

Blessed George Napier Catholic School and Sports College

Addison Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9DG

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Blessed George Napier is a proudly Catholic school which self-confidently proclaims its values and ethos.
- Leaders have built a caring and nurturing environment where each individual is celebrated as a unique person.
- The school's contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary.
- Most pupils thrive and develop as well-rounded young adults.
- Teaching is good overall with particular strengths in science, art, modern foreign languages and religious education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well and make strong progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from specialised teaching which enables them to access the full curriculum quickly.
- Pupils' conduct is exceptional. They are kind to each other and polite with adults.
- Leaders ensure that a wide range of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' school experience.
- The school's work as a former sports college helps pupils develop appropriate attitudes to health and fitness, find a sport of choice, and understand the benefits of teamwork and competition.
- Most parents are delighted with their choice of Blessed George Napier: 'The school creates an incredible sense of community and caring in which staff and pupils respect each other.'
- Disadvantaged pupils are cared for sensitively but do not always make as much progress as they should.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Not all the information they possess is precise enough to drive focused and rapid improvement.
- Subject leaders support their teams. They are beginning to hold teachers to account for the rates of pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase consistency in the rates at which current pupils make progress, especially those who are disadvantaged.
- Strengthen leadership further by:
 - ensuring that all management information systems provide easy-to-use, precise and timely information about the performance of the school and of pupils and groups of pupils
 - extending the contribution that subject leaders make to teachers' performance management.
- Clarify quickly the strategic governance arrangements of the school and report these accurately on the website.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders demonstrate full and passionate commitment to the values on which the school is founded. They want the best for every pupil and seek to promote the well-being of all.
- Leaders are proud of the school's demonstrable Catholic foundation. The chapel provides a symbolic presence at the core of the school. Prayers are said daily as a collective act of worship. The school gives regard to timely moments in the spiritual life of the pupils, such as pausing to reflect on the London Bridge terror attacks. Students in Year 12 volunteer annually to care for pilgrims to the shrine at Lourdes in France.
- The principal leads with a relentlessly positive approach. This contributes to a relaxed and friendly atmosphere across the school. He is ably supported by the vice-principals. These three senior leaders work closely as a team. They benefit from increasingly effective leadership of the sixth form and from the skills and commitment of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo).
- Leaders have become adept at recognising what works well and what still needs developing. Recently, for example, they have changed the way teachers report the outcomes of assessment. Similarly, in September 2016, leaders put in place a system to help teachers focus their work on individual pupils or groups of pupils. These new systems are currently producing helpful information though it is not always precise, easy to use or accurate. Leaders are aware that some adjustments or further refinements are necessary. They also recognise the need to interpret carefully what the data produced shows about performance in the school.
- Leaders have committed time, effort and money to improving teaching so that the quality of each pupil's school experience is consistent. Leaders have rightly set expectations for teachers for lesson planning, behaviour management and the way teachers should provide pupils with feedback on their work and the progress they are making.
- The vast majority of staff are pleased to work at the school. They welcome the training they receive and other opportunities to develop professionally. They refer frequently, as do pupils, to the 'family atmosphere' and enjoy the comfort of working in such a context.
- Subject leaders take an active role in supporting teachers' professional development. They ensure that teachers have up-to-date information to support pupils' preparations for examinations. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in supporting the school's performance management activities and contributing to the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time.
- Leaders use the school's resources creatively to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum, especially in the sixth form. This means that sometimes classes are very small. However, leaders' commitment to fostering each pupil's skills and talents drives them to retain subjects such as music, art, and design and technology. Over the past three years, leaders have tried to ensure that even low-attaining or middle-attaining

disadvantaged pupils can access a suite of subjects at GCSE level, enabling them to attain the full English Baccalaureate. Increasingly large numbers of pupils opt to take physics, chemistry and biology as separate sciences. This leads to relatively strong take-up of these subjects in the 16 to 19 study programmes.

