

# St Anne's Roman Catholic High School, Stockport

Glenfield Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 2QP

**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Teaching and learning and leadership and management at all levels, although improving, are not yet good enough to enable all students to make good progress.
- For too long teachers in some departments have been satisfied if students gain grade C at GCSE and have not provided sufficient challenge for more able students to reach the highest grades. Students are making faster progress now but are only beginning to catch up.
- Not enough emphasis has been put on students making good progress in Years 7 to 9.
- Progress in science and English has been inconsistent and insufficient in recent years. Action taken by senior and middle leaders to raise attainment has been partly successful but there is more to do to raise standards to consistently above average.
- Some aspects of checking on the work of the school, such as looking at the quality of work in students' books, especially by subject leaders, are not sufficiently rigorous to make sure weaknesses are spotted and put right.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