

# Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116999
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358067
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin SheldrickHMI

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

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<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>	1048
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Mchugh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sean Devlin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Timberdine Avenue Worcester WR5 2XD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 43 lessons, taught by 43 teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to planning, monitoring, safeguarding, communications with parents and carers, and questionnaires from 471 parents and 200 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

How much progress do students make throughout the college, particularly girls and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

- How much contribution do different aspects of provision make to student outcomes, particularly students' contribution to the school and wider community, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
- How much has the college improved since the last inspection and what does this indicate about the college's capacity for sustained improvement, and how effectively it promotes equal opportunities?

## Information about the school

This college is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. Less than half the national average of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. Although the proportion of students from White British backgrounds is above average, the school does have just over 10% of students from a range of minority ethnic groups. Nearly half of students are not members of the Catholic faith and they include members of other Christian denominations, and a small minority who are Muslim.

The college has been a specialist college for information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematics for some time. The college has achieved a number of awards since the last inspection, including the National Mentoring and Befriending Mark, an Intermediate International School Award, Arts Gold Mark and Investors in People.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

This college provides a warm and welcoming reception to those of all backgrounds and faiths. The systematic planning of important experiences, reinforced by the gospel values, ensures students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is second to none. This stems from outstanding provision for care, guidance and support that also enables students to contribute in an excellent way to the college and wider community. The college cleverly uses an extensive committee structure, its prefect system and the peer mentoring programme to give all students exceptional opportunities to contribute. The positive ethos is further enhanced by a good curriculum. These major strengths ensure all other aspects of students' personal development are good and have contributed to the much improved GCSE results in 2010. The college's results over the last three years and evidence from lessons, show that achievement is satisfactory.

Although the learning and progress of is satisfactory overall, inspectors observed a very wide variation in the quality of teaching and learning. They were good in the majority of lessons and outstanding in some. However, inspectors saw a minority of lessons in which students did not progress well because of weaknesses in teaching and this included a few that were inadequate. The college's lesson planning has helped more confident teachers improve their practice. Planning is not as effective in helping less confident members of staff in meeting the needs of different abilities within each class. As a result, some students are unsure about how they can do really well in lessons. The college's focus in younger age groups on the skills and attributes needed to learn effectively has been successful in improving students' ability to work independently and to revise. Older students spoke positively about the range of courses they can choose, and all students enthused about the very wide range of extra-curricular activities that are available. As one student said, 'There is something for everybody'.

Although, until recently, some important targets have not been met, the college's specialism is having a generally positive impact. For instance, it is has resulted in an ICT based system that allows parents to be more involved in checking and supporting their child's learning. ICT was used well by teachers in many of the lessons seen and students are confident in how they use modern technologies. The college's track record of improvement since the last inspection is uneven. The overall measure of the progress students make declined in the last three years. Progress this year has substantially improved, largely because of well-targeted interventions in Years 9 to 11, and improvements made to teaching, particularly in mathematics and English. The college's monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory. The college knows its strengths and weaknesses and senior teachers' judgements about the quality of lessons are largely accurate. In managing a number of initiatives, leaders have not taken effective action

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with sufficient urgency to ensure consistently effective approaches are embedded throughout the college. This evidence confirms that the college has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Ensure students make consistently good progress in lessons by:
  - eradicating any inadequate teaching
  - ensuring lesson planning clearly indicates how all students will be able to demonstrate that they have made the best possible progress
  - ensuring lessons consistently meet the needs of the full ability range
  - involving all staff students, parents and governors in the development a teaching and leaning policy.
- In all areas of the college's work, improve the management of initiatives so they are more consistently effective by ensuring:
  - all policies are regularly reviewed and amended in the light of the evidence of their effectiveness
  - the governing body are more actively involved in checking on the implementation of the college's policies.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students start in the college with standards that are above average, and achieve satisfactorily, to ensure above-average standards when they leave. The college's investment in ensuring students have the skills needed to learn is starting to pay-off. For instance, Year 11 talked about how they felt better able to revise because of the skills that had been taught in special lessons in Years 7 to 9. In most lessons, students showed interest in their work and often demonstrated resilience in tackling problems. However, there were also lessons in which students did not concentrate well because they were passive for too long and work was insufficiently challenging. Students' strong sense of right and wrong meant that they often behaved well in such situations, although very occasionally this was not the case. The 2010 results of examinations are much better than in previous years. For instance, the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, rose from 47% to 74% and has reversed a downward trend that had been evident since the last inspection. There were noteworthy improvements in all the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Although this improvement partly reflects the fact that this was a more-able year group when they entered the college, it is also the case that these students made better progress. This improvement is also evident in the data the college collect about the progress students make through to Year 9. There are no significant differences in