- The SENCo ensures that specific funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities contributes directly to their successful progress. Money is spent judiciously on software applications, focused teaching assistant support, and tools for checking learning. It is not so easy to evaluate the impact of pupil premium funding on eligible pupils' progress. At the start of the inspection, leaders had not published details of their plans for the use of the money in the current year. Leaders were able to show, however, that some of the grant was used historically to enable such pupils to participate in the full range of learning activities. The recent 'Shakespeare in School' performance is one example of how the pupil premium grant was used creatively for the benefit of many pupils.
- The school's extra-curricular offer is one of its many strengths. Inspectors counted in excess of 25 activities. This does not include the high take-up rates for and participation in sports and fitness-related activities. The school hosts, cooperates with and draws support from the North Oxfordshire Sports Trust. Pupils are thereby enabled to participate in a wide range of competitions. They also have rich opportunities to develop leadership skills, and to work with and mentor younger children.
- The school makes an exceptional contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to reflect on philosophical ideas and concepts. They debate issues of enduring and emerging importance through lessons in English, history and religious education. Pupils have a stark reminder of the morality of warfare in the history corridor, which is set up as a replica of First World War trenches. Culturally, pupils are exposed to a wide range of music. As well as formal lessons in composition, pupils experience inspiring music played as a background to learning in modern foreign language lessons and other lessons. The school's choir is about to embark on a tour of Florence in Italy. The head of physical education arranged for a dance company to work with a specific group of pupils whose engagement in movement activity had previously been negligible.
- The school is a socially cohesive and inclusive community. Pupils are taught about democracy and the rule of law. They are exposed to a wide range of views and historical thought leaders from Mother Teresa to Che Guevara and Winston Churchill. This helps pupils adopt appropriate British values and align them with their own Christian beliefs.
- A parent wrote, 'The Catholic values are shared with the school community regardless of an individual's faith and this makes a profound impact on visitors to the school.' Inspectors agree.

Governance of the school

- The local board of governors is made up of directors of the trust which include the school's principal. This board is authorised by the Archdiocese of Birmingham to act on

its behalf. The local board has a good working knowledge of the school. It bases its judgement of the school on information provided by senior leaders.

- The Archdiocese is determined to maintain strong Catholic secondary school provision in north Oxfordshire and charges governors with delivering this ambition. The trust's directors are passionate in working to secure this aim, as well as growing the trust to incorporate more schools.
- The local board has confidence in senior leaders and provides them with considerable support. During the inspection, however, it was not wholly clear how leaders are held to account for their work, or governors for their impact on pupils' outcomes. For example, it was not clear how information about disadvantaged pupils' progress was used to set targets and drive improvements. It was not clear initially how the pupil premium grant was being used to overcome any barriers to disadvantaged pupils' progress. Those responsible for the strategic oversight of the school had also not made clear, through the website, how delegated powers from the Archdiocese are exercised.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that all aspects of safety are managed carefully. Access to the school is controlled so that entry is only possible for approved visitors.
- The checks that leaders make on anyone wishing to work at the school are thorough. They are recorded accurately, with records maintained to a high standard. Similarly, senior leaders monitor the cleanliness and maintenance of the site so that pupils learn in a mainly pleasant environment.
- Leaders work closely with groups of parents to check that they remain confident in the school's ability to keep their children safe, including in online settings. Pupils told inspectors that they are taught how to stay safe in relationships and how they value the good quality of learning in personal, social and health education.
- The school's ongoing work as a former sports college contributes to positive attitudes among the pupils to health and fitness. Many pupils participate actively in exercise-related classes and clubs.
- Teachers shared with inspectors how they are trained to keep pupils safe. For example, they are trained to recognise signs of neglect, abuse or radicalisation, and any pupils at risk of developing poor mental health.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good with some pockets of outstanding practice. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They keep up to date with changes to their subject's specifications so that pupils are suitably prepared for examinations.
- Teachers plan using the school's simple set of minimum expectations and most start each lesson with a key question. Many teachers plan interesting and engaging ways to generate pupils' enthusiasm for learning. In an art lesson, pupils were exploring a

range of responses to an artist's work. In a science lesson, pupils were exploring the properties of waves by moving around the classroom.

- Many teachers help pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding by questioning them skilfully during lessons. This reflects leaders' concerted efforts over time to raise standards in teaching.
- Leaders have adjusted the school's feedback policy so that all pupils understand what to expect. There is, however, some variation across the school and within departments in its use. Similarly, inspectors found variation in teachers' support for the school's homework policy. A significant number of parents commented on this variation too. Some felt there was too much homework but more felt there was not enough and it was not set regularly enough.
- In some subjects the most able pupils do not receive sufficiently challenging work that promotes their consistently high attainment. In other subjects, these pupils are stretched in their conceptual understanding. This was most noticeable in religious education.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support the successful progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school provides a number of training places for 'intern' teachers. These additional adults work well with class teachers to support pupils' learning.
- A specialist teacher assesses early the learning needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. She sets in motion a focused intervention programme and, as a result, these pupils catch up quickly. Many are very able and, once they can access the curriculum, they make rapid learning gains.
- Reading is taught well. Leaders have developed a culture where reading is 'cool'. Many English lessons begin with a period of focused reading. Teachers challenge pupils to change their books regularly. Much of the literature is of high quality. English teachers are increasingly skilled at challenging pupils to account for and report accurately on what they are reading.
- Pupils generally write well. Many subjects provide opportunities for them to write at length, developing their work and learning to edit it carefully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders focus relentlessly on ensuring that pupils grow and develop as unique individuals.
- A parent commented, 'I feel the pastoral care that my child receives is excellent.'
- Pupils integrate well. They treat each other kindly and are polite and respectful to adults. Pupils are proud of the school. They say it boosts their self-esteem and confidence but also monitors their well-being.

- Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They also wear any badges they have earned such as the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award or the 'maths leader' badge.
- Inspectors noted how confidently pupils spoke in lessons. Even when answering simple questions, they took time to speak clearly and in complete sentences. Inspectors also commented on the courteous way pupils addressed them and spoke about what they were doing or learning.
- The nurturing environment created by leaders encourages this inclusive and positive atmosphere: pupils say 'we all get on well'. Tutors use form time effectively to build on the family-like ethos and enable a safe space for discussion. In one case, the tutor carefully led a meaningful discussion about the upcoming general election.
- Pupils are able to articulate and agree accurate definitions of bullying. Teachers said that it happens rarely. Parents, for the most part, agree that this is the case. Pupils are sure that on the rare occasions when it happens, it is dealt with effectively and stops.
- Pupils were also clear that they would take a dim view of any prejudiced-based bullying or aggression. They think it would offend their own values and beliefs. As a result, they could not recall any occasions when they were aware it had happened.
- The vast majority of pupils were grateful for the school's work to help them stay safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The conduct of pupils around the site and in lessons is exemplary. Low-level disruption is exceptionally rare. It is challenged and managed sensitively but firmly.
- Pupils attend regularly. Overall, the school's absence figures are below national averages. The school has not permanently excluded any pupil since the last inspection and the rate of fixed-term exclusions is consistently below the national average.
- Pupils like the system of rewards the school uses to recognise when they have done well.
- Leaders ensure that any pupil receiving education in alternative provision attends regularly, behaves appropriately and makes good progress.
- At Blessed George Napier, outstanding behaviour is much more than just the absence of poor conduct. Pupils positively go out of their way to do good things. They act as positive role models for younger children, contribute to charitable activities and represent their school in their own dispersed local communities.
- Sometimes pupils are so well behaved that they remain passive in lessons. Teachers' excellent control and the positive atmosphere in the school mean that more teachers could take greater risks with learning activities. For example, in some sixth form lessons, teachers actively encourage debate on controversial issues, which fires students' imagination, causing them to make even more rapid learning gains.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school with broadly typical levels of attainment from their primary education. They make steady progress through the school and most attain expected results in their GCSE examinations. Overall, in 2016, Year 11 pupils made above-average progress compared to all schools nationally.
- In 2016, however, the small cohort of disadvantaged Year 11 pupils made less good progress than other pupils nationally. This was especially the case for those disadvantaged pupils who joined the school with prior attainment in the 'low' or 'middle' categories. These results reversed the strong progress made by disadvantaged pupils shown by results for the bigger 2015 Year 11 cohort.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently on roll in Years 7 and 8 are making more progress than their peers, but those in Years 9, 10 and 11 still lag behind their classmates. Differences between the performance of these pupils and other pupils nationally are, however, diminishing at a steady rate over time.
- Leaders and governors are aware that the performance of disadvantaged pupils varies from year to year. Much of the pupil premium funding is used to help pupils overcome pastoral or social barriers so that such pupils are integrated well with the rest of the community. Some of the pupil premium is used to fund learning interventions, though greater analysis is still needed to be sure which interventions would be most cost-effective.
- Most-able pupils generally attain well, though few go on to achieve exceptionally high results or add significant value to their learning.
- The vast majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make extremely strong progress as a result of the excellent support they receive in school. Many catch up with their peers through focused activities aimed at helping them cover any missed learning. Most achieve standards that exceed those of pupils with similar starting points in other schools.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make strong progress. This is due to the focused support for language learning in lessons and as part of structured and skilful additional sessions led by a specialist teacher. Those who are new to the school, and at an early stage of learning English, receive intensive support so that they can access the school's curriculum as quickly as possible. This is commendable.
- All pupils are prepared suitably for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Many stay on in the Blessed George Napier sixth form. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are in education, employment or training at each census point.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Outcomes for learners on both academic and vocational programmes are broadly in line with standards nationally. In 2016, the average grade achieved in A2 qualifications was C+.

