

Saint Pius X Catholic High School

A Specialist School in Humanities

Wath Wood Road, Wath-upon-Dearne, Rotherham, S63 7PQ

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because students are not making good progress in a number of subjects including mathematics.
- Teaching in too many lessons is not sufficiently focussed on getting students to do work that challenges them, resulting in less than good progress in these lessons.
- Leadership and management require improvement as not all changes planned by the school have made as much difference as they should to teaching and learning.
- Governors agree plans which do not always specify exactly what improvements in teaching or achievement are expected and how their success will be measured.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They feel confident about the school's ability to keep them safe.
- Close and accurate assessment of the quality of teaching by the headteacher alongside other school leaders is beginning to help them get a more accurate view of what good teaching looks like.
- Some of the new approaches to improvement put in place, such as the student support centre and systems to check student progress, are already beginning to show a change for the better on teaching and achievement.
- Leaders, managers and governors are supportive of innovative ways of giving students a better experience of learning in lessons. New approaches brought in this year, and some continuing from last year, are making a change for the better on the quality of teaching and beginning to improve weaknesses in achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons involving 33 teachers out of a possible 47. Three lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, staff and students from the school.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of school documents including information relating to teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies, whole school and departmental development plans and reviews, records of observations of the quality of teaching and records of the progress students are making.
- Inspectors analysed the 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, completed by parents and 108 responses to a survey of parents' views carried out by the school.

Inspection team

Pankaj Gulab, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joan McKenna	Additional Inspector
Peter Eeva	Additional Inspector
Joan Beale	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students entitled to the pupil premium is below average.
- The vast majority of students are from White British heritage with small numbers from minority ethnic groups and a few students for whom English is not their first language.
- The proportion of students with disabilities and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for progress and attainment.
- The school works with the following providers to meet the needs of particular students.
 - Dearne Valley College
 - Leslie Francis (Hair and Beauty)
 - Serenity (Hair and Beauty)
 - Glebefields (Riding Stables)
 - Saint Thomas Motors
 - Groundworks – Dearne Valley

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by improving the quality and consistency of teaching so it is securely good or better by:
 - requiring teachers to make full use of information about their students' learning to set work that meets the different needs of individuals and is challenging for all
 - ensuring students are actively involved in their learning in all lessons through being given opportunities to learn things for themselves and/or in groups
 - ensuring teachers regularly check students' learning so that misunderstandings can be addressed quickly in lessons and through comments in marking.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - focussing all leaders and managers on ensuring their actions improve teaching and the amount of progress students make
 - ensuring leaders and managers ask the right questions, using all the evidence available, when planning new approaches to making improvements and take the right steps to help students achieve their best
 - developing the skills of the governing body, especially in understanding how good teaching is, and in checking data about students' performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- For some years the school's examination results have been in line with the national average. However in 2012 the results in mathematics dropped and this resulted in only 51% of students securing 5 grades at A*-C including English and mathematics. This is a 6% drop on the previous year and below the national average.
- Students generally make the nationally expected amount of progress in English although those who are in the middle ability range when they join from primary school do not do quite as well. Progress in mathematics is not as good as in English with many students making less than the amount of progress expected nationally.
- Performance in other subjects is variable with some improving but others dropping. The percentage securing A*-C grades in most subjects is in line with national averages for those subjects.
- The number of students achieving five grades A*-G has been consistently higher than the national average reflecting the school's commitment to all its students.
- The average point scores in their best eight subjects including English and mathematics for students entitled to the pupil premium are slightly below the national figures for similar pupils and much less than the scores for those in the school who do not receive it. New facilities in the 'student support centre' and additional staffing in place this September are helping to close these gaps although it is too early to judge the full impact of the improvements. This early success also shows the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for its students.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs are performing in line with those nationally. Within this group those supported on school action plus are making less progress than their peers. The new arrangements described above are also being used to support these students and showing some early signs of success.
- The small number of students in various alternative provisions (listed earlier) for part of their education are gaining appropriate qualifications and some are achieving well.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Some teaching is good and some outstanding but not enough to ensure that students make consistently good progress in their learning.
- There are positive relationships between teachers and students. Calm and conducive atmospheres for learning are created and most teachers are supportive and encouraging. Lessons are generally well prepared. Teachers explain the purpose of the lessons so students understand what they are going to do. A range of activities are carefully planned to help students' develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Features of the good and outstanding lessons help ensure that students learn well. For example, what students are to learn and how to be successful is explained in detail so the students can push themselves to do better. Explanations are very clear and the teacher illustrates points well to interest students and deepen their understanding. Activities are set which require students to be fully involved and so their ability to learn for themselves is promoted well. Their learning is checked well and misunderstandings corrected quickly.
- However too few lessons are of this quality and consequently teaching promotes sound rather than good learning. Shortcomings include unclear explanations of what students are expected to learn and why. Students are sometimes too passive because teachers talk for too long and there is not enough time for students to learn for themselves. Information teachers have about where students are up to in their learning is not used to ensure the tasks are well suited to their different needs or are challenging enough. Students' learning is not checked thoroughly enough. For example, one student answering a question correctly is sometimes taken to mean that all

students understand when they do not.

