

Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College

Terry Road, Coventry, CV1 2BA

Inspection dates	9–10 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- New leadership has had a positive impact on improving pupils' progress so that it is now good throughout the school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are highly skilled and their capacity to improve the school further is strong.
- Attainment at GCSE has been well above the national average for the past three years. The proportion of pupils making expected progress in English and mathematics is high.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are well supported and they make similar progress to other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are supported effectively and achieve well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are keen to learn from one another. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
- The sixth form provides a good education for students and their attendance is very high.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are promoted well. The school offers an extensive range of enrichment activities which help to prepare pupils for later life.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance is above average. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of their learning.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education for pupils is rich and varied. This reflects the school's distinctive Christian ethos and promotes pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
- Governors know and understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Careers advice and guidance supports pupils well in preparing them for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Pupils are happy at school and are safe. Parents believe that the school serves their children well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not use pupils' assessment information with enough precision to check quickly and accurately the progress pupils make, especially the most able.
- Some of the most able pupils are not getting the highest grades. In a few lessons, work is not sufficiently challenging.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers make consistently good use of assessment information in their lesson planning to set work at the right level of difficulty for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, so they are challenged to think more deeply and achieve the highest outcomes.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school, by:
 - sharpening the use of the whole-school assessment system so that school leaders can check the progress of different groups of pupils with greater accuracy to reflect the evidence of progress seen in pupils' exercise books.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher, senior leaders and governors are committed in their pursuit of high-quality teaching and learning for all pupils in school. They share a vision to provide all pupils with the best opportunities and experiences. They are highly experienced and the vast majority of staff and parents agree that the school is well led.
- There have been significant changes in leadership since the last inspection and governors have skilfully rebuilt a knowledgeable and determined team. Leaders focus on improving the progress of all groups of pupils in their care. The school has invested heavily in developing teachers' skills and in building capacity across the school to improve pupils' outcomes. This has been very effective. For example, teachers' participation in the delivery of training programmes with the University of Warwick, as well as other strong partnerships with a teaching school alliance, enable the best practices to be nurtured and shared to improve outcomes.
- Pupils are progressing more rapidly than in the past because senior leaders check regularly on the quality of teaching and learning. They regularly visit lessons, look at work in pupils' books and have a structured process to identify the strengths of teaching and how it can be improved further. However, leaders do not ensure that evidence of the progress seen in pupils' exercise books is reflected accurately enough in their whole-school analysis of pupils' assessment information. Although their analysis focuses well on the progress of most groups of pupils, they have not paid enough attention in their analysis to the progress of the most able.
- Senior leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They know and understand the challenges they face and have taken decisive action to deal with the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. These actions have led to improvements in the quality of education pupils receive.
- Subject leadership is strong. This has sharpened teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all groups of pupils. Subject leaders meet regularly, share good practice and have a clear focus on improving pupils' progress. These leaders are well supported and given guidance and support by their senior colleagues to ensure that their work in subject areas contributes to the school's performance targets.
- Subject leaders and pastoral leaders work closely together to make sure that academic progress, behaviour, care and guidance are checked alongside each other, so that any issues are quickly noticed and all pupils have the best chance to do well.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, includes a good range of subjects at key stage 4 and meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils receive effective guidance so that they choose subjects that interest them and help them to make progress. As a result, pupils are motivated to achieve well. The ALPHA programme in Year 7 and Year 8 is highly effective in supporting pupils who need extra support and this makes a strong contribution to the good progress pupils now make.
- The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is very strongly underpinned by the school's distinctive Christian ethos and the values which permeate school life. It is based on fundamental British values and the promotion of equality. The school raises pupils' awareness of the potential dangers of extremism and radicalisation. It encourages pupils to think positively about the values of other faiths and cultures.
- Extra-curricular opportunities in school are extensive and participation is good. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community through their involvement and leadership in charity work, sport, drama, music and other enrichment opportunities.
- Extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used effectively to improve their outcomes. The support given to disadvantaged pupils is very effective in increasing their rates of progress. The gap in achievement between these pupils and others has closed since the last inspection and is closing for those in school now. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability also make good progress. Both groups of pupils now achieve good outcomes because clear targets and priorities are identified by the school.
- Pupils in Year 7 who receive additional funding to catch up to the expected level of literacy and numeracy are given extra help. Pupils were very enthusiastic about this help, and inspectors saw evidence to show that these pupils make significant gains in improving their reading ability. This work contributes well to the improving progress being made by pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- Staff and pupils work well together to promote strong relationships and to prevent any kind of discriminatory behaviour. The school's behaviour policy has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and conduct. Parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, agree.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors are highly effective and know the school well. They have supported the school through significant changes in leadership since the last inspection. Governors are well-informed and come from wide and experienced educational, financial and business backgrounds. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need more work.
