

Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School

St Michael's Road, Basingstoke, RG22 6SR

Inspection dates 7–8 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders have successfully created a climate in which students achieve well due to good teaching. Most notably, the school successfully promotes outstanding behaviour and safety of students.
- The curriculum is a significant strength that is underpinned by excellent provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students attain GCSE results that are well above the national average. In English and mathematics their rates of progress also exceed national averages.
- Students achieve very well, due to very good teaching, in a range of subjects including religious education, art, music and history.
- Teachers have very high expectations of students, especially of their behaviour and application to work, contributing to their good achievement.
- Students' outstanding behaviour is shown by the lack of disruption to lessons, strong interpersonal relationships and high attendance showing their love of school.
- Leaders and managers have correctly identified weaknesses and taken successful action to remedy them. They have successfully brought about improvement since the previous inspection, for example in governors' knowledge of the school's performance.
- Teachers' performance is managed well and good performance is appropriately rewarded.
- The governors are increasingly successful in holding senior leaders to account. They ensure that arrangements to keep students safe are of a high standard.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While gaps between the performance of disadvantaged students and that of others are closing, these differences are not yet fully resolved.
- There is too much variation in the quality of marking and feedback to students, and in the use of available information to check their progress and amend their targets.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 33 lessons. About one-quarter of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Tutorial sessions and an assembly were also observed.
- Inspectors reviewed documents, including those about students' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students and members of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 121 parents and carers who submitted them on the Ofsted online Parent View website, and of 28 staff who completed a questionnaire, were analysed and taken into account. A very small number of letters received from parents were also considered.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steven Colledge	Additional Inspector
Geoffrey Wybar	Additional Inspector
Trevor Woods	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. While it serves the Roman Catholic community of Basingstoke and the surrounding area, the school also welcomes students from families of any or no faith communities.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action, 8.3%, is below average. The proportion who are supported through school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is also below average at 5.1%. Most of these students have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, 10.2%, is well below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for looked after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students of minority ethnic heritage, 27.3%, is average, as is the proportion known to speak a language other than English at home, 10.6%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not routinely use any alternative provision. From time to time individual students attend alternative provision, for example for medical reasons.
- The last Section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in June 2010. The governors plan to commission a further inspection in the spring of 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure through regular and careful checks on progress that gaps between the performance of disadvantaged students and that of others continue to close.
- Improve the consistency of students' achievement across all subjects by:
 - checking students' progress to ensure that targets set for GCSE are appropriately demanding while remaining achievable
 - improving the consistency of marking and feedback to students so that, in all subjects, they meet the standards set by the best.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders lead by example. They have high expectations of themselves which enable others, both staff and students, to do their very best to ensure that the latter achieve well and demonstrate exemplary behaviour.
- The most notable strength of the school is the way in which every aspect of its work promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In religious education (RE), studied to GCSE by all students, Year 9 students discussed whether war can ever be justified, while Year 11 discussed the meaning and importance of family life. These are examples of the approach to such issues seen in many subject areas.
- Students have a very good understanding of British values such as tolerance, democracy and fairness. This is evident in the positive way they interact with adults and other students of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds. It shows the school's success in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity, and of tackling potential discrimination.
- The curriculum rightly encourages almost all students to aim for the demanding English Baccalaureate. Appropriate courses are provided for those who would find this too challenging. A strength is the very wide range of additional activities offered. Of particular note are the performing arts, where the school has been awarded the Gold Artsmark, sport and educational visits, including overseas.
- Work is rightly taking place to amend teaching programmes in the light of changes to the National Curriculum. However, work to agree with other local schools on approaches to assessment is at a very early stage of development.
- School leaders identify correctly weaknesses such as in the achievement of disadvantaged students and take successful corrective action. Additional funding is used with increasingly good effect in tackling this particular issue.
- Subject and other middle leaders are increasingly effective. However, a sophisticated system of analysing performance data has only been introduced very recently and some staff are not yet able to monitor their current students' progress as usefully as they might. Targets set for students' GCSE attainment are sometimes too modest.
- A revised policy for checking teachers' performance has been introduced recently. School leaders have an increasingly accurate picture of the quality of teaching, and the quality of training is improving. Good performance is rewarded appropriately.
- The quality of advice and guidance to students is good. Most students move on to colleges where they study for A levels or follow other appropriate courses. The school continues to check on their progress, especially that of disadvantaged students, in order to try to ensure that they remain in education, employment or training.
- The school's arrangements to safeguard students meet statutory requirements and are of very high quality. All necessary checks are in place and are updated regularly. The progress and welfare of individual students who attend alternative provision from time to time are checked thoroughly.
- Parents have a high level of confidence in the school. Nineteen in every 20 would recommend the school to other parents, which is a higher proportion than is usually found in secondary schools.
- The local authority has provided effective light-touch support for this successful school. An annual check on the school's progress has provided very useful reports for senior leaders.

