

Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Sports College

Bluestone Lane, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 9SD

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have been too slow to implement improvement plans since the last inspection. As a result, improvements made to the quality of teaching have not had time to show enough impact on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' achievement remains too variable across subjects. Although it is improving in mathematics, too few pupils make good progress in English by the end of Year 11.
- Additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils have not been used effectively enough in the past to make sure that this group of pupils make good progress.
- The difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and their peers nationally remains too wide.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Leaders have not made sure that teachers' expectations are high enough. This is particularly so for the most able pupils, who are not achieving as well as they could in enough subjects.
- Some pupils are unclear about how to improve their work because not all teachers follow the school's marking policy.
- Students in the sixth form do not achieve well. Sixth-form leaders do not ensure that information about learning is used systematically in order to check that the study programmes meet students' needs so that they make good progress.
- Although attendance overall is improving, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent remains too high.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have created a safe environment in which pupils feel secure and well supported.
- Pupils who enter the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy are effectively supported in Year 7 and Year 8 so that they make good progress.
- The work done by the school to promote positive behaviour and pupils' personal development and well-being is good.
- Pupils benefit from the effective careers guidance they receive. Nearly all pupils move on to further education, training or employment when they leave school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress is at least good, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, most-able pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the main school and the sixth form, by making sure that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able
 - information from assessments is used to good effect to set work which is at the right level for all groups of pupils
 - pupils receive precise feedback, in line with the school's assessment and marking policy, so that they know how to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in the main school and the sixth form by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders in accurately monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Continue to drive improvement in attendance for all groups of pupils in the main school and the sixth form and particularly for disadvantaged pupils, so that it supports them to make good progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have made sure that all staff understand what needs to be done to improve the school. Plans for improvement across a number of key areas are in place, but actions to make sure that all pupils make good progress have not been carried out quickly enough.
- There have been some improvements to the quality of teaching since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. However, until recently improvement in English has been too slow and it is also variable across some other subjects such as geography and art.
- Processes are now in place to manage teachers' performance, but some weaker teaching still remains. The headteacher has taken effective action to deal with the weakest teaching, particularly in English.
- The school has faced challenges to recruit teachers since the last inspection and this has influenced the slow progress that has been made to improve.
- Senior leaders support those subject leaders who lack the skills to monitor pupils' progress well enough in lessons so that pupils can make good progress. However, this has not yet had enough time to have sufficient impact on securing good progress for pupils. For example, a change in the leadership and staffing of English has brought stability and continuity in teaching, and there is an improving picture of progress in English for pupils currently in school.
- Leaders' aspirations for what pupils can achieve were not high enough in the past. As a result, groups of pupils, particularly the most able pupils, have not made the progress of which they were capable. However, improvements in teaching, and the school's assessment information, show that most able pupils are now making better progress than previously.
- Leaders have previously spent a large proportion of the pupil premium funding on staffing and support given through one-to-one teaching or small-group work. However, they have not done enough to ensure that the funding supports better teaching and learning in lessons. However, leaders have taken action to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in school now. Teachers use specific interventions based on the school's progress information for this group of pupils. The school's information shows that the difference between their achievement and that of their peers is now beginning to close. However, it still remains too wide in mathematics in Year 8 and Year 9 and English and mathematics in Year 10.
- Leaders carry out formal checks on learning, and a programme of staff training, linked to the school's improvement priorities, is starting to secure improvements in teaching. Teachers support each other, share good practice and also receive support from a partner school. However, these actions have not yet secured consistently good teaching so that all groups of pupils can achieve well.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and a wide range of academic and vocational courses are offered to pupils, which meet their individual needs and abilities. However, leaders have not always ensured that provision for the most able pupils challenges

them sufficiently. This is now under review to equip pupils better for the demands of new GCSE courses.

- The school provides subject based extra-curricular opportunities as well as opportunities outside the classroom. These include participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award, sports leaders' programme, residential activities and a range of music and drama productions. Pupils say that they value these opportunities greatly. There are high rates of participation by pupils from a variety of backgrounds.
- The school offers many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. While this is closely linked to the school's distinctive Catholic ethos, it is not exclusive, and enables pupils from a range of backgrounds to think for themselves and develop their ideas and opinions in a mature and responsible way. 'SAVE' (social awareness and values education) is supported through form tutor activities, assemblies and religious education (RE). Pupils confirmed their enjoyment and the usefulness of the programme in their discussions with inspectors.
- Pupils also have a clear understanding of the risks of radicalisation, the dangers of extremism and the importance of British values. As well as receiving specific guidance for these issues, pupils are reminded of them through the many displays and prompts in corridors and classrooms.
- Changes in the way the school now manages its provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have improved and are more effective. New leadership, as well as effective deployment of teaching assistants and a dedicated resource area, have enabled pupils currently in school to make better progress.
- Pupils begin their school day with a specific time allocated to reading and developing literacy skills. Pupils in Year 7 for whom the school receives additional funding to catch up to the expected level of literacy and numeracy are also given extra help. Pupils spoken to were very enthusiastic about this and inspectors saw evidence to show that these pupils make gains in improving their reading ability. This work contributes to the improving progress being made by pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 now.

