

Our Lady & St Bede Catholic Academy

Bishopton Road West, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS19 0QH

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors are unwavering in their pursuit of excellence. Since joining the Carmel Education Trust the school has improved markedly.
- Following a turbulent period, staffing is now stable. Staff morale is high. Staff set high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve.
- The school's core values of 'integrity, hard work and compassion' permeate all aspects of school life.
- The high quality of teaching and learning across the vast majority of subjects is underpinned by a relentless focus on getting the basics right.
- Provisional outcomes for 2017 indicate that pupils' progress across their GCSE subjects is in the top 7% of schools nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is significantly higher than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. The vast majority of pupils are resilient, well-motivated and are determined to succeed.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. As a result, pupils show respect for different cultures and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- High-quality and impartial careers guidance ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Consequently, in 2017, all pupils went onto further education or training.
- Trustees and governors have been instrumental in working with the head of school, and staff, to improve the school rapidly. Trustees and governors hold leaders to account effectively to ensure that high standards are the norm.
- Pupils' progress in science is not as strong as it is in other core subjects.
- Attendance has improved this school year, and is now broadly in line with the national average. However, leaders recognise this needs to be strengthened further, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Ensure that pupils' progress in science matches the excellent progress made by pupils in other core subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Improvements since the school joined the Carmel Education Trust have been rapid. This is due to the high expectations set by school leaders and by the trust. The vision for improvement, developed by all staff, pervades all aspects of school life.
- Leaders and staff work tirelessly in their pursuit of excellence. One member of staff said that the targets and expectations set 'are challenging, but we are achieving them'. Consequently, pupils make strong progress and show excellent attitudes towards their learning.
- Staff morale is high, despite a period of turbulence following the school's conversion to an academy. Staff are supportive of each other. New teachers are particularly complimentary about the support they receive. As one new member of staff shared with inspectors, 'all staff are welcoming with an open-door policy, including the head of school'.
- The trust provides excellent support to the school. The trust directors know the strengths of the school, and what needs to improve, exceptionally well. Staff talk highly of the collaborative opportunities they receive to work with teachers from other schools in the trust. Such opportunities to share good practice and moderate pupils' work are ensuring that high standards are maintained.
- Governors ensure that the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. The governors challenge school leaders by checking that all strategies have a positive impact. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make stronger progress than other pupils nationally. The Year 7 catch-up funding is well targeted to ensure that pupils who are not at the expected standard by the end of primary school make rapid progress. Reading strategies have been particularly successful. For example, many pupils have made more than three years' progress in reading in one year.
- Funding to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively. As a result, pupils who have SEN make strong progress from their different starting points.
- The trust has introduced very effective systems to check the progress pupils are making across all of their subjects. This enables leaders to provide additional support for pupils who are at risk of underachieving. As a result, all groups of pupils are making outstanding progress from their varied starting points.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum. It is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils. A wide range of academic, creative and artistic subjects, together with an extensive enrichment programme, ensure that pupils have access to a broad, and balanced, well-rounded, curriculum experience.
- Only a small proportion of parents and carers responded to the online survey, Parent View. These responses were mixed. Some were very positive, but others, less so. However, the school's own surveys show a more positive picture. That said, leaders are not complacent and acknowledge there is further work to do to raise the profile of the school within the community.

Governance of the school

- The chair of the governing body provides highly effective leadership. Governors and directors of the trust set high expectations and aspirational targets for the school. They continually challenge leaders to make further improvements.
- Governors are passionate about achieving the best for all pupils, no matter what their ability or background. The progress and support provided for disadvantaged pupils features highly in the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school exceptionally well. This means they challenge leaders and hold leaders to account effectively. They play a strong role in checking the work of the school. As a consequence, there is no complacency.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, governors and the trust ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school follows all statutory checks and requirements when recruiting new staff.
- Staff understand the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. Training is thorough and regular. As a result, staff know what signs to look out for which may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm, including from extreme views or radicalisation, female genital mutilation, neglect, domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation.
- The safeguarding link governor, who is also chair of the governing body, regularly visits the school to talk to staff and pupils. He provides training to staff and assemblies for pupils, for example about cyber bullying. Pupils talk positively about the impact of these assemblies on helping them to stay safe.
- Leaders and staff have a good knowledge of any local risks in the community and respond accordingly.
- Leaders check that safeguarding procedures are in place for the small number of pupils who attend alternative educational provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers set high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. Strong leadership of teaching and learning ensures that standards and expectations are consistent across the vast majority of subjects and year groups. Year 10 and 11 pupils interviewed by inspectors said they appreciate the established routines, because they know the same standards apply across all of their subjects.
- The vast majority of teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils and probe their thinking. They provide many opportunities for pupils to refine and improve their work. This ensures that any gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills are quickly identified and diminished. Pupils told inspectors they value the opportunity to

improve their work. As a result, they typically act on the advice they receive from their teachers.