The governance of the school:

- Following recent changes in working practices, the governing body is increasingly effective. Governors provide a good level of challenge, for example in order to obtain a clear picture of the performance of individual subjects. They support senior leaders in bringing about improvement, for example in the better use of additional funding to improve the performance of disadvantaged students. They know how the school performs in relation to schools nationally but, partly due to the relatively unusual nature of the school, have a less clear picture of its performance compared with similar schools.
- Information about the overall quality of teaching is made available to governors, who have a good understanding of how responsibilities and good performance are rewarded, and of how underperformance is tackled. They maintain effective oversight of issues such as the safety of students, and play an important part in maintaining and strengthening further the school's highly positive values and beliefs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. This has been achieved through the very high expectations that all adults have of this aspect of students' school life and the exceptionally strong development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- In lessons, students are polite and get on with their work. They say that learning is almost never slowed by any disruption and the school's records confirm this. There was a calm, purposeful atmosphere in all the lessons observed.
- Students are punctual to lessons. If necessary they wait quietly outside the classroom for the teacher to arrive.
- At breaks and lunchtimes students socialise pleasantly in small groups. It is notable that these groups usually contain both boys and girls and students of different ethnic backgrounds. In wet weather some areas are quite crowded but this raises no concerns about behaviour or safety.
- The school is very clean and tidy. There is no evidence of discarded chewing gum. There is a remarkable lack of litter; when inspectors spotted a single discarded crisp packet they commented that it was the only piece they had seen.
- Students look very smart in their school uniform and are proud to wear the many badges and awards that show their achievements in school.
- Students say there is very little bullying, including racist or homophobic bullying. Again, records confirm that this has been the case over a long period of time. Students can give examples of how rare incidents have been dealt with very effectively. They are taught well about different types of bullying and of how these might arise.
- Levels of exclusion are below national averages and effective steps are taken to ensure that the situations that lead to them are not repeated.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Arrangements such as for child protection, or to assess the risks associated with educational visits, are of a very high standard.
- Students are particularly well informed about the potential dangers of misuse of electronic media. An assembly directly addressed a recent incident in a very appropriate and informative manner.
- Students say that they are confident to talk to adults about personal concerns. They are well informed about who might be the best person to approach about a specific issue. Levels of trust between students and adults are high.
- Parents rightly have a high degree of confidence that their children are safe at school, and say that they are happy there.
- This is reflected in students' attendance, which has been well above national averages for several years. Persistent absence is rare and the reasons, for example concerning medical issues, are always known to staff. Where possible steps are taken to improve attendance, for example by using additional funding to help disadvantaged students get to school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers have high expectations, especially of students' behaviour and work-rate in lessons. They plan work that is challenging and meets the needs of the various groups of students in the class. As a result, in almost all lessons, students work at a good pace and hence make good progress.
- Teachers are aware of those students whose individual needs should be considered, such as disabled students and those with special educational needs, and support them appropriately in making progress similar to the rest of the class. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to this good progress.
- Homework is used well to enhance students' progress. Many staff commit their time to a Saturday school where students have opportunities to prepare for examinations or take part in a range of other activities. Parents and students recognise and value the commitment that this involves.
- Literacy skills, including reading, are developed well in many subjects. Religious education and history give opportunities to develop writing and argument. Research skills are enhanced in science and engineering. While students have a range of opportunities to develop mathematical skills, coordination is less well developed so that occasionally, for example, students might be asked to apply mathematical knowledge in

