

Inspection of a good school: Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College

Timberdine Avenue, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 2XD

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2022

Outcome

Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils matter at this caring and inclusive school. Pupils fondly call the school 'Blesseds'. They enjoy attending here and are proud to be part of the school community. Pupils are strong advocates and excellent ambassadors for their school. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Pupils work with their teachers and rise to this.

Pupils look after their school well. The school is a clean and bright place to learn. Pupils respect their environment, staff and each other. Staff make sure that new pupils settle in quickly so that they feel part of the school. As a result, pupils feel valued and can flourish.

Pupils have a trusted adult in school whom they can talk to about any worries or concerns. Staff deal with any concerns promptly. They check in with pupils to make sure that any issues have been resolved.

School staff keep most families fully informed about their child's education. Parents and carers cannot recommend this school highly enough.

Pupils visit exciting places across the world. They can play netball and football in Barbados, visit war memorials in Belgium and ski in Italy. These wider curriculum opportunities help pupils to grow in confidence and build their self-esteem.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have developed a broad and wide-ranging curriculum. At key stage 3, all pupils follow the same well-sequenced curriculum, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils can choose to study a broad range of courses at key stage 4. However, in the past, the proportion of pupils choosing to study the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) has been low. This is because previously, many pupils have not chosen to study a modern foreign language and a humanities subject.

Teachers in subjects such as modern foreign languages and history plan tasks that help pupils to thrive. For instance, Year 8 pupils confidently followed the Spanish text of a song. In history, Year 11 pupils skilfully interpreted a cartoon about Jenner's invention of the smallpox vaccine. As a result of this engagement, more pupils have chosen to study a modern foreign language and history as GCSE options next year.

Leaders have designed an ambitious subject curriculum. For instance, in English, Year 7 pupils study a range of challenging texts. They read Jules Verne's 'Around the world in 80 days' to explore a 'gentleman's' life in Victorian England. In mathematics, older pupils confidently tackle 'financial depreciation' problem-solving questions relevant to everyday life. Consequently, they can connect new ideas with what they already know.

In lessons, teachers check pupils' learning regularly to identify what they have learned and remembered. This helps them provide clear feedback to pupils. Leaders have recently started to look closely at what is working well and what could be done better. Subsequently, they are improving their knowledge of how well pupils are learning, but they know that there is still more to be done in this area.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support. This helps them make strong progress. Teachers apply the school's 'think SEND' policy effectively. They use audio recordings together with the written text to support pupils' reading. Some pupils read extracts aloud. This supports pupils to read fluently and with expression. Teachers shape tasks for reluctant readers well. They provide large-text books, and reading rulers, and highlight key words and phrases. This helps pupils to read with increasing confidence.

Leaders provide pupils with a broad and rich wider curriculum that develops their spiritual and cultural character effectively. For instance, pupils have participated in a residential retreat at Alton Castle and are raising funds to build a hospital in Zimbabwe. Medical staff visited pupils during an assembly and sang an African prayer to thank them for their support. Pupils could see the impact of their charitable work.

Leaders carefully consider staff workload. Staff feel well supported. Leaders have changed the way in which teachers assess pupils to ease their workload. Consequently, staff have more time to work together to develop the curriculum and share resources.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders ensure that staff receive regular training on good safeguarding practice. Teachers know to whom to refer concerns and how to record these.

Pupils appreciate the systems in place to share their worries. The designated safeguarding lead has positioned 'chatter boxes' for pupils to post their concerns. Pupils know that these will be acted upon. Pupils can also use an online safeguarding app, where they can send confidential messages and respond to school surveys.

During the inspection, a few record-keeping errors were identified. Leaders rectified these immediately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not put the EBacc at the centre of their curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not access the academic breadth that this suite of subjects provides. Leaders should continue to build on what they are doing to increase pupils' take-up of languages and a humanities subject at GCSE.
- Leaders do not have a fully developed understanding of how well the curriculum is implemented in each subject. Consequently, their work to determine which subjects should be a focus of their school improvement priorities is relatively new. Leaders should carry on the work they have started to evaluate different subjects. They should do this to sharpen their understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as section 5 inspection immediately.

This was the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	116999
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10212504
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,043
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Carney
Headteacher	Greg McClarey
Website	www.blessededward.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2017. A small number of pupils attend alternative provision off site at six providers. Four of these providers are registered with the Department for Education (DfE). Two of the providers are not registered with the DfE.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with members of the senior leadership team and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and history. In these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, scrutinised planning and made visits to lessons. Inspectors spoke with subject teachers and met with a selection of pupils.

- Inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding leads about safeguarding and child protection procedures. They examined the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school. They spoke with a broad range of pupils across all key stages and discussed safeguarding with governors. Inspectors talked with teaching, catering and cleaning staff about their safeguarding training.
- The views of 84 parents who completed Ofsted Parent View, the online survey, were considered. These included 56 free-text responses made by parents. Inspectors took account of 70 staff responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire. However, inspectors listened to the views of 30 pupils about the school in their meetings during the inspection.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation, including records related to self-evaluation and school improvement. They also considered records and documentation relating to attendance, bullying, behaviour, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. They took account of a range of curriculum planning documents, including those concerned with the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships, and relationships and sex education and health education.

Inspection team

Antony Edkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Steve Byatt

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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