safeguarding the students and promoting the outstanding community cohesion. The consistent rate of improvement linked with effective leadership and management give the school a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, raise levels of attainment further by ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good or better and ensuring that teachers:
 - encourage students to develop their independence for learning to solve problems themselves rather than referring to the teacher as a first resort
 - focus on precisely what they expect individuals to learn in order for them to reach the higher levels
 - use questioning techniques which are linked more directly to assessing students' understanding and creating greater challenge for all.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Indications from unvalidated results in 2011 show that the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics is above the national average. All students were successful in attaining at least five A* to G grades, including English and mathematics, and all achieved an accredited qualification in information and communication technology (ICT). Students are particularly successful in gaining good grades in modern foreign languages, religious studies and science. Assessment data indicate that this improvement is continuing in the current Year 11, where students are on track to meet their challenging targets for 2012.

Students' attitudes to learning and their ability to apply themselves in lessons are good. A group of Year 7 students delighted in preparing their dance routine, sharing one another's ideas and showing no inhibition when rehearsing in front of their peers. Students take pride in the presentation of their work and apply their good numeracy and literacy skills confidently across all subjects. They are secure in their belief that any problems or incidents will be dealt with calmly, promptly, fairly and

effectively by staff. Peer mentors have received good-quality external training so that they have a keen eye when it comes to supporting and guiding their peers. They will not tolerate any form of racism or bullying. Students have a range of opportunities for their opinions and views of the school to be heard. The school is a harmonious community where the richness of differing faiths and cultures of the students and their families are respected and celebrated. Students are self-assured and express themselves confidently and passionately when considering moral, social and ethical issues.

Students take full advantage of the range of extra-curricular clubs. They have an astute awareness of how to keep safe, particularly in respect of the use of the Internet and mobile phone technology. As one student said, 'if we are in any doubt we know who to report it to.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching overall is good. Work is matched appropriately to students' abilities in the majority of lessons. A particular strength is the effective use of ICT to enhance learning in lessons. For example, in a history lesson, students' interest was stimulated during discussion time as images of the English Civil war were projected on the whiteboard, leading to outstanding progress being made. There are examples of outstanding teaching, which is characterised by a high level of student independence. For example, in a Year 8 modern foreign languages lesson, students showed high-level skills by fluently writing complex sentences in French then referring to marking criteria to work out their levels. In the best lessons, assessment data is used carefully to ensure the work targets individual students' needs. However, there are factors which are preventing the quality of teaching and learning from rising to outstanding. On occasions, students are not developing independent learning skills as effectively as they might. For example, they are sometimes too quick to ask the teacher for assistance rather than solve problems themselves or in groups. Some teachers tend to question only those students who are motivated to

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

volunteer answers; this does not always challenge the quieter ones. Questioning sometimes does not encourage students to answer in full sentences, which limits the challenge.

The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to develop skills across a range of subjects. The school's role as regional centre for gifted and talented education enriches the opportunities on offer. A variety of extracurricular activities enhances the curriculum and there is a good level of uptake. The personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) curriculum is strong and encourages mutual respect and empathy for others' needs, ensuring that students develop outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Furthermore, the accredited course students take in connection with the peer mentoring scheme results in good-quality personal outcomes. In Key Stage 4, the curriculum is well-tailored to the needs of students, for example, through providing a horticulture course.

Students and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers are rightly appreciative of the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school. One student said, 'I could not wish for more from such a caring school, everyone really looks after us.' A carefully-structured network of support for students' pastoral as well as academic needs ensures that no one is excluded and no one is in danger of being left behind. The house system ensures that rates of students' academic progress are closely monitored with appropriate intervention should there be problems identified. The parent of a student with special educational needs and disabilities praised the school for the way in which her child's mobility and learning needs were being met. 'It is such a wonderful place for my child to be, she is full of confidence.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Through an effective process of regular monitoring and accurate self-evaluation the school has steered a steady course over the past four years to achieve their current levels of success. In her efforts, the headteacher is well-supported by the leadership team and governors. Staff are held to good account for rates of progress of students in their care. Following lesson monitoring by senior leaders, staff work willingly with their peers in coaching and mentoring sessions. This has resulted in the quality of teaching improving, particularly in relation to the way in which teachers use assessment to move students on in their learning. While the majority of lessons are good, and a few outstanding, there remain some weaknesses to be resolved linked to questioning, developing students' independence and focusing on moving students forward to the next levels.

Members of the governing body are well-informed about the work of the school and hold the school to good account. They demonstrate a good level of insight in to current levels of attainment and progress and ensure safeguarding procedures are met. Systems to monitor and ensure equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are successful in ensuring that students are safe and free from racial harassment. The school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion is reflected in the harmony evident among different groups of students. Senior leaders undertake regular scrutiny of the differing faith groups and ensure that students have a full understanding of cultures and communities both locally, nationally and internationally.

The school monitors the progress of students accurately but has only just introduced a more sophisticated and up-to-date system which will allow more accurate tracking of rates of progress for all groups. Many parents and carers praised the work of the school. Typically these were to do with the high quality of pastoral care and welcoming and friendly environment of the school.

The school's specialism provides effective collaboration with a range of outside partners, universities and colleges. Learning opportunities provided have been instrumental in raising attainment. Given the outcomes for students the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly-supportive of the work of the school. Their views were, in the main, in line with the judgements made by the inspectors, particularly in relation to keeping safe and enjoying school. A very small minority had concerns about the way in which behaviour was managed, how the school helps children to have a healthy lifestyle and taking account of their views. Inspectors raised these issues with the school without compromising the confidentiality of the respondents. Inspection evidence shows that the school does much to encourage healthy lifestyles and that behaviour is well-managed through a rigorous and fair system. The recently-introduced

headteacher's forum on the school's website is designed to take in to account more thoroughly the views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bede's Catholic School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 198 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 685 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	33	127	64	5	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	72	36	115	58	8	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	65	33	109	55	18	9	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	29	123	62	10	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	58	29	123	62	7	4	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	30	112	57	18	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	14	141	71	23	12	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	52	26	125	63	5	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	29	123	62	9	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	21	121	61	20	10	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	14	129	65	19	10	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	51	26	126	64	9	5	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	40	107	54	7	4	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic School, Scunthorpe, DN16 2TF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the inspection team when we inspected your school recently. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with us or chatted to us, we found you to be polite, helpful and well-mannered. This is what we found:

- Teaching is good and you make good progress in your work so that your attainment is above average.
- The care, guidance and support provided for you are excellent. We can see why you enjoy coming to school-that is why your attendance is consistently well above average.
- Your behaviour in lessons is good but some of you forget the school's code of conduct when you are moving between lessons.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. You show a deep understanding of current issues and are able to express your views clearly. You show great generosity and understanding for the plight of those less fortunate than you.
- You told us that you feel safe in school, you know how to live a healthy life and that if there is a problem there is always an adult to help you-we think that the peer mentors help a lot in achieving this.
- We were particularly impressed with how well all of you get on and how your school encourages you to celebrate and embrace others' cultures and other faiths as well as your own.

We have asked the school to ensure that teachers focus lessons more closely on helping you to achieve the higher levels and to use questions more effectively to make you think more deeply. Also, we think that you can help by not having to rely on the teacher so frequently once the lesson is under way. You can achieve much by using your own independent learning skills.

Yours sincerely,

James Kilner
Her Majesty's Inspector

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