

# Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College

Timberdine Avenue, Worcester, WR5 2XD

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Students achieve well in a wide range of subjects and leave the school with above average examination results.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well, especially those who are supported by statements.
- Students who receive additional help from the pupil premium make good progress and attain as well as their peers in the school in the virtually all lessons.
- Teaching is effective in helping students to learn quickly in the vast majority of lessons.
- Teachers question students closely and allow them time to think clearly before giving their answers.
- Students' behaviour and conduct around the school is good. They are keen to learn in lessons.
- Students feel safe in school, and appreciate that staff are available to help them.
- Leaders throughout the school have a clear awareness of the strengths of the school and correctly identify what areas to develop further.
- The Governing Body has improved its role significantly since the last inspection and are active in helping the school to maintain and improve students' achievement by setting high expectations of all staff in the quality of teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all students make good enough progress and attain their best in mathematics.
- In mathematics lessons, teachers do not always recognise when students are ready to move onto the next learning activity, and marking does not encourage students to respond or reflect on their learning well enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons. Of these 11 were jointly observed by the headteacher or senior leaders. Several other short visits to lessons were made as well.
- A range of students’ work was looked at, and informal and planned discussions were held with students.
- School documentation was scrutinised, including the school’s data about the progress and attainment of students, how teachers’ performance is monitored, and records about safeguarding and attendance.
- Discussions were held with two members from the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, in addition to senior leaders and middle leaders responsible for subjects or aspects of school life.
- Inspectors took account of communication from parents during the inspection and 58 responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire, and 36 responses to the questionnaire that staff were invited to complete.

## Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patrick Taylor

Additional Inspector

Susan Thomas

Additional Inspector

Jean Samuel

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school, where most students are of White British heritage. Just over half of the students are of the Catholic faith.
- A below-average proportion of students are eligible for the pupil premium, additional government funding for specific groups of students.
- The proportion of disabled students or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion of disabled students or those with special educational needs and who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- A small proportion of students attend alternative provision away from the school on a part time basis.
- The school has a resource base, referred to as 'Sanctuary', where small numbers of students follow a three-week course to develop their self-esteem and build their confidence in developing a range of skills
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Accelerate progress and raise the attainment of students across the school in mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teachers consistently use a structured approach to written feedback on students' work which requires students to respond, correct and review their learning
  - insisting that teachers consistently use on-going assessments to inform the pace at which students develop skills, knowledge and understanding and move students swiftly onto tasks when they are ready so that no learning time is lost in lessons.
  - ensuring that learning activities are tailored to the needs of the individual student, especially those ready for more challenge.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students typically achieve well in a wide range of subjects during their time at the school. Most leave with results that are above the national average.
- Students in all years learn and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding quickly, and many students make good progress in lessons and achieve to the best of their ability, especially in English. However, in mathematics, some students do not always make the progress of which they are capable and their attainment is less than expected.
- The attainment and progress of students who are eligible for free school meals are above that of their peers in most subjects, although these students do not make as much progress in mathematics when compared to others. The pupil premium is used effectively to provide additional help and resources for carefully selected students who generally achieve well as a result.
- The small number of students in the school who are looked after by the local authority achieve well, as a result of close monitoring of academic progress and personal well-being by specific staff.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well over time. Expert help, well-chosen resources and small group tuition is particularly effective in ensuring that students supported by statements achieve significantly more than seen nationally for this group.
- The school keeps a careful check on how successfully the students attending alternative provision off the school site learn. They make good progress and are cared for well.
- Some students have been entered early for GCSE mathematics in the past, and whilst this has been used appropriately by the school, the current practise is to enter fewer, carefully selected students and only those who would benefit from a boost to their confidence to gain a grade C or above.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Most of the teaching throughout the school is good with some that is outstanding. This has led to students achieving well in a range of subjects over time.
- In the best lessons, teachers skilfully question individual and groups of students to encourage them to think deeply about their learning and so the teacher knows exactly what they understand and can build on this. Teachers have consistently high expectations of what each student is capable of, and students grasp the opportunity to participate fully and take an active role in their lessons.
- In the vast majority of lessons, students learn quickly and little time is lost. Teachers pick up when students understand a concept, or where they need further explanation, and ensure that learning activities are tailored to the needs of the individual student. These features are not as well developed in mathematics compared to other subjects in the school.