- Relationships between pupils and their teachers are strong. Teachers understand the strengths and weakness in each pupil's learning. Teachers are well aware of pupils' social and academic needs. As a result, teachers plan activities accordingly.
- Teaching assistants are well informed, and provide effective support to pupils, particularly pupils who have additional learning needs.
- Pupils work well together and support each other. They regularly share ideas. The vast majority of pupils make the most of their lessons with no time wasted.
- Across the curriculum teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities for pupils to write at length and to write accurately. This aspect of pupils' literacy development is strong across the vast majority of subjects. This enables pupils to construct extended answers proficiently. However, this is less well developed in science.
- The teaching of science has not been as strong as other subjects. However, effective leadership, and stability in staffing, is bringing about more rapid improvement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Enrichment and extra-curricular activities are wide and varied. There is a high uptake from pupils. The clubs visited by inspectors were vibrant, providing opportunities for pupils to socialise and develop and build their social skills. Some pupils attend a different activity every day. These activities make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Leaders place high importance on charitable work. This is a substantial feature of school life. Participation in fundraising activities is high. Examples include making and donating Christmas hampers and the crochet club making animals to donate to a children's ward at the local hospital.
- The school has recently won an award to commend the high number of pupils participating in the National Citizenship Service. Leaders are keen to develop pupils' leadership skills and pupils relish the opportunities given to them.
- The vast majority of pupils are punctual to school and lessons. They are well equipped and ready to learn. They take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Most pupils are resilient. They are not afraid to make mistakes and to 'give things a go'. They have regular opportunities to improve and edit their work, enabling them to learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe online. They receive regular assemblies and talks on topics such as sexting. As a result, they understand the dangers of sexting and were able to tell inspectors what they can do to keep themselves safe online.

- A very small number of pupils on roll attend alternative education provision on a part-time basis. Pupils attend well. Leaders receive regular reports on their progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. They respect their environment. Inspectors saw very little litter around the school and no graffiti.
- Leaders and staff set a very high bar for good behaviour. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils show impeccable attitudes towards their learning. There is a calm atmosphere both in and outside of lessons.
- Pupils wear their uniform, which was designed in collaboration with pupils, smartly and with pride.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school. They say bullying is rare, and if it does happen, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils told inspectors they are confident to talk to an adult, particularly their head of year, if they have any issues or concerns.
- The number of pupils receiving a fixed-term exclusion has reduced markedly this year. Levels of exclusions are now below the national average. Some pupils did tell inspectors that the school was 'strict', but they explained this has improved their learning as disruption in lessons is now rare and dealt with swiftly.
- Some parents completing Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, believe that their child is not happy at school. Pupils spoken to by inspectors appear to be happy and enjoy school. They talk positively about the changes made to the school in recent years.
- In 2017, absence was above the national average. Compared to the same point last year, absence has improved considerably. The profile of attendance has been raised across the school. Effective action plans for pupils with high absence rates are in place and showing strong impact. As a result, pupils' attendance to date is now broadly in line with the national average. However, persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, although improving strongly, is still above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Provisional outcomes for 2017 indicate that pupils made strong progress across a range of subjects, placing the school in the top 7% of schools nationally. Pupils' progress in mathematics was particularly strong and in the top 7% of schools nationally.
- Pupils join Year 7 with broadly average starting points. However, in 2016 pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11 was above the national average across the vast majority of subjects. This trend continued in 2017. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C was above the national average in all subjects, with the exception of GCSE product design. The proportion achieving the top grades of A* and A was above the national average in 15 out of 20 GCSE subjects. Attainment is particularly strong in GCSE religious education and geography, where over half of pupils achieved the top grades of A* and A.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is significantly above other pupils nationally. For the last two years disadvantaged pupils have made progress that places the school in the top 7% of schools nationally. The school's current assessment information indicates that disadvantaged pupils are continuing to make strong progress. In some subjects disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than other pupils. Where there are any differences, leaders are quick to ensure that effective support is put in place so pupils catch up quickly.
- The most able pupils made substantial progress in their GCSEs in 2016, and in 2017. The school's progress information for current pupils shows the most-able continue to make strong progress across year groups and subjects.
- Pupils who have SEN make equally strong progress, which is well above that of pupils with similar starting points nationally. Effective support ensures that there is no significant difference between the progress of pupils who have SEN and their peers.
- In key stage 3, pupils make strong progress and achieve well. The large majority of pupils are on track to reach their aspirational targets successfully. This is because leaders' higher expectations are immediately set with pupils arriving in Year 7. The school's highly effective monitoring systems enable leaders to recognise quickly where there is capacity for some pupils to make stronger progress.
- In 2017, pupils' progress in science was not as strong as other core subjects. Pupils are now making more rapid progress due to improved teaching, stronger leadership and more stable staffing. However, leaders recognise this remains a priority for the school.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Pupils talk positively about the support they receive to make informed choices. A range of opportunities, from practice interviews to support with applications, ensure that all pupils move onto further education, employment or training by the end of Year 11.

School details

Unique reference number	141370
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10042141

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	819
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jim Cunningham
Head of school	Chris Hammill
Telephone number	01642 704 970
Website	ourladyandstbede.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@ourladyandstbede.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average 11 to 16 secondary school.
- Since the school converted to an academy in 2015, there have been significant changes in staffing including new senior and middle leaders and many new teachers.
- The school is part of Carmel Education Trust. The board of directors is the legal governing body within the trust. The school operates an interim advisory board.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN is above the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below the national average.
- The school's deprivation indicator is above the national average.

- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum performance expectations for secondary schools. Provisional outcomes for 2017 indicate that the school will meet the government floor standards.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative educational provision at the Daisy Chain Project and Stockton Learning Centre.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during this inspection, including through lesson observations, many of which were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work in every year group and across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including middle leaders, the chief executive and deputy chief executive officer of the trust, members of the governing body and a wide range of staff, including newly qualified teachers. An inspector also talked to some parents at the school gate at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors talked both formally in meetings and informally with pupils during breaks, lunchtimes and during lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 69 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to the school's work including the self-evaluation document, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- An inspector contacted the providers used by the school to provide a very small number of pupils with alternative educational provision.

Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
John Paddick	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018