- Governors evaluate and question the information provided by the school, particularly in relation to the outcomes for all pupils. They provide an appropriate degree of challenge, hold senior leaders to account and check that improvement priorities are acted on quickly.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have robust systems in place to review teachers' performance. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and challenge leaders on the impact it has on the outcomes made by pupils it is intended to support.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree. Procedures are rigorous in ensuring that all checks follow the correct guidance regarding child protection and safer recruitment. Staff are alert to any risk and act quickly to pass on any concerns they may have. All staff and governors are aware of the published requirements for keeping children safe in education, as well as the 'Prevent' duty training which focuses on dealing with extremism. Safety is well-promoted throughout the curriculum with significant issues covered also in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Pupils benefit from good teaching. The evidence secured from the inspection, the school's assessment information on the progress pupils make and the quality of work in pupils' books all show that teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject. As a result, pupils are interested and engaged in their learning activities.
- Teachers use time well and some are adept at altering work so that pupils can access ideas and concepts. In an English lesson, the teacher strengthened pupils' understanding of a particular style of writing by giving pupils basic ideas for discussion so that they could then develop their own vocabulary in an original and stimulating way. Pupils responded with enthusiasm and assessed their own work and that of their classmates with maturity because they were now driving their learning forward.
- Pupils make good progress when they know exactly what to do to achieve the highest grades. In a design technology lesson, where learning was really successful, pupils had to reflect on their practical work and assess its quality against the school's bespoke assessment standard displayed on a whiteboard. That showed pupils' understanding of the criteria being used to assess the task and ensured that pupils received helpful and specific individual guidance from the teacher on the next steps for improvement.
- Pupils at risk of underachieving are identified by teachers and leaders across the school. Leaders liaise at appropriate assessment points with subject leaders and this results in the good progress pupils now make at the end of Year 11. Work seen in pupils' books shows that all groups of pupils in school now make good progress in their learning.
- In most lessons, pupils enjoy their learning, behaviour is positive and pupils make good progress. Teachers establish good working relationships with pupils and they help pupils to overcome any barriers to learning they might have.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported in lessons and in the extra opportunities that they are given to learn. This contributes well to the good progress they make in school and their strong attainment at the end of key stage 4.
- Teachers are helped to improve their skills through a variety of training opportunities made available by senior leaders. For example, the school benefits from a local teaching school alliance. The school also uses weekly teaching and learning briefings to identify and share good practice among staff and improve the learning experience for pupils. The training that is given is linked to the progress that pupils make in their lessons and teachers' performance management targets.
- Teachers use a range of techniques to check that all pupils have mastered their previous learning in order to make sure that no pupils are left behind. However, they do not always ensure that the most able pupils experience the level of challenge they need to make the accelerated progress of which they are capable, although inspectors saw examples of strong challenge in science and mathematics where pupils had to think deeply about concepts which showed pupils' good levels of understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's focus on Christian and British values means that pupils appreciate their diverse community in which they are valued and respected.
- The school's chaplaincy supports all pupils, whatever their individual beliefs. Visible reminders around school help pupils to focus on the help that can be sought through the chaplaincy and its contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are encouraged to think of others, both in school and in the wider community and support them through raising money for a range of national charities.
- Pupils know the importance of keeping safe and say that they feel very safe in school. Their parents agree. The school teaches pupils how to stay safe in many respects, including online safety, the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of sexual health. The school teaches pupils about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle, including their mental and emotional health, through the programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils know who they should go to if they had any worries or concerns.
- The school anticipates and manages any risk that pupils may be exposed to, including radicalisation or extremism, and monitors this carefully.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and if bullying of any kind happens, the school deals with it effectively and quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are welcoming, helpful, polite and courteous to staff, visitors and to each other.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and the school is usually calm and orderly, both during and between lessons, at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils interact well with each other and with adults.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good across all years and all subjects. Pupils are punctual to lessons, bring the right equipment with them, settle quickly and approach their work with enthusiasm. They look smart and the presentation of their work in books is mostly neat and tidy.
- The school has high expectations for social behaviour among pupils and staff, so that respect and courtesy are seen as integral to the school's distinctive ethos as a Christian learning community.
- Pupils know how to behave safely in practical subjects such as science, technology and physical education lessons.
- The use of exclusion for poor behaviour has been low for a long time and is much lower than the national average.
- Attendance and punctuality are very strong and this reflects pupils' enjoyment in coming to school. The school makes sure that everyone appreciates the importance of regular attendance and its link with the good progress that all pupils in school make.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- The school has worked hard and successfully to improve pupils' progress and raise their attainment across a number of subjects. Changes to senior and subject leadership, new assessment processes and an emphasis on further improving teachers' classroom skills have resulted in good progress for pupils.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who attained five GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, was well above the national average. Most pupils achieved well in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress in subjects previously identified as weaker, such as languages, is now better and attainment is rising.
- The proportion of pupils making at least expected progress in English and mathematics was high in 2015. Information provided by the school for current pupils indicates that this will continue.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are supported well and make good progress. In 2015, this group of pupils attained good outcomes at five A* to C grades at GCSE. Pupils currently in school continue to make this good progress.

