

# Bethany School

Finlay Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S3 7PS

## Inspection dates

2–4 October 2018

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b> |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b> |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b> |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b> |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b> |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Good</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors ensure that the school complies with the independent school standards. They regularly audit and review compliance with the standards.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. They have high expectations and have created an environment where pupils feel well cared for. However, safeguarding and welfare records do not always include precise information about the effect of actions to support pupils.
- The headteacher regularly reviews the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced. The leadership place high importance on the development of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding and experiences.
- Pupils enjoy coming to the school and they attend well. Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They plan lessons that are rich in knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary.
- Most pupils make good progress from their different starting points. However, progress is stronger for secondary pupils than it is for those pupils in the primary phase.
- Pupils behave well. They show respect and tolerance of others and enjoy learning about different religions and cultures. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe outside of school. For example, pupils talk with confidence about road and online safety.
- Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and further areas for development of the school. However, procedures for checking the work of the school are not sufficiently well developed.
- Most secondary pupils present their work well. However, not all teachers have the same high expectations of pupils' presentation, particularly in primary.
- Teaching is good in the early years. Children are happy and well cared for. However, the outdoor area does not reflect the rich environment found indoors. Leaders agree that the outdoor area needs improvement.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - developing more thorough procedures for quality assuring the work of the school, especially to check on the effect of teaching on pupils' progress
  - ensuring that all pupil welfare and safeguarding records include precise details of any follow-up actions taken and their effect.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - developing primary pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
  - ensuring that all teachers have the same high expectations of pupils' presentation of their work.
- Improve the quality of early years provision by:
  - developing the outdoors area so that it reflects the rich provision seen indoors.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and governors regularly review the independent school standards to ensure that they are consistently met. They also ensure that legal requirements of the early years foundation stage are met.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils. They place high importance on pupils achieving academic success, but equal importance on supporting pupils' individual needs and developing their wider skills and experiences.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel well supported by leaders and governors. As a result, staff morale is high.
- Staff have access to professional development opportunities and have some links with other schools. However, leaders acknowledge the need to consider further bespoke training for staff to improve aspects of their practice which require development; for example, specific training for primary staff in developing primary pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Leaders and governors place high importance on ensuring that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. A wider range of opportunities within the curriculum ensure strong development of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. Visits to places of worship enhance pupils' wider knowledge of religions other than Christianity. British values are fostered well. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of why British values are important.
- Leaders review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs. Staff are in the process of planning the progress that pupils make from the early years to Year 11 across all areas of the curriculum. This work is at an early stage and therefore it is too early to see the effect of this.
- Parents and carers play a very active role in the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online Ofsted survey, Parent View, would recommend the school.
- The headteacher carries out some checks on the quality of teaching. However, the headteacher accepts that checks on the quality of teaching and learning need to be more accurate to ensure that leaders can evaluate with greater precision the effect of teaching on pupils' progress more accurately.

### Governance

- Governors are fully involved in the school. They visit the school at least weekly. As a result, they have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and areas for further development of the school. The chair of the governing body meets with the headteacher weekly to provide both challenge and support.
- Governors audit their skills regularly. Consequently, the governing body has a good skill set which improves their performance.

- The safeguarding governor regularly visits the school to evaluate how well leaders are ensuring that safeguarding procedures are adhered to. She is highly involved in the recruitment of staff and ensures that safer recruitment procedures are followed when appointing new staff.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Parents can access the school's safeguarding policy on the school website. The safeguarding policy references current government guidance and requirements. For example, the school has recently revised the safeguarding policy to reflect government guidance on peer-on-peer abuse.
- Staff take their responsibilities to keep pupils safe seriously. One member of staff told an inspector: 'We have an attitude that it could happen here. We don't rule anything out.'
- Staff training is kept regularly up to date through formal training and weekly staff meetings. For example, staff understand their responsibility to report female genital mutilation to the police. They also have a good understanding of the signs to look out for should a pupil be at risk of a forced marriage or honour-based violence.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and happy in school. They know who to talk to if they have any issues or concerns.
- Early years staff have undertaken the appropriate paediatric first aid training as part of the early years welfare requirements.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the necessary pre-employment checks on staff and parent volunteers are carried out.
- Safeguarding processes are fit for purpose. Safeguarding and welfare records are filed securely. However, all records need to include precise follow-up actions and their effect.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The vast majority of teachers demonstrate very strong subject knowledge. Teachers plan activities for pupils that are knowledge-rich. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary.
- Pupils are inquisitive, particularly secondary pupils. They ask thoughtful questions. In a GCSE history lesson on Nazi Germany, pupils were able to make links between what has happened in the past and politics today.
- Teachers provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop and enhance their extended writing skills across the curriculum. Teachers address pupils' misconception in their written work and place high importance on correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Secondary pupils present their work well. However, not all teachers have the same expectations of standards of presentation in the primary phase. Therefore, pupils' presentation is variable across the school.

