

# Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy

Duffield Road, Darley Abbey, Derby, DE22 1JD

## Inspection dates

22–23 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Achievement has improved quickly over the last two years and the number of students gaining five A\*- C grade passes at GCSE, including English and Maths, compares well to national averages.
- The progress made by students with special educational needs and disabilities is in line with other students.
- Teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding. In the best lessons teachers and students work together to create a positive climate for learning.
- Training for teachers is robust and has ensured that, over time, teaching has improved.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and this is improving over time. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education or for working life.
- The ethos of the academy is based on shared values and leads to very good relationships between teachers and students. This means that behaviour in lessons is good and students' attitudes to their learning are positive.
- Leaders, managers and governors have been consistent in their ambition to ensure that all students make good progress. They know the strengths of the academy and they also know what they have to do to improve it further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some students, particularly middle ability boys, do not make sufficient progress in English.
- The teaching of numeracy across all subjects is not as well-established as literacy.
- Not all lessons incorporate activities that engage the interest of all groups of learners.
- The youngest students do not have enough opportunities to develop group work skills so that they can better enjoy collaborative learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 62 lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors then observed academy leaders reporting back to those teachers on the quality of their teaching. Inspectors visited the enhanced provision for visually impaired, blind and severely disabled students and talked to staff and students there. Four vertically grouped tutor sessions were observed and an assembly on the importance of reading was attended by an inspector.
- Meetings were held with various senior and middle leaders in the school, the Chair of the Governing Body, who is also the Chair of the Holy Family Trust, and a local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students and took account of the views of the 105 members of staff who completed questionnaires.
- Inspectors also took account of the 52 responses to the on-line parent questionnaire and 1 letter from a parent.
- The inspection team observed the academy's work, looked at student books and information related to student achievement, attendance, behaviour, safety and safeguarding.
- Documents relating to the academy's evaluation of its own performance, improvement plans, performance management and pay progression information and records of the academy's monitoring of teaching were examined.

## Inspection team

Liz Talmadge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Turner	Additional Inspector
Michael Blakeley	Additional Inspector
Anne White	Additional Inspector
Jean Whalley	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy school on September 1st 2012. When its predecessor school, Saint Benedict Catholic School and Performing Arts College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The academy is much larger than most schools and although the proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average and is growing.
- The academy houses the enhanced resource provision for partially sighted, blind and severely disabled students in South Derbyshire. This resource is managed by the Saint Benedict governing body.
- The student population of the academy has changed over time. There are now more than average numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and a growing number of students who are new to speaking English.
- The numbers of students supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found nationally. There are more students than average supported by school action. The number of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in care, students known to be eligible for free school meals or with a parent serving in the armed forces, is in line with the national average.
- A very small number of students in Year 11 attend courses off-site.
- The academy currently meets the floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve boys' achievement in English so that it matches their achievement in mathematics.
- Further improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better, by:-
  - sharing more widely the best use of assessment strategies to help all teachers to understand more precisely, and plan for, the needs of different groups of students
  - ensuring more lessons are planned to include a wider range of practical activities that quickly engage students' interest
  - creating opportunities for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils to develop the skills needed for working collaboratively in groups
  - ensuring students' skills in numeracy are reinforced in all subjects of the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Improved achievement has been sustained over the last two years. The school now uses data well and has a sound understanding of the factors that affect the achievement of different cohorts of students.
- Since 2010 attainment at Key Stage 4 has risen from below average and has rapidly closed the gap with average attainment. The proportions of students achieving well also rose in 2011 and has been sustained in 2012. Inspectors saw convincing evidence that current Year 11 students are set to make further improvements.
- Many students arrive with below average attainment. The academy has robust systems to measure and track students' achievement. If students are falling behind the school makes changes to address this. For example, early entry in mathematics GCSE for the most able students was stopped to achieve higher grades. Early entry for middle ability pupils was introduced because this motivated students. This resulted in better results for this group.
- From low starting points students with special educational needs and disabilities now achieve in line with their peers. A wide range of additional support is provided such as: one to one support, booster classes and intensive literacy programmes. The support provided by learning support assistants is also very good.
- The achievement of those students who are eligible to receive the Pupil Premium is close to national levels of achievement in mathematics and English and higher in science.
- Key Stage 5 results dipped slightly in 2012 but there is persuasive evidence that current students' achievement will be better. Once students enter the 6<sup>th</sup> Form, the vast majority complete their courses successfully and move onto higher education or vocational training courses.
- The academy knows that middle ability boys, whilst making the progress expected of them can do better and has plans in place to help them achieve more, particularly in English.
- Improvements to achievement over the last two years are closely linked to the work that the academy has undertaken to improve the quality of teaching.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved over time; the majority of teaching is good with much 6<sup>th</sup> form teaching outstanding. The best teaching helps students to make good or better progress.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Subject leaders are fully accountable for results achieved in their subjects; they check on students' progress at regular intervals and intervene quickly when necessary
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students and high expectations of what students will achieve. Students in a 6<sup>th</sup> form dance class made excellent progress because they trusted the teacher's instruction and responded well to her expectations.
- In good and better lessons teachers create a learning environment in which students feel confident to take risks with their learning. They are confident to 'have a go' at difficult tasks and activities. In a Year 11 history lesson, students across the full range of ability framed good and insightful questions around complex subject knowledge.
- The best lessons in Key Stages 4 and 5 enable students to take the lead and work collaboratively. This is not always the case in lessons for Year 7 and Year 8 students who do not have sufficient opportunities to practise group work skills.
- Teachers' marking in Key Stages 4 and 5 is generally good but it is not specific enough in Key Stage 3 to enable students to know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers accurately use questioning skills to assess students understanding during lessons and then re-shape explanations to ensure that all students understand what they need to do. Where students require additional help good use is made of some very skilled learning support