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the progress being made by boys compared to girls. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well. Those who receive additional support through the well-named 'sanctuary' provision make especially good progress.

Students develop good workplace skills, because they develop above-average basic skills and can work well with others. Strengths in students' cultural awareness is helpful, in that they are keen to find out about others, and are at ease in the company of those that have a different background. Students are thoughtful and demonstrate a considerable willingness to consider different views. Students showed considerable maturity when they discussed possible changes to the college uniform, for example. Students' enjoyment of college encourages high attendance and good levels of punctuality.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

In the best lessons the college's approach to lesson planning ensures high levels of student engagement. For instance, a 'learning to learn' lesson, in which the teacher set regular challenges, totally involved students in identifying how they would know if they

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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were successful in their learning. The focus on the benefits of learning helped students appreciate the importance of the topic being studied. In the best lessons, students are very aware of how their studies link to their targets and they make choices accordingly. Generally, lesson plans do not identify how students can demonstrate higher level outcomes and, as a result, more-able students sometimes only reach the same level as lower-attaining students. This focus on one outcome limits challenge in some lessons, including those containing students of broadly similar abilities. There are inconsistencies in teachers' questioning. In the best practice, teachers ask a good range of questions, some of which require all students to think deeply about the concepts being taught. In contrast some questioning is much less effective because teachers tend to accept responses largely from willing volunteers. The use of assessment is inconsistent across the college although some subjects are developing departmental approaches. Examples of effective practice, including student self- and peer-assessment, were seen in English, music, history and science vocational courses.

The curriculum has developed so that students are offered a wide range of choices, particularly at the start of Year 10. Collaboration with other providers has further enhanced what is available and ensures that students are aware of the routes they can follow when they leave the college. The adoption of more appropriate vocationally orientated courses has improved students' progress, particularly in science and ICT. Although learning skills and attributes are explicitly taught in Years 7 to 9, these are not consistently reinforced across all subjects. The curriculum contributes strongly to students' adoption of healthy lifestyles, particularly as the college has taken steps to ensure a very wide range of activities are made available. When asked to highlight memorable experiences, students referred to the many trips they have.

Since the last inspection, the college has made major improvements to its approach to monitoring students' progress and targeting interventions. As a result, inspection evidence supported the many parents who praised the quality of support and guidance the college provides. The sanctuary provision is highly effective in that it provides a learning environment that contrasts with the classroom but is well suited to its clientele. One parent summed-up the views of many in stating that the '...Sanctuary has been a lifeline to my child's transition to high school and continues to be so - great stuff.' This provision successfully allows students to participate more fully in the college curriculum in Years 10 and 11. The college was able to highlight some very good examples of how the support provided by the college had enabled students to overcome very considerable difficulties and continue learning in the college. Very effective links with outside organisations and student volunteers in a variety of roles further enhance provision. A mark of the college's success is that it accepts some challenging students from other colleges and ensures they prosper. The college does well in keeping the exclusion of students low.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have a clear and compelling vision of an inclusive college that welcomes all and is not just concerned with academic achievement. This vision means there are considerable strengths in how the college ensures equality of opportunities and tackles discrimination. The college has made the incidence of racism a rare occurrence, and relationships between different faiths are very good. Effective action to improve equality of opportunity has been taken in a number of areas, for instance to ensure the participation of students of Pakistani and Indian heritage in activities related to keeping fit. Action taken to improve the attainment of boys has eliminated the gender-based gap in attainment that once existed. At departmental level, equal opportunities concerns are beginning to feature in middle leaders' work in eliminating areas of lower achievement. The college has used its response to community cohesion to further promote good community relations between the different ethnic and faith communities in Worcester. The college's international links thoroughly justify the award the college has for this aspect of its work.