- Outcomes in some subjects were notably higher than in others with particular strengths in religious education (theology and philosophy), geography, Polish and business studies.
- Leaders are currently reviewing the school's 16 to 19 study programme so that it is more attractive to students not wishing to follow a fully academic programme. This is intended to replace some of the vocational awards on offer up to summer 2015.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are very keen to retain a Catholic sixth form in north Oxfordshire to serve the community's needs post-16. Leaders' recent appointment of a skilled professional has already made a difference to the quality of the provision. She has added rigour to the monitoring of students' progress, greater challenge to students to aim high, and greater clarity to policies, processes and procedures.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are well led and managed. Leaders know each student's strengths, talents and personality in detail. They are already encouraging Year 11 pupils to opt positively for the Blessed George Napier sixth form. Many students say their choice to 'stay on' is partly motivated by the all-round pastoral care they receive.
- Historically, retention rates have been strong. Similarly, completion rates are high. As with the rest of the school, only a tiny number of students are not in education, employment or training within six months of leaving school.
- Leaders ensure that students in the sixth form receive good-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance. A few students commented that they would have liked some more help with the universities central admissions service (UCAS) applications and some would have liked more advice on specific higher education courses or career options.
- Leaders arrange for all students to undertake at least one week's programme of work experience to complement their study programme. Many add value to this minimum requirement by volunteering or acting as leaders across the wide range of the school's activities.
- Any student who joins the sixth form without a good GCSE pass in mathematics or English is supported to re-sit the examination. Outcomes in English are good for these candidates. Results in mathematics are broadly in line with national expectations and performance levels.
- Teaching in the sixth form is sometimes better than in the rest of the school. This is partly due to the small size of the classes. It is also because some teachers on the 16 to 19 study programmes are inclined to take greater risks and challenge students' thinking. This is appropriate for students working at A level. Teaching is also characterised by positive and supportive relationships between teachers and students.
- In order to provide a distinctively Catholic aspect of the sixth form, all students complete an extended project qualification on a matter or topic of moral or social significance. Students like the opportunity this affords them to work on a chosen area of concern.

- Students told inspectors that they were encouraged to aim high in accordance with the school's commitment to their success. They also commented on how much they appreciate the wide range of opportunities during their time in school.

School details

Unique reference number	141146
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10026762

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	845
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	155
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Paul Concannon
Principal	Fraser Long
Telephone number	01295 264216
Website	www.blessedgeorgenapier.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@bgn.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website with regard to its strategic governance.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about its governance and ownership.
- Blessed George Napier School is an average-sized secondary school serving a wide geographical area in the north of Oxfordshire.

- The proportion of pupils from black and ethnic minority households is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A few of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities or an education, health and care plan.
- The number of pupils who either leave the school or join it other than at the end of a key stage is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well below average.
- The school is part of the local Pope Francis multi-academy company (MAC). The MAC is a subsidiary of the Barberi and Newman multi-academy trust (MAT). This trust runs schools on behalf of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- The school's principal is also the accounting officer for the MAC. The principal and some of the trust's directors provide support to other diocesan schools, including one that is not part of the MAT.
- Currently, the school only has very few pupils receiving support from Banbury College, an alternative provision setting.
- The school meets the governments' current floor standards.

237 responses

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 74 parts of lessons. On the first day of the inspection, inspectors conducted two extensive learning walks. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors on these learning walks and in many of the visits to lessons on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke frequently to pupils informally in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. They met six pupils formally from key stages 3 and 4 and a group of six sixth form students. Inspectors took into account 237 responses to Ofsted’s confidential online pupil survey.
- The lead inspector met with a group of six parents and took into account 124 responses to Ofsted’s confidential online survey, Parent View, and 72 free-text responses submitted through that system. The lead inspector also considered one letter received from a parent.
- Inspectors conducted regular meetings with senior leaders and two directors of the multi-academy company. The lead inspector also conducted a phone conversation with the Archdiocese of Birmingham’s director of education.
- Inspectors met with a group of five members of staff, subject leaders, leaders of the pastoral system and the school’s SENCo. Inspectors also took into account 48 responses to Ofsted’s confidential online staff survey.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of the school’s documents, including leaders’ evaluation of the school’s performance and its development plan, information about current pupils’ progress and attainment and information relating to the school’s wide extra-curricular offer. Inspectors also looked at records of the work of those responsible for governance.

Inspection team

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Richard Carlyle	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Foster	Ofsted Inspector
Karon Buck	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Duke	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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