

Saint Benedict, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Duffield Road, Darley Abbey, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 1JD

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The determined leadership of the headteacher and the senior team has led to rapid improvements at the school. They have successfully embedded a positive and inclusive culture that staff and pupils have embraced.
- The support provided by governors and the prospective trust has been instrumental in ensuring rapid improvements at the school.
- The professional development of staff has been highly effective in improving the quality and consistency of teaching and pupils' behaviour.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders and governors have ensured that it meets the needs and aspirations of pupils.
- The personal development of pupils, alongside their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is highly effective. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding is effective and leaders have swiftly ensured that a culture of vigilance has become firmly established. Pupils say that they feel safe.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported and are making good progress as a result.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers use their subject knowledge enthusiastically to engage pupils in activities that challenge them to think and deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders have made improvements to the effectiveness of 16 to 19 provision. Students make good progress in most subjects and the vast majority successfully complete their courses.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite, smart and courteous. Pupils understand the values of the school and demonstrate this in the way that they interact and care for one another.
- Levels of attendance have improved overall. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are frequently absent from school remains high.
- Progress has improved and is now good in most subjects but the progress made by the most able and disadvantaged pupils remains inconsistent.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes at key stage 4, by ensuring that pupils consistently make good progress across the curriculum, particularly the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils who are regularly absent from school so that they make better progress.
- Extend the support that disadvantaged pupils receive so that all are able to secure their next steps in education or training.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined leadership of the headteacher has brought about rapid improvements at the school. Together with the senior team, he has thoughtfully restructured leadership within the school to great effect, maintaining a positive staff morale with a clear sense of common purpose. His leadership is valued and respected by staff.
- Leaders have a strong vision for the school, underpinned by a comprehensive and meticulous development plan. Leaders and governors closely monitor the progress of key development priorities linked to effective planning and this has helped to bring about rapid improvements at the school.
- Leaders have been successful in creating a culture of high expectations for all pupils and staff. The visible presence of school leaders around the school site, and in supporting lessons, has strongly assisted in embedding and sustaining this culture.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and outcomes is accurate and informed by robust processes for checking the quality of the school's work. This has meant that the quality of teaching is consistent across the school and that the right actions are put into place to improve outcomes, including subjects where outcomes have been weaker in the past.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have benefited from the support provided by the prospective Saint Ralph Sherwin Multi-Academy Trust. The support has successfully assisted school leaders in sharpening processes to ensure consistency and accountability. Leaders and staff have benefited from opportunities to work alongside colleagues in high-performing schools and learn from best practice. As a result, their capacity to implement and sustain school improvement has been highly effective.
- The programme for teachers' professional development is very successful. Excellent use is made of expertise from within the school and from outside sources. Teachers feel valued and newly qualified teachers are very positive about the support they have received. As a consequence, rapid improvements have been made in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' behaviour.
- Subject leaders are clear about leaders' expectations, are stringently held to account and say that they are supported by them very effectively. For example, professional learning opportunities on curriculum planning have raised the profile of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that their needs are successfully met. Additional training has rapidly improved the consistency of pupils' behaviour and 'hot spots' have been identified where additional leadership presence may be required during the school day in support of learning.
- Leaders continually reflect upon and revise the curriculum to ensure that it meets the aims and aspirations of pupils. For example, the proportion of time given towards physical education has been increased in support of pupils' physical and mental well-being. Construction and, more recently, engineering have added to the breadth of curriculum offered at key stage 4 due to the level of demand and interest from pupils. Leaders' planning for how the curriculum is taught is thorough and effective.

- The 'Brighter Futures' programme successfully incorporates a wide range of personal development themes, including careers information and guidance, maintaining physical and mental health, active citizenship and staying safe. This programme is well coordinated and delivered. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of staying healthy and keeping safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well throughout the school. The many and wide-ranging displays throughout the school showcase a variety of themes, including a celebration of cultural diversity, supporting charitable work and volunteering. Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities, including a variety of sporting and musical clubs and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Initiatives such as the multi-faith chaplaincy team enable pupils to develop their leadership skills.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They actively demonstrate their understanding of fundamental British values such as tolerance and individual liberty. Inspectors saw an example of this during tutor time, where the learning activities reflected the diversity of the school's population. Pupils describe the school as a caring and happy place where they are able to be themselves.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school, particularly in the care extended towards vulnerable pupils who may find themselves in difficulty.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive a range of support to help them make informed choices at both key stage 4 and in the sixth form. For example, they ensure that pupils learn about careers and making choices as part of a carefully planned curriculum for personal development, which begins in Year 7.
- Leaders use catch-up funding in Year 7 well. Pupils who arrive at the school with skills in literacy and numeracy below those expected for their age are provided with effective support. As a result, these pupils catch up with their peers quickly.
- The impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is beginning to have a more positive impact on these pupils' outcomes across all year groups since the last inspection. The gaps in attainment and attendance between these pupils and other pupils nationally are beginning to diminish.
- Leaders use the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities purposefully. They provide effective and highly personalised support for this group of pupils. As a result, they are now making good progress.
- The leadership of the enhanced resource base is highly specialised and effective. Pupils attending the school who have high-level needs are well supported in learning a range of specific skills within a well-equipped centre. They benefit from personalised curriculum planning that enables them to be successfully included into mainstream lessons. The assistance that these pupils receive fully reflects the inclusive ethos of the school.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey would recommend the school and believe it is well led and managed.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is effective.