- Teachers' written comments on students' work are, in most subjects, helpful and point out what the student needs to do in order to improve. Where this is most effective, for example in English, students routinely respond to the written feedback, reviewing and adding to their work, and engaging in dialogue with the teacher to enable rapid progress towards personal targets.
- A feature of the good and outstanding teaching observed is the opportunity for students to pause and reflect on their learning before contributing to class discussions. For example, in a religious education lesson, the teacher encouraged a range of different viewpoints in response to a topical subject and students offered carefully considered responses while showing respect for the differing opinions of others.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs benefit from a range of carefully selected additional strategies. For example, extra support with developing literacy skills such as reading and spelling is effective in promoting the good progress in English made by this group of students.

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

- Students are courteous and helpful. Their conduct around the school is good, and they show mutual respect for all members of the school community. Of particular note is how harmoniously students from different faiths enjoy learning together and appreciating similarities and differences.
- In lessons students are keen to learn, and in the best lessons they participate very actively in their learning. They are confident to put forward their own ideas and listen carefully to others' opinions.
- The school has clear expectations of good behaviour, and students are appreciative of how this is reinforced through the consistent and effective use of the behaviour policy enabling their lessons to be a calm environment in which to learn.
- The school uses a small section of the school as 'sanctuary' where students follow a three week programme to develop self-esteem and build confidence in learning a range of skills.
- Students have a good awareness of what constitutes different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. Students say that bullying is rare but is dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations and safe practice was observed in practical lessons.
- Attendance is consistently above average. Students are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and enjoy coming to school to learn.
- The vast majority of parents' views support this positive view of behaviour and safety at the school.

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

- School leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and correctly prioritise which areas to develop in order to continuously make improvements. All leaders have a

firm grasp of their areas of responsibility and are passionate about enhancing the life chances of all students in the school.

- Pupil premium is allocated effectively on a range of support for specific groups of students, for example lunchtime and after school additional tuition. Leaders carefully monitor how well students achieve as a result of this.
- Rigorous and frequent monitoring of the quality of teaching throughout the school by senior and middle leaders has led to improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Lesson observations are routinely used to identify specific training needs for individual staff and for the whole school and these continue to improve teaching.
- Leaders at all levels have high expectations of staff, which are supported by the setting of rigorous and carefully thought out performance management targets. More is expected of teachers on the upper pay scale and teachers understand the link between students' achievements and pay. Underperformance is not tolerated and appropriate support is offered to the staff who need it.
- The local authority has provided appropriate light touch support for this good school in recognition of strong leadership, and good capacity for improvement.
- The school has actively sought to work with other schools to enable the curriculum to meet the needs of all students, for example in arranging alternative provision for some students. The subjects studied in all areas of the curriculum promote the positive spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the students.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The Governing Body plays a pro-active role in the strategic direction of the school. Governors are keenly aware of the strengths of the school, including about the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of the school's data on students' achievement and ask appropriate questions of school leaders which lead to areas to improve being identified and prioritised. The effective structure of the Governing Body means that individual governors have clear areas of responsibility which they embrace and welcome the opportunity to support and challenge school leaders and departments in the drive to improve students' achievement. They are actively involved in managing the performance of teaching staff and salary progression. They ensure that finances are managed efficiently and allocate pupils premium funding effectively as reflected in their good achievement. They make sure that all legal responsibilities for safeguarding and ensuring equality for all are met.

## 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>	116999
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405681

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1050
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter McHugh
<b>Principal</b>	Sean Devlin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01905 352615
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