Governance of the school

- Governors have been ineffective in monitoring the school's improvement since the last inspection. They were slow to respond to the urgency of the improvement needed, although they now know what needs to be done and are fully aware of the challenges ahead. They support the headteacher's improvement strategy and acknowledge that significant staffing difficulties have impeded the school's progress since the last inspection.
- Governors now receive the right information from school leaders and can challenge them by asking the right questions. They now use their breadth of skills and knowledge to effectively challenge and question school leaders in more depth. They are unafraid to make difficult decisions to secure improvement in the quality of teaching so that pupils can make the good progress they need to make.
- Governors know how additional funding is spent and monitor its impact on pupils' achievement more effectively than previously.
- Governors are trained in statutory safeguarding requirements and strategies to prevent discrimination.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff, at all levels, are well trained in safer recruitment and the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders create a culture within the school where staff show a clear understanding of their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Parents and pupils who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire agree.
- Staff and governors are aware of the published requirements for keeping children safe in education and the culture of safeguarding is promoted throughout the curriculum, with issues covered also in assemblies, RE and the 'SAVE' programme of study.
- Procedures for checking visitors to the school and staff recruitment are robust, so that all adults are checked for their suitability to work with children. School leaders quickly identify any pupil at risk of harm and the school engages appropriately with partners and local community agencies as necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite some improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, too much inconsistency and variation remains. As a result, pupils' achievement has not been good enough by the time they reach the end of Year 11.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough and teachers do not set work which is at the right level for some pupils. Sometimes, the school's information from assessments is used to good effect to plan and provide work that challenges pupils, but it is not applied equally well in some lessons.
- Teachers' application of the school's marking and assessment policy is inconsistent. In some subjects, pupils are provided with accurate and meaningful feedback and they know how to improve their work. This makes a positive difference to their learning. In other subjects, however, pupils are unclear how to improve their work.
- Some teachers consistently use good subject knowledge and assessment information to plan lessons that are engaging, and this allows pupils to think deeply for themselves, so that pupils' learning is more effective. For example, in an English lesson about creative writing that was really successful, pupils used a range of skills to demonstrate their understanding and use of language. They showed maturity in the way they evaluated their own work and that of others through a group activity.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving because leaders provide a good level of support for them. In addition to mainstream lessons, some of these pupils benefit from a personalised curriculum, learning life skills as well as more formal subjects. This variety helps to motivate them to make better progress.
- Leaders' work to improve pupils' literacy skills is having a positive impact on the better progress being made now in Year 7 and Year 8. The use of a reading programme has improved the reading ages of a number of pupils and this also helps them with extended writing opportunities in other lessons. This is also developing personal confidence and a love of reading for pleasure for some pupils. Also, improvements in mathematics have secured better numeracy development for these pupils too.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The supportive culture in the school promotes pupils' well-being, including their emotional and physical welfare.
- The school's focus on British values is linked closely with the school's distinctive Christian ethos and is developed through the 'SAVE' programme, form tutor time, RE lessons and daily assemblies. This means that pupils appreciate their diverse learning community in which all are valued and respected.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe. They understand risk and have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including bullying done through social media, internet and mobile phone technology. They say that there is very little bullying in school and express great confidence that, should any happen, it would be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils can identify an adult they could go to if they had any worries or concerns.
- Pupils are given good, impartial careers information, advice and guidance and are supported well to move on to the next stage of their education.
- The school anticipates and manages any risk that pupils may be exposed to, including radicalisation or extremism, and monitors this carefully.
- There are opportunities in the school for pupils to take on responsibilities such as the school council so that they are able to appreciate the importance of listening to other pupils' views in coming to a democratic decision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are helpful, polite and courteous to staff, visitors and to each other. The atmosphere in school is one of sharing and learning together.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school in a calm and orderly manner, both during and between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime. Areas of congestion in the building at peak movement times are overseen by staff, and pupils respond well to the guidance given.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good across all years and in most subjects. Pupils are punctual to lessons and settle quickly. They look smart and the presentation of their work in books is mostly neat.
- Pupils know how to behave safely in practical subjects such as science, technology and physical education lessons.
- Although exclusion for poor behaviour has been too high in the past, pupils spoken to during the inspection talked confidently and supportively about the school's work to improve behaviour, including the sanctions given to ensure that effective learning can take place.
- Attendance is improving and is now at the national average. This reflects pupils' enjoyment in coming to the school and the work that leaders have done to reinforce the importance of attendance and its impact on progress. There is still more to do