- Students have targets; some know them well whilst others have a more hazy understanding. Some high quality feedback is given on how well students are doing and how to improve their work, but this is variable overall with some feedback giving them less than helpful information.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Almost all students behave well in and out of lessons. They listen well in the classroom and positively engage when the teacher captures their interest and challenges them. This happened in one Year 8 lesson where students were intrigued by the way in which the human body worked and kept asking the teacher more questions beyond the focus topic of lungs. Students' attentive concentration was also demonstrated in a good assembly and when grouped together in the hall to carry out mathematics intervention work. They are generally keen and eager to learn.
- Attendance is above the national average and has improved compared to last year. The percentage of students who are persistently absent is in line with the national average.
- Whilst there are reports of some bullying, parents and students believe they are rare and dealt with effectively. Students and parents believe this is a safe school.
- Students enthusiastically get involved in the wide range of extracurricular activities on offer. These, alongside other curriculum experiences contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is leading the drive for improvement in a number of ways. These are based on a shared view of improving teaching and raising the expectation of how much progress students should be making over a year. He is spending time observing teaching with other school leaders in order to check the accuracy of their judgements about its quality. This is leading to a clearer, view of what good and outstanding teaching looks like. However, it is too soon to judge how these developments are improving pupils' longer term performance.
- Whole school and departmental development plans are focused on improving achievement through better teaching. Nevertheless, the way in which the success of these plans is to be measured is not always clear and time scales for achieving such success are not always set. Evidence from the inspection shows that the quality of teaching does not consistently match the school's judgements. The headteacher is doing much of the work to improve teaching. Whilst some school leaders are helping to improve teaching through their close and accurate checking of its quality, others have too rosy a view and this is hindering improvement. The headteacher is currently working to resolve this.
- There is some good and outstanding teaching in the school. This expertise has been used to form 'teaching and learning communities' where best practice is shared and trialled. These communities allow teachers to explore different ways of teaching to improve achievement. Whilst there have been some early improvements, it needs further time and clearer focus to make a difference to all teaching.
- Teachers who lead and manage subjects are upbeat about their role and speak positively about their experiences of joint observations. They welcome the use of the teaching and learning communities to improve teaching in their subject. However, sometimes subject leaders are not taking direct responsibility for the quality of teaching in their area.
- Systems for managing performance of teachers have been reviewed for this academic year and incorporate the national Teacher Standards. Targets for staff are appropriately focussed to improve teaching and students' achievement.
- The new system to record the way in which students are progressing is being used well. Those

monitoring students' progress can now identify anyone who is not doing as well as they should, allowing them to put in place support to help these students to catch up quickly.

- A number of changes to the way in which the curriculum is organised have been put in place recently and are beginning to meet the needs of students more effectively. Students now have a choice of an academic route or one that has a mixture including more practical subjects. The introduction of these and the use of alternative provision for some are resulting in some good progress. The figure for students leaving the school and not known to be in education or work is lower than the national.
- Early entry to examinations is used sparingly to support those at risk of failing to complete their academic studies or to provide an additional experience of the types of questions students can expect.
- Parents are supportive of the school and appreciative of the regular reports they receive on their children's progress towards their academic targets.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and the school operates effective safer recruitments practices.
- The local authority has commissioned an educational consultant to provide support for the school and he has access to specialist subject leaders who have been involved in supporting the school with some success.
- The school's leadership has shown that it is capable of continuing to make improvements. This is evident, for example, in the improved achievement in some subjects, the reduction in fixed term exclusions and improved attendance. There is a clear acceptance of challenging targets by students, staff and parents and a major focus on improving teaching, which is having some success.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a temporary Chair and Vice Chair. Governors receive an appropriate amount of information to help them in their role. Plans to involve governors in 'non judgemental' joint lesson observations have been made but not yet put into practice. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses as pointed out by senior leaders. Although some challenging questions are asked by governors, their skills in analysing documents, such as those containing data on students' progress, are not securely developed. Plans made and initiatives agreed do not always have clear enough measures by which their success can be judged.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106962
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	405071

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	640
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue McCarthy
Headteacher	Tony Bishop
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2010
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