The college does not always ensure policies are regularly amended in response to the monitoring of its effectiveness. For instance, governors have not discussed and ratified a teaching and learning policy. The full range of evidence is not consistently used to determine the way forward. For instance, the college has not identified the overarching priority in the otherwise impressive work undertaken in the area of community cohesion. The college meets the requirements for safeguarding and there are particular strengths in how the college manages risk assessments. Although students are kept safe and staff are fully vetted, the systems are yet to be fully embedded at every level in the college. The governing body brings a wide range of expertise to the college and its strength and weaknesses are largely known. Governors are highly involved in the life of the college, including regularly critically reviewing the outcomes for students, and they are beginning to influence its strategic direction. The college involves parents very well. The college's regular communications make it crystal clear to parents where their child is in relation to attaining their targets. This has contributed to parents encouraging their children's active participation in revision exercises, particularly in Year 11.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Compared to schools nationally a well-above-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the college and the large majority agreed with all the statements in the questionnaire. Almost all parents and carers are happy with their child's experience and think their child enjoys college. The overwhelming majority think the college is well led and that the college keeps their child safe.

A very small minority of parents and carers disagreed that the college helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors in deciding that the grade for this aspect took full account of the views of all parents and carers that were received. Inspectors discussed with the college the scope for further increasing student involvement in activity designed to encourage healthy living. A very small minority of parents and carers disagreed that the college deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw some isolated examples of poor behaviour associated with some weakness in teaching. This was a factor in helping inspectors determine an area of improvement related to further improving teaching

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 471 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1048 pupils registered at the college.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	193	41	264	56	9	2	2	0
The school keeps my child safe	169	36	292	62	8	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	140	30	280	59	31	7	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	149	32	277	59	26	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	145	31	300	64	12	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	125	27	295	63	35	7	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	80	17	319	68	48	10	13	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	139	30	286	61	20	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	132	28	293	62	24	5	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	115	24	283	60	48	10	13	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	77	16	315	67	33	7	7	1
The school is led and managed effectively	165	35	271	58	12	3	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	209	44	238	51	13	3	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



15 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College, Worcester, WR5 2XD

I would like to thank you all for making us feel so welcome in your college. In particular, I appreciate the time some of you gave to meeting us in order to share your views about the college. I want to briefly share our findings, including some ideas of how you can help the college become even better.

We concluded that the college does well in ensuring that all elements of your personal development are at least good and a few are outstanding. In considering the achievement, inspectors have to consider the last three years and what was seen in lessons during the inspection. For this reason, achievement and the college's overall effectiveness are satisfactory, even though the results in 2010 were much better than in 2009. We were very impressed by how well you contribute to the college and wider community and we thought this was an important factor in why your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

To bring about further improvement we have asked the college to ensure you make good progress in all lessons. To do this we think teachers should always make it clear what you need to do in order to make the very best progress. You can help by checking with other students and your teacher what it is you must do to achieve this. In addition, we think that college can do more to ensure consistency in how its policies are implemented. An important first priority would be an agreed teaching and learning policy. We know that your college really values your opinions and will therefore want your ideas about what should be in this. We are also confident that the college will involve you in checking that everybody is playing their part in implementing this policy.

I wish you all the best for the future and good luck in beating the record results obtained by last year's Year 11.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick

Her Majesty's Inspector

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