- Governors are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They are kept very well informed about the school's development priorities and know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. Governors are ambitious for the future and are keen to see pupils' outcomes continue to improve rapidly. Their high ambition has been instrumental in supporting leaders to raise standards rapidly across the school.
- Governors hold senior leaders stringently to account. They have established effective links to support the monitoring of the school's development priorities, including safeguarding and the use of the pupil premium funding. Governors have implemented an effective committee structure. Regular meetings are held and these are complemented by governor visits during the school day.
- Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior leaders and are prepared to take decisive action when necessary in the best interest of pupils. For example, they are determined to see improvements in the outcomes for humanities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have acted swiftly to embed a culture of vigilance at the school.
- The checks made on the recruitment of staff are secure and monitored by senior leaders and governors. Procedures are in place to ensure that all visitors are suitably checked.
- The training for staff and governors in safeguarding is rigorous and of a high quality. A team of staff, who are appropriately trained, supports the designated safeguarding lead effectively. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies and with parents to ensure that pupils receive the right support. This includes training on radicalisation and extremism.
- All staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. School records are well organised, detailed and demonstrate that prompt action is taken to keep pupils safe. Care for pupils who are vulnerable is sensitive, considered, thorough and well documented. The arrangements for testing the effectiveness of safeguarding are robust. These include, for example, regular briefings where leaders actively question staff to test their understanding of procedures.
- Leaders have paid specific attention to ensuring the security of the school site since the last inspection. All aspects have been thoroughly risk assessed and appropriate measures put swiftly into place to secure the safety of pupils and staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils benefit from consistently good teaching, which means that they achieve well.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve is high, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that support pupils of different levels of ability. Consequently, pupils engage well with their learning and they say that they feel well supported.

- Teachers ensure that their assessments of pupils' work are carefully planned and reliable. Staff work in a highly collaborative way to ensure that assessment results are accurate. Teachers use assessment information to plan learning that enables the majority of pupils to make good progress over time.
- Lessons are thoughtfully sequenced so that pupils are moved on appropriately in their learning. Teachers use well prepared resources to sustain pupils' interest and focus, ensuring that little time is wasted.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge that they use enthusiastically to engage pupils in a variety of interesting learning activities, which pupils say they value. This includes the effective use of questioning to probe and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Pupils are challenged to produce their best work. For example, in a Year 9 art lesson the teacher set high standards which enabled pupils to emulate the artistic style of Lowry. Pupils understood the distinctive features they needed to demonstrate in order to be successful.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills are effective. The whole-school reading and 'Voice' communication initiative, for example, is embedded during lessons and tutor time to develop reading and speaking skills. Pupils also have the opportunity to have written work published and celebrated as part of a young authors scheme.
- There are strong and positive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils respond promptly to instructions and they work well independently and in groups to support each other's learning.
- Additional adult support is carefully deployed to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or speak English as an additional language are effectively supported. They help to reshape learning activities and questions so that these pupils make rapid progress. Pupils who require highly specialised support at the enhanced resource base benefit from effective individualised planning which meets very specific needs. These pupils say that they are very happy with the support they receive and that they feel included within the school.
- The school's policy on providing feedback systems is used consistently by all teachers. Pupils are informed about their successes in learning and about how they can further improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have implemented an effective and well-considered programme of learning to support the personal development of pupils, called 'Brighter Futures'. The programme enables pupils across all year groups to explore a range of themes, including mental health, healthy relationships, online safety and social media, child sexual exploitation and hate crime.

- Pupils have a very good understanding of fundamental British values. They are tolerant of others who may have a different culture to themselves and are respectful of democracy and individual liberty. Pupils exemplify these values in their conduct within and outside of lessons, reflecting the school's strong caring ethos.
- Pupils benefit from a very effectively planned programme of careers education, which begins in Year 7. As a result, the vast majority of pupils secure places in further education, employment or training. However, in 2017 the proportion of disadvantaged pupils securing their next steps was below the national average.
- Leaders promote the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding effectively. These opportunities are creatively showcased by numerous displays arranged around the school site.
- School records show that incidences of bullying are low, including incidences relating to racism or homophobia. Pupils are confident that school staff would deal with any occurrence swiftly and effectively. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey expressed that their child was happy at school and felt safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct around the school is calm and orderly.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and helpful. They are punctual to lessons and follow instructions from staff promptly. They wear their uniform with pride. A distinctive feature of pupils' behaviour in this school is their sense of a community and the care that they extend towards one another.
- Staff apply the behaviour system consistently and, as a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has been high in the past but this has significantly reduced. The proportion of pupils receiving fixed-term exclusions and repeat exclusions is now below average when compared to national figures. Strategies to improve pupils' behaviour have been successful. For example, the 'Damascus Centre' provides highly effective support for individual pupils at risk of disengaging from learning.
- Overall attendance has improved and is now above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced, although it remains slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school remains high.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision away from the school site are closely monitored. The school ensures that they are safe and that they attend and behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, pupils made good progress by the end of key stage 4 in a number of subject areas including English, mathematics, science and the suite of subjects that comprise the English Baccalaureate. Outcomes in languages were particularly good. However,

pupils' progress in humanities subjects was significantly below that of other pupils nationally.

- Pupils' overall attainment across a range of subjects studied was also broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally in 2017. However, the attainment of boys and disadvantaged pupils, although improved from 2016, was weaker overall. The proportion of pupils gaining a standard pass or better in English and mathematics was above the national average, although the achievement of a strong pass or better was below the national average in these combined subjects.
- In 2017, the progress made by the most able pupils by the end of Year 11 was below that of 2016, particularly in humanities and mathematics. The progress of these pupils was above the national average in English and languages. School records for current pupils suggest a stronger picture overall in 2018.
- Current school information shows that pupils' progress across the school continues to strengthen for all groups of pupils, including outcomes in subjects that were weaker in 2017. Inspectors' observations of learning and a scrutiny of workbooks for disadvantaged pupils indicates that this group of pupils are beginning to make better progress than they did previously.
- The funding that the school receives to help pupils in Year 7 catch up with their peers if they are behind in English or mathematics has been well spent on a variety of strategies. There have been improvements in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as a result, particularly in reading.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported and their progress is improving rapidly towards that of other pupils nationally. The enhanced resource base for physically and visually impaired pupils is particularly successful in adapting learning to help pupils make better progress.
- A strong culture of reading is established across the school. Pupils read widely and often. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making good progress as a result of focused and well-targeted support.
- Pupils are well prepared for the future. There is effective support and guidance in place to help the vast majority of pupils find appropriate places for their next steps in education or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is consistently good. Students enjoy their lessons and find them interesting and challenging. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to question, challenge and accurately assess students' performance.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and continues to improve, despite a dip in 2017. Students make good progress in most subjects. School information suggests a stronger position than in 2017 and this is supported by inspectors' observation of lessons.
- Expectations are high. The retention and attendance rates in the sixth form are high and this serves as an indication of how much students value the sixth form and the provision made for them.

- A small number of students who did not secure a standard pass or better in English or mathematics by the end of key stage 4 are successful in doing so by the end of the sixth form.
- The leadership of the sixth form is strong and ambitious for the future. Leaders enjoy good relationships with students, who say that they are approachable and supportive. Leaders know the strengths of the sixth form well, and the areas for further improvement. Leaders also ensure that sixth-form students act as good role models to other pupils in the main school. For example, many students support the whole-school reading programme by acting as mentors.
- Students who attend the enhanced resource base benefit from specific opportunities that help them to become more confident about living independently. For example, students can learn about living away from home by using the 'overnight facility', which is provided on the school site.
- Work experience is an integral part of sixth-form provision and the vast majority of students have benefited from their participation in a meaningful placement.
- The information, advice and guidance about students' next steps in education, employment or training is of a high quality. Access to impartial careers advice complements a wide range of personal development opportunities. As a consequence of this support, all students in 2017 secured placements which met their needs and aspirations for the future.

School details

Unique reference number	138622
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10038679

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,341
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sherri Medcalf
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Gritton
Telephone number	01332 557032
Website	www.saintben.derby.sch.uk
Email address	mail@saintben.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 November 2016

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school has a specialised resource base for 26 pupils who have physical disabilities and/or visual impairments.
- A very small number of pupils attend curriculum provision off-site at either the Derby Pride Academy or Kingsmead School.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
- Inspectors observed 37 parts of lessons across the main school and the sixth form, in a range of subjects. Inspectors also visited tutor time and assembly. All of the observations were carried out jointly with senior school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of pupils, including one from the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers responsible for teaching and learning, outcomes, behaviour and personal development and the sixth form. Inspectors also spoke with the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, pastoral and subject leaders. A meeting was held with four governors. The lead inspector also met with the designate chief executive officer of the Saint Ralph Sherwin Multi-Academy Trust. The school is to join this trust on 1 September 2018.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation; pupils' performance information and a selection of pupil workbooks; the governing body minutes of meetings; behaviour logs; whole-school and curriculum plans and school policies in relation to safeguarding, behaviour and teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors also evaluated 150 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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