

Inspection of Blessed George Napier Catholic School and Sixth Form

Addison Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9DG

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are keen to describe what it means to be part of this thoughtful and inclusive school. Making friends, enjoying learning and showing kindness are part of everyday life. Bullying is therefore rare. Pupils are proud of how diverse their school community is and how they ensure everyone feels welcome. As one pupil commented, 'We are all BGN.'

The sixth-form students act as positive role models, demonstrating their drive and determination to achieve. They know that staff have the highest expectations of them in terms of their conduct and they consistently strive to meet these. All pupils know the importance of concentrating and listening in lessons. On occasion, a small number do not always do this. Leaders are currently working with teachers to ensure that the learning in every subject helps all pupils to learn and focus well.

Pupils talk positively about the support provided for their physical and mental well-being. Many pupils name physical education as their favourite subject. The opportunity to lead and officiate in different sports helps pupils build their confidence and self-esteem. They also learn how to communicate with one another. Specialist pastoral support is provided if pupils need any additional help in demonstrating the school's values of compassion and respect.

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

Leaders are resolute in their determination that all pupils will study an ambitious curriculum that teaches the knowledge and skills pupils need to succeed. Subject leaders have been redeveloping and strengthening their subjects. Regular checks are made of what pupils are learning in each lesson. This has a particular focus on vocabulary. In many subjects, the key words pupils need to learn and understand are regularly discussed and revisited. This helps pupils confidently explain challenging mathematics equations in the sixth form as well as exploring the effects of weathering in key stage 4 geography. As a result, many pupils achieve well.

As yet, however, the curriculum is not consistently or securely embedded across the school. Some staff changes and the disruption caused by COVID-19 has meant that a small number of subject teams have not yet fully implemented their ambitious plans. In these subjects, work in pupils' books and their understanding of what they have learned is not as strong as it is in other areas of the curriculum. Leaders are aware of this and are continuing to increase staff knowledge and skills so they can expertly deliver learning in every subject.

Underpinning the subject curriculum is a distinctive Catholic ethos that both staff and pupils value and respect. The thoughtful spiritual, moral, social and cultural education provides pupils with an understanding of the world around them. Through tutor time and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, pupils develop their confidence in forming opinions about issues that are important to them. This

includes exploring how to form positive and healthy relationships. In addition, guidance around different career pathways helps pupils to be ambitious for their futures. They value the up-to-date information provided and the opportunities to speak to different external speakers and employers.

Time is taken to ascertain if pupils have any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Close working with external specialists helps staff identify the required support in order to ensure that pupils with educational, health and care plans achieve well. Leaders do, however, recognise that as yet, not all pupils with SEND get the targeted support they need. This is particularly evident in some lessons where teachers do not always have the expertise needed to make the necessary adaptations to learning. In addition, pupils who find reading more difficult do not routinely get the precise teaching to help them read fluently. Leaders are aware of this and have already started to provide staff with the vital training needed.

Pupils' attendance is high. They value their education and know that it is important to behave well. Most recently, leaders have been making some changes to the behaviour policy. There is a strong focus on pupils reflecting and learning from any incidents where their behaviour did not meet the school's high expectations. Behaviour records indicate the ongoing success of this work and how important this has been through any unsettledness caused by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over recent times, challenges such as changes in staffing and delayed building works have been frustrating for the whole school community. Leaders, governors and directors from the trust recognise this. Pupils and staff value the actions taken to mitigate the impact of this disruption. There is a common understanding of the importance of working together as a school community to ensure that all pupils receive the very best education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils recognise the priority leaders place on pupil safety and well-being. PSHE lessons and assemblies help pupils to identify where they may encounter risks. They know how to report any concerns they may have, confident that a trusted adult will always provide support.

Leaders also provide staff with regular and up-to-date training. This ensures that staff quickly identify where a pupil may be at risk of harm. Where needed, support from external agencies is requested swiftly. Appropriate checks are made on the well-being of any pupils who are absent from school. This includes the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The ambitious curriculum planning in some subjects has not been as consistently well-implemented as in others. Where there is variance in teaching, pupils are less focused on learning. This means they do not always remember what they have been taught. Leaders need to continue to develop staff's pedagogical knowledge and monitor the full implementation of the curriculum to ensure that it is securely embedded in every subject.
- Not all teachers have the specialist knowledge required to successfully adapt learning to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND. These pupils, therefore, do not always get the right support to learn as well as they could. Leaders should carefully monitor the impact of the training that is currently taking place, to ensure all staff have the necessary expertise.
- The support for the small number of pupils who find reading more difficult is not precise enough. Consequently, these pupils do not have the reading skills to learn well across the full curriculum. Leaders must continue to strengthen the support for these pupils to ensure they can read confidently and fluently.

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](#)' 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	141146
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10258811
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	869
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	133
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Concannon
Headteacher	Niamh Dolan
Website	www.blessedgeorgenapier.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a part of The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company (MAC).
- The school is a member of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and has a Catholic character.
- A Section 48 inspection was carried out by the diocese in 2017. The school was graded outstanding.
- The school currently uses two registered and two unregistered alternative providers to support the education of a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with representatives from both the board of trustees and from the local board of governors.
- The lead inspector also spoke to the leader of the MAC and spoke with a representative from the diocese.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, art and design and modern foreign languages. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the 188 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, as well as the free-text comments that were submitted. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding leads, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with governors.

Inspection team

Aimee Floyd, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Potten	Ofsted inspector
Zoe Enser	His Majesty's Inspector
Maria Roberts	His Majesty's Inspector

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