science before they have been taught it in mathematics.

- The quality of marking and advice to students on improving their work is generally good, but there are variations. In music, for example, it is exemplary. Teachers demonstrate at each stage how students can make the next step to improve their performance. Art, religious education, English and history are other subjects in which marking and feedback are of high quality, enabling students to make very good progress. In other subjects, such as science, it is more superficial, especially in ensuring that notes and accounts of investigations are complete and accurate.
- Students and parents recognise that teaching is good. Students can accurately point out variations between subjects which are generally supported by other inspection evidence.
- There is evidence that some of the GCSE targets set for students are too modest. Teachers told inspectors on several occasions that students were capable of higher grades than their targets suggested, and some students also believed that this was the case. In part, this is due to the limited access that some staff have as yet to the newly introduced data management system.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- On starting at the school in Year 7, the attainment of students in English and mathematics is above average. Few have not reached the nationally expected standards at the end of Year 6 and many have exceeded what is expected.
- Attainment in GCSE has been well above average for several years and preliminary information for 2014 suggests that it remains so. In both English and mathematics, the proportions of students making or exceeding the progress expected of them from Year 7 to Year 11 exceed national averages.
- Scrutiny of students' work over a period of time shows that they make steadily good progress in many subjects. However, there is some variation with students making exceptionally good progress in some subjects including religious education, art, music and history.
- Preliminary analysis of 2014 GCSE results shows improvements in science and continued high levels of success in a range of subjects including English, mathematics and religious education. The most able students achieve well, with many attaining grades A* or A across a range of subjects. An above average proportion achieve the English Baccalaureate. Girls outperform boys on this measure, mainly because they have greater success in modern foreign languages.
- In 2014 there was a reduction in previously high attainment in French, Spanish and geography, when compared with previous years. Senior leaders have found that this was partly due to changes in the groups of students studying these subjects and have taken action to bring about improvements. There are early signs of success, especially in French and Spanish where students' work this year shows good progress.
- Students have good skills of literacy and mathematics. They read widely, and as a result can discuss sophisticated matters with maturity. The school library is well stocked and is well used by students. They have good research skills when using the internet and can discuss the reliability of information from different websites. They can carry out routine calculations in a range of subjects.
- In 2013, there were disappointingly large gaps between the performance of disadvantaged students and that of others in the school. While numbers of students are quite small and data must be treated with caution, on average these students obtained GCSE grades in English and mathematics that were more than two grades lower than those of other students. Action was taken, and preliminary analysis suggests that in 2014 these gaps were reduced to about two-thirds of a grade in both subjects. These students are also now attaining standards broadly similar to that of all students nationally.
- Similar improvements have taken place between 2013 and 2014 in the achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Many of these students are now attaining at least five GCSE passes at grade C or above, including in English and mathematics.
- There is little difference in the achievement of students from different ethnic backgrounds, or by those who speak a language other than English at home, reflecting the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity.
- In the recent past students were entered early for a science GCSE examination. While this did not limit their achievement in the subject, the practice has been discontinued.
- Students achieve well in aspects of the curriculum where they do not necessarily enter public examinations. These include the performing arts, sport and, importantly, their social and emotional development including their understanding of the importance of leading healthy lives and avoiding unnecessary risk.

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116478
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	448798

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	804
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Webb
Headteacher	Anthony Corish
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 March 2010
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