

Inspection of a good school: Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College

Terry Road, Coventry, West Midlands CV1 2BA

Inspection dates:

3–4 March 2020

Outcome

Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has a strong caring ethos based around its values. These include care, hard work, respect, integrity and servanthood. Pupils feel safe in school and attend well. They say that on the odd occasions when bullying does occur the school deals with it well.

Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and work hard to help them to do their best. This leads to high levels of achievement in many subjects at key stages 4 and 5. However, the emphasis on examination success in some subjects means that pupils do not get the opportunity to learn enough across a wide range of subjects, particularly at key stage 3.

Teachers know their subjects well. However, they do not always take the needs of all pupils into account when planning lessons, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Most pupils behave well and are keen to do their best. But, in some lessons they lack interest and occasionally disrupt learning. Usually this is where learning is not planned well enough and teachers are not ensuring that pupils understand what they are learning.

The school offers a wide range of drama, music and sporting extra-curricular activities which many pupils enjoy.

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

Leaders want the best for their pupils. They have built a strong ethos of care for everyone who attends the school. Pupils' pastoral needs are carefully monitored and there are effective systems in place to support the most vulnerable pupils. Leaders have recently

enhanced their model of care through the introduction of a 'vertical tutoring system', encouraging older pupils to guide and support younger pupils in a 'family model'.

Leaders have designed a seven-year curriculum model aimed at achieving continuity from Year 7 to Year 13. However, leaders have not ensured that the key stage 3 curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. This means that some subjects, for example history, languages and technology, are not studied in enough detail.

The sixth-form curriculum is well planned. Teachers ensure that students learn with increasing levels of independence. As a result, sixth-form students achieve well. Students access extensive advice to help them make decisions about further education and careers. They play a significant part in wider school life. For example, they take the lead role in the school council and act as well-being mentors for younger pupils.

Most pupils behave well. However, sometimes pupils do not fully engage with their work, which on occasion results in low-level disruption. This is particularly the case where activities are not well matched to pupils' needs, so pupils are not able to understand what they are learning.

For some pupils, repeated instances of poor behaviour result in removal from lessons and spending time in 'internal isolation'. While leaders monitor which pupils are involved in this, and provide some work for them, some pupils fall further behind in their learning.

Systems are in place to identify the learning needs of pupils with SEND. However, some teachers are not using this information well enough to adapt their lessons. This means that these pupils do not do as well as they could. Leaders are aware of these issues, but it is too early to see the impact of their work to improve the situation.

Parents appreciate the extensive additional opportunities which the school offers their children. These include drama club, instrumental lessons, orchestra, choir, sports clubs and a wide range of trips. The hard work of staff and pupils results in regular high-quality productions, such as the termly concerts and the forthcoming performance of 'Bugsy Malone'.

Governors know their school well and want the best for all pupils. They are well informed about leaders' plans for improvement and are aware of the need to ensure that they hold leaders to account for moving these forward.

Staff say they feel valued. They appreciate the way that leaders have worked with them to plan their professional development and ensure that their workload is manageable.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that the curriculum (particularly at key stage 3), provision for SEND pupils, and behaviour may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are given high priority. Staff receive regular training and updates to ensure that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Any concerns are followed up without delay. Record-keeping is thorough. Leaders work alongside a range of other agencies to provide the right support for pupils. Pupils feel safe in the school and know they can talk to an adult at school if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is broad and ambitious enough to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly at key stage 3. This means that pupils are not gaining a broad range of knowledge in enough depth by the time they complete key stage 3. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are planning a carefully sequenced, ambitious curriculum in their subject areas, and check that pupils acquire and retain sufficient depth of knowledge across the breadth of the curriculum.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers are making best use of the information they are given about pupils with SEND. Consequently, teachers do not plan work that is well matched to the abilities of these pupils. Leaders should make sure that teachers plan lessons that take account of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.
- In some lessons, the low-level disruption caused by a small number of pupils interrupts learning. Leaders should make sure that the information they hold on positive and negative behaviour in lessons is used to work with pupils and teachers to ensure that learning is not disrupted. If pupils are removed from lessons leaders should ensure that this does not result in them falling behind.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school standards may be declining then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 9–10 June 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	137272
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10122550
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	1,634
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Lyn Johnson
Headteacher	Victoria Shelley
Website	www.bluecoatschool.com
Date of previous inspection	9–10 June 2016

Information about this school

- The school makes use of alternative provision organised in conjunction with Coventry local authority to provide work-based learning. Providers are Brakes Training Ltd, Educ8 and Right Trax.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we focused on the following subjects: mathematics, languages, history, technology and drama. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, looked at teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects are planned and taught.
- We took into account external performance data about the school and looked at school documents and the website.

- We spoke to staff, leaders and governors about safeguarding. We looked at records of employment checks on school staff and checked the school site.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school at the start and finish of the day, between lessons and during breaktimes.
- During the inspection, we had formal meetings with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and governors. We also talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- We looked at the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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