- Since the last inspection, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils has improved and is now good. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics was similar to that of other pupils nationally. The gap between their progress and that of their peers nationally and in school is closing.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils at GCSE, but make greater progress than them.
- Those pupils entering the school with lower literacy or numeracy skills receive well-structured and organised support which enables them to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills quickly. Year 7 catch-up funding is used well. Pupils are also given opportunities to enjoy reading for pleasure. As a result, these pupils are given strong foundations for the good progress they now make.
- Most-able pupils make progress which is in line with that made, on average, by similar pupils nationally. However, they do not make as much progress as some of the other groups within the school. They have appropriate targets but some would relish ones that push them a little harder.
- Teachers use the school's assessment system to monitor pupils' progress from their starting points. However, the assessment information held by the school does not always match up to the work seen in pupils' books, which shows the good progress they now make.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. They are given good-quality and impartial guidance, support and mentoring opportunities. Pupils are clear on the range of choices that are available to them.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Leaders in the sixth form demonstrate high levels of ambition for the students in their care. They are aware of areas of strength and areas to develop further and there are clear plans in place to improve provision through the introduction of vocational qualifications that meet students' needs and interests.
- Study programmes are effectively planned for each individual. Suitable academic qualifications are offered and a comprehensive range of non-qualification activities help the majority of students to prepare for further education or university. Students say that teaching in the sixth form is good and information available for inspectors supports that view. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. A range of teaching styles enables students to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Those students who choose apprenticeships or employment pathways are given specific support from an impartial careers adviser to help them access relevant opportunities. This includes work-related experience.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form is good overall, although outcomes at A level have been variable. Comprehensive and rigorous tracking of students' achievements has helped students to make improved progress. The school's own assessment information indicates that outcomes and progress will continue to improve.
- The proportion of sixth form students who did not gain a good grade at the end of Year 11 make good progress towards achieving a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics in the sixth form.
- Attendance in the sixth form is high and this is due to the high expectations that leaders have of students. There are robust procedures in place to monitor attendance and progress.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Sixth form students act as good role models for younger pupils. They are polite, articulate, proud of their school and eager to do well.
- Students in the sixth form know how to keep themselves safe and can identify a suitable adult in school who they could turn to in any time of need.
- The number of students gaining places at their university of choice is increasing over time. Almost all students enter further or higher education, training or employment when they leave the sixth form.
- Retention figures are high and leaders have ambitious plans to raise them further.
- Students in the sixth form make a positive contribution to the whole-school community by leading a range of extra-curricular activities. For example, opportunities for leadership in drama and sport are plentiful and musical opportunities are exceptionally strong. Sixth form students lead the school's gospel choir.
- The 16 to 19 interim standards set by the government are met comfortably.

School details

Unique reference number	137272
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10009286

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,479
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	312
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Douglas Tribe
Headteacher	Victoria Shelley
Telephone number	02476 223542
Website	www.bluecoatschool.com
Email address	admin@bluecoatschool.com
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school and has a sixth form. It converted to become an academy in July 2011.
- 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 or disability is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding given to schools to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school's governing body is an interim arrangement and has been in place since 2015. These arrangements will continue to support the school for the foreseeable future.
- The school has a teacher training partnership with the University of Warwick.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's sixth form provides a range of academic courses, all of which are taught on-site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons in order to evaluate the quality of pupils' learning and the use of assessment. Many of these visits 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 and key stage 4.
- 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. Inspectors also looked at the minutes of meetings of the interim governing body.
- Meetings were held with pupils across Years 7 to 11 and with students in the sixth form, as well as contact at breaktime and lunchtime. An inspector also met with members of the interim governing body and a representative of the University of Warwick.
- Discussions took place with senior leaders, subject leaders and staff responsible for the pastoral care and guidance of pupils. A discussion also took place with the director of education for the Diocese of Coventry.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading in Years 7 and 8 as part of their lessons and separately.
- Inspectors evaluated the large number of parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the free-text facility. Inspectors also evaluated the responses of parents who contacted them directly at the school. They took account of the views of pupils through formal and informal conversations and the responses of staff who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire.

Inspection team

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