

Inspection of St Bede's Inter-Church School

Birdwood Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 3TD

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Alistair Day. This school is the only school in St Bede's Inter-Church School Trust. The trust is overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Rev Dr Geoff Cook.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils swell with pride when they talk about their school. They flourish in a harmonious, safe and happy environment. Pupils benefit from deeply embedded Christian values that underpin the school's culture. They place high regard on how this enriches their lives and learning. Pupils live these values in their daily interactions around school. They behave extremely well. Pupils know it is wrong to be unkind to anyone. They do not tolerate any behaviour of this kind. They are highly respectful to each other, staff and visitors.

Pupils know that all adults want them to achieve the highest levels of success. Pupils' respond to this aspiration with an equally high determination to succeed. They are highly motivated and work extremely hard. As a result, pupils produce work of the highest quality and achieve exceptionally well.

There is a plethora of cultural, intellectual and sporting opportunities available for pupils to take part in. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are encouraged to take part. No one is left out. Many of the clubs are set up and managed by pupils themselves. This is reflective of the high levels of trust that exist between the school and pupils.

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

The school has planned a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils. The programmes of study meet and, at times, go further than the requirements of the national curriculum. The school carefully checks what pupils know when they arrive. This information is used to ensure all pupils, including those with SEND, make progress right from when they start school.

Subject experts have carefully planned the order that pupils should learn important information. Curriculum plans build in time for pupils to revisit and recall prior learning. This helps pupils remember what they have been taught before and build on what they already know.

The school has ensured that teachers have been trained in the best methods to deliver their subjects to meet pupils' needs. Teachers use this training exceptionally well. They present information clearly. Complex ideas are expertly broken into small manageable pieces. Well-constructed learning activities help pupils secure each individual piece of knowledge before moving on. Teachers check carefully what pupils know at each stage. If pupils need more support, teachers make adjustments immediately. This means that pupils engage with learning activities with confidence. They produce high-quality written responses. Pupils can precisely articulate what they have learned. They achieve extremely well.

Many pupils are avid readers. The library is abuzz with pupils who are keen to share the joy of the latest book they have read. Those who need extra support with

reading are quickly identified. They get targeted support, which helps them develop into confident and fluent readers.

Support for pupils with SEND is highly effective. SEND specialists know pupils and their families extremely well. They use this knowledge to develop plans that help teachers address specific learning barriers. Teachers use this information effectively to support pupils with SEND. Consequently, pupils with SEND learn and achieve successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. There are exceptional relationships between adults and pupils. There is warmth and encouragement in every classroom. This strengthens pupils' already positive attitude to learning. In the rare cases when pupils struggle to meet the school's high expectations, they are helped to improve. Pupils attend regularly and often.

The development of pupils' character through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is exceptional. The programme is given high regard by pupils. They develop a deep and rich awareness of the world around them. They learn how to keep themselves and each other safe. Pupils engage and celebrate a variety of beliefs and faiths. This helps create a school family, where all are warmly welcomed. Pupils have access to a well-thought-out careers programme. They use the information they gain from this programme to make well informed choices. Consequently, they are highly successful in the next steps of their education or training.

There is strong leadership at all levels. Leaders are continually looking for ways to improve pupils' experiences. Governors know the school extremely well and provide robust challenge to leaders. Staff are exceptionally proud to work at the school. They value how leaders and governors support them, personally and professionally.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137924
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345332
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	925
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rev Dr Geoff Cook
Headteacher	Alistair Day
Website	www.st-bedes.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates as a single academy trust.
- The school has a religious character. It serves both the Church of England, and Roman Catholic denominations. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 17 May 2016. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteachers, and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the board of trustees, and a representative of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors reviewed curriculum documentation for and met with leaders of geography, history, music and design. Inspectors also reviewed documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector/inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school life, learning in lessons and behaviour in the school to understand what it is like to be a pupil in the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Clare Gammons	Ofsted Inspector
Sufian Sadiq	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Matthews	Ofsted Inspector

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