however, so that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils gets nearer to the national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils join the school with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are at the national average but the proportion of pupils who left school in 2016 with good passes at GCSE level was lower than the national average. A legacy of poor teaching and staffing difficulties had an impact on this underachievement. However, attainment in most subjects now, including mathematics and science, has improved since the last inspection and the school's assessment information shows that this improvement is set to continue for current pupils.
- The most able pupils do not progress as well as they could from their starting points. Despite some improvements made in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, some teachers' expectations are still too low and, as a result, not enough of these pupils are making progress in line with similar pupils nationally.
- The difference in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, including disadvantaged pupils who are most able and others nationally in 2016, was still too wide. It is not yet good because the gap between them and their peers nationally has not closed enough in English and mathematics. Leaders recognise that there is further to go to improve on these differences and now use a range of strategies to help these pupils in every subject.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not previously made the progress they were capable of. However, this group of pupils in school now are better supported and the school's information shows that their progress is improving as a result of this.
- The school's progress information for key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils currently at the school shows improving trends. However, these improvements are not yet consistent across all subjects and for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and there is a reading programme for pupils at key stage 3. This is helping particularly to secure pupils' improving progress in Year 7 and Year 8.
- Nearly all pupils who left the school at the end of Year 11 went on to sixth form courses at the school, college, training or employment.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for students in Year 12 and Year 13 have been variable since the last inspection, although the 16 to 19 interim minimum standards have been met for academic and vocational qualifications.
- Leadership of the sixth form is focused on bringing about improvement, especially since the establishment of the school's discrete 16 to 19 provision in 2014. Leaders have high expectations of students in terms of their personal organisation.
- Outcomes in 2016 improved on the previous year. However, attainment in many subjects is still below the national averages and students have not made sufficient

progress overall from their starting points. Attainment and progress in vocational subjects is, however, stronger.

- Teaching in the sixth form, although valued by students for the support teachers give them, lacks challenge in some subjects. Most-able students are not fully stretched and successful in attaining the highest grades of which they are capable.
- Students who fall behind with their work are helped to catch up and those who have not reached a good standard in English and mathematics are given the opportunity to resit those examinations. Most students are successful in improving their grades, but not all.
- The sixth-form curriculum has been reviewed to make sure that it meets students' current needs and aspirations. It now provides for a blend of academic and vocational subjects. This change has successfully addressed recent lower numbers of students staying on from Year 12 to Year 13 in 2015.
- Opportunities for students to develop their personal, social and employability skills are well planned. Impartial careers guidance enables students to develop realistic plans for the future and a high number go on to higher education studies.
- Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities in school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong and in keeping with the school's ethos. Students behave well and show confidence, maturity and independence. Students' attendance in the sixth form is improving, although it is still lower than that of pupils in the main school.

School details

Unique reference number	124459
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10020031

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	726
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jerome Emery
Headteacher	Martin Cain
Telephone number	01283749450
Website	www.robertsutton.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@robertsutton.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and has a sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is lower than the national average.

- The school has a partnership with John Taylor High School.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's sixth form provides a range of academic and some vocational courses, all of which are taught on-site.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons in order to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Pupils' work was sampled in lessons and through formal reviews of work in various subjects at key stage 3, key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own information on the progress of current pupils, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.
- Meetings were held with pupils across Years 7 to 11 and with pupils in the sixth form, as well as contact at breaktime and lunchtime. An inspector also met with members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with the school's former local authority improvement manager.
- Discussions took place with senior leaders, subject leaders and staff responsible for the care and guidance of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading as part of their lessons and during the daily 'drop everything and read' session. An inspector also listened to pupils reading in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Inspectors evaluated the responses of parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, the free-text facility and those who wrote separately to inspectors. The views of pupils and members of the school's staff were taken into account through responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire and through informal conversations.

Inspection team

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Sarah Godden	Ofsted Inspector

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