- Teachers use assessment information to inform their planning and to ensure that pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning. Pupils talk positively about the individual support they receive from their teachers.
- Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons. Teachers ensure that they implement the strategies to aid pupils' learning in their education, health and care plans.
- Pupils' fluency in mathematics is well developed. However, opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills are not as strong.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have high aspirations of themselves. They want to do well at school.
- Both pupils and parents told inspectors that bullying is very rare. Any bullying is dealt with promptly. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. Pupils told inspectors that there is always someone in school that they can talk to if they need any help or support.
- Older pupils often support younger pupils in lessons. There is an active student council. This helps to develop pupils' leadership skills.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe online. They talked to inspectors about 'stranger danger' and the range of activities they participate in to help them to keep safe outside of school. For example, the local police workshops for Year 6 pupils, where pupils explore road, personal and online safety. Older pupils learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.
- Pupils show respect and tolerance for others. They told inspectors that the teaching of respect, tolerance and diversity is made high profile in the school. Consequently, pupils show respect for other cultures and are knowledgeable about the religions in modern Britain. Visits to places of worship, such as a visit to a local mosque, help to enhance pupils' understanding.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good working relationships with their teachers. Both teachers and pupils are respectful of each other. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school. Consequently, pupils' attendance is in line with the national average.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour system. Most follow it well. Any minor disruption is dealt with by staff. Pupils told inspectors that most pupils behave well. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They look after their environment. There is very little litter around the school site.

- At break and lunchtimes pupils mix well with each other, ensuring that no one is left out. However, pupils said that lunchtimes can be very noisy at times. The headteacher acknowledges the need for more activities for pupils to do in the playground at lunchtimes.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress in their GCSE examinations. Pupils study a range of GCSE subjects and attain particularly well in GCSE English, mathematics, including further mathematics, and religious studies. The most able pupils often achieve the top grades in their GCSE examinations.
- In the primary phase most pupils make good progress from their different starting points. The development of a more effective tracking system since the last inspection enables teachers to identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving and put in place appropriate support and intervention.
- There is a strong culture of reading across the school. Pupils enjoy reading. They read regularly both in school and at home. Pupils read fluently. They have good comprehension skills. A wide range of books are available in most classrooms. Teachers use opportunities within lessons to enhance pupils' reading skills.
- The school provides support and guidance for pupils with their post-16 education. Pupils typically move onto study A levels at other schools or colleges. During the inspection the senior pupils participated in a workshop on apprenticeships. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy hearing about different career options from outside speakers. Science lessons held at Sheffield University give pupils the opportunity to experience university.
- Parents have previously been responsible for ensuring that pupils receive a one-to-one careers interview with support from the school. This is now being organised by the school to ensure that all pupils receive a careers interview by the end of Year 11.

### **Early years provision**

**Good**

- Leaders ensure that the independent school standards for the early years are met.
- The parents of children in the early years, who inspectors talked with, feel that their children are safe and secure. Children appear happy and they are encouraged to be kind to each other.
- Strong partnerships with parents ensure that parents are well informed about the progress that their child is making. Parents talk positively about the communication between home and school, including the information they receive about the early years curriculum.
- The two early years teachers have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. They have acted on the advice given by the local authority to plan for wider opportunities to develop children's early writing skills.
- Teachers use praise well to foster children's good manners and behaviour. Teachers use every interaction to encourage the development of children's communication skills.

- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is variable over time due to the small numbers of children involved. Teachers are keen to ensure that more pupils, especially the most able, exceed a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Children are well prepared for the increasing demands of Year 1. Effective communication between the two Reception and Year 1 teachers ensures that they plan to meet children's individual needs.
- Teachers plan high-quality activities indoors to develop children's creativity and curiosity, as well as their early writing and number skills. However, teachers agree that the outside area does not reflect the rich environment seen indoors. There are limited child-friendly information and resources outdoors to enhance children's reading, writing and number skills.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 107168   |
| DfE registration number | 373/6027 |
| Inspection number       | 10053825 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                      | Other independent school   |
| School category                     | Christian Independent School   |
| Age range of pupils                 | 4 to 16  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 93   |
| Number of part-time pupils          | 0  |
| Proprietor                          | Christian Family Schools LTD   |
| Chair                               | Benjamin Chinedu Udejiofo  |
| Headteacher                         | Judith Baxter  |
| Annual fees (day pupils)            | No fixed fees  |
| Telephone number                    | 01142 726994   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.bethanyschoolsheffield.org">www.bethanyschoolsheffield.org</a>       |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:office@bethanyschoolsheffield.org">office@bethanyschoolsheffield.org</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 14–16 October 2015   |

## Information about this school

- Bethany School is a Christian independent day school for girls and boys aged 4 to 16.
- The school has an open admissions policy and admits children from all faiths.
- Bethany School is the sole school in the Christian Family Schools LTD.
- There no set fee for parents to pay. Parents make a financial contribution based on what they can afford.
- The school expects parents to contribute fully to school life and their child's education. Many parents are volunteers at the school.

- The previous standard inspection took place in October 2015.
- There are six pupils attending the school who have an education, health and care plan.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days. The school was given notice of the inspection the day before.
- Inspectors visited a number of lessons covering all year groups. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors talked to pupils informally during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also met formally with pupils in Years 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- An inspector met with all members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors also talked to parents during the inspection.
- An inspector toured the school site.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to the school's work, including the self-evaluation document which includes leaders' evaluation of the school's compliance with the independent school standards, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, documents relation to safeguarding, behaviour, welfare and attendance, and documents relating to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including the 30 free-text responses. They also analysed the eight responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Rogers

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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