

Inspection of Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School

Leasowes Avenue, Coventry, West Midlands CV3 6BH

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Chris Billings. This school is part of Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Company (the trust), which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the Catholic senior executive leader (CSEL), Marina Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Teahan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bishop Ullathorne is a welcoming, caring school community. The values of the 'Ullathorne way' underpin all aspects of school life. Pupils value the school's ethos and it contributes to why so many have very good attendance.

The school has high expectations and aspirations for pupils' behaviour and learning. They want pupils to be the best person they can be. Pupils understand the importance of respect for others and the impact their choices have on everyone in the school. Pupils behave well in lessons and almost all apply themselves well to their learning. At break and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy each other's company. There are warm relationships between staff and pupils.

Sixth-form students enjoy taking on roles to support the school community, including reading with younger pupils and delivering diversity workshops. Pupils see the value in completing the 'super-curricular' activities provided by each subject. They value the wellness checks they fill in on 'Wellbeing Wednesdays'. There are many clubs on offer, including debating, Warhammer, choir and various sports. Many pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The curriculum is enhanced by visits; for example, trips to a fashion exhibition in London and World War 1 trenches in Belgium.

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

The school has an ambitious and inclusive curriculum. It has been designed to ensure that pupils' knowledge builds clearly over time. Key stage 3 pupils enjoy a rich learning experience across the arts and design technology carousel. Sixth formers benefit from a wide choice of A-level subjects.

Across all key stages, lessons at Bishop Ullathorne are characterised by teachers who know their subjects well and pupils who are eager to learn. Teachers give clear explanations and model thinking processes well. However, there is some variation in how well questioning is used in lessons. This means that pupils do not always acquire the depth of knowledge they are capable of. Pupils appreciate the helpful feedback they receive from their teachers and know how to improve their work in their 'DIRT' sessions.

Teachers make sure that the learning tasks they set enable pupils to apply their learning independently. They help pupils to practise the skills they need to demonstrate in their assessments at the end of key stages 4 and 5. Pupils take pride in the work they produce. Most pupils and students achieve good examination results, but this is not always the case for disadvantaged pupils. Outcomes for these pupils are improving, but not yet consistently enough across the curriculum. The school does not have a shared approach to closing the learning gaps for pupils who are persistently absent.

The school carefully identifies the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The 'student support plans' help staff to understand how they can adapt lessons to meet these pupils' needs. Because they do this well, pupils with SEND achieve good outcomes.

The importance of reading is understood by staff and pupils alike. The school uses a range of information to identify any pupils who are not yet confident, fluent readers. These pupils then benefit from targeted interventions to help them make rapid progress. The school is currently working on how weaker readers can be fully supported across the curriculum.

The school's pastoral work is excellent, and pastoral staff know the pupils very well. Attendance is, typically for most pupils, very good, but the school is determined to improve it further. They know poor attendance is hindering the learning and outcomes of some pupils. Staff work successfully with pupils and their families to reduce barriers to being in school.

The school has very high expectations of behaviour and these are understood well by pupils. When needed, the school makes appropriate use of suspensions and exclusions. Pupils know that poor behaviour will be dealt with fairly. The school's work to support pupils who sometimes make the wrong choices has resulted in those pupils making better choices in the future.

Pupils learn well about their role and responsibilities in modern Britain and how to keep themselves safe through the citizenship, personal, social, health and economic curriculum. Different departments are looking at how they can make the content of their curriculum more representative of the school's diverse community. Pupils receive useful guidance around careers and are well prepared for their next steps in life and education.

Trustees and governors are diligent in ensuring the school is meeting its responsibilities. Staff are appreciative of how leaders take their workload and well-being into account. They know the values of the 'Ullathorne way' apply to staff and pupils alike.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some variation in the quality of questioning used to check pupils' understanding in lessons. This means that sometimes pupils do not get the opportunity to deepen their learning or have misconceptions addressed quickly

enough. The school should ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of how to use questioning effectively.

- There is more to do to close gaps for disadvantaged pupils, including those who do not attend school often enough. Some disadvantaged pupils are not achieving the outcomes they are capable of. The school should ensure that all staff understand and are equipped to fulfil their role in improving outcomes for all disadvantaged pupils.

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	147345
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10294668
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	1,146
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	145
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Teahan
CEO (CSEL) of the trust	Marina Kelly
Headteacher	Chris Billings
Website	www.bishopullathorne.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Company in September 2019. There are seven academies in the trust.
- When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The school's last section 48 diocesan inspection was in June 2022. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school makes part-time use of registered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders, the trust CSEL, the chair of the trust board, representatives of the local governing body and spoke with a representative from the diocese and local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, design technology and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also visited lessons in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including comments submitted via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

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Richard Wakefield	His Majesty's Inspector
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