assistants.

- Support for students new to English is good, as is support for students who have special educational needs and disabilities. In-class support and one to one support is used effectively.
- Teachers' use of data is generally confident and leads to most being able to identify the learning needs of every student in the class. Where this is not the case activities are not always planned to engage and interest all learners.
- The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strong feature of many lessons. An example of this was seen in a Year 10 science lesson when a discussion about global warming led to students thinking about charitable support for malaria victims. During form period, mixed aged groups of students talked together about challenges in learning; the good support given to the younger pupils by older ones was very evident.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The positive ethos of the school means students behave well and know what is expected of them. Exclusions have fallen significantly and are now low with a handful of students 'at risk' of exclusion being educated off-site in more appropriate environments.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding when students are able to make choices about how they learn. Students consistently display positive attitudes towards their learning and towards each other; low level disruption is rare.
- Students say that they feel safe at school and parents responding to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, agree. Students are cared for very well and those at risk of falling behind, for whatever reason, get the well planned guidance and support they need to thrive.
- The school site is extensive and students are required to move between buildings regularly. During these times behaviour is sensible and ordered with most students arriving on time for lessons.
- Students understand what different forms of bullying look like, including homophobic and cyber bullying, and are confident that teachers are on hand to sort things out.
- Attendance is good because the majority of students are enthusiastic about learning.
- All students in the school's house system are known personally by house leaders who provide the good care, guidance and support needed. The vertical grouping of students in houses enables older students to act as effective role models for younger ones.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The Headteacher describes Saint Benedict's as a special place, and it is. The commitment of staff to students' successes and well-being is exceptional as is the high quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The senior team are ambitious, enthusiastic and highly motivated. This enthusiasm is also seen amongst subject and house leaders at all levels they are keenly accountable for the good achievement of all students.
- Academy leaders and governors know that they are, 'on a journey', they know there is more to do and they are not complacent. Improvement planning correctly identifies the short and long term goals for the academy.
- There is now a shared understanding between leaders at all levels about how all students will be supported to achieve a minimum of three levels of progress between the start of Key Stage 3 and the end of Key Stage 4.
- Regular teacher training and development is delivered through 'the learning hub' has led to good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Performance management of teachers is rigorous; there is clear evidence that only those teachers reaching the required standard will make progress on the

pay scales.

- The academy ensures that literacy is a strong feature of lessons across all subjects of the curriculum but this is not the case with numeracy.
- The curriculum, including subjects taught in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form is good. Where subjects are not having sufficient impact they are removed. Course choice is carefully considered by subject leaders in all subjects.
- Parents are supportive of the school.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- The pupil premium is being well used by the school and pays to create: additional and smaller classes in mathematics; the provision of 'a late bus' so that students can be targeted to attend after school classes in English and mathematics; a mentoring programme to support those not making expected progress and funds additional learning support assistants for students eligible for the pupil premium.
- The local authority school improvement service worked successfully with the predecessor school to ensure that judgements about the quality of teaching were accurate and has since then supported further developments to the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an excellent focus on improving achievement and believes that the 2010 inspection of the predecessor school created a 'mandate for change' that has been rigorously pursued.
- The governing body asks challenging questions of senior leaders and holds subject leaders to account through departmental reviews. Governors have a good understanding of the complex needs of some students and they are fully aware of the way in which the pupil premium is being spent.
- Governors are kept fully informed about the performance management of teachers and decisions about salary progression.
- Governors are ambitious for the continued improvement of the academy and ensure that they are up to date with the knowledge and understanding needed to make a positive contribution.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138622
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	409362

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Academy Converters
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1483
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Ray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Christopher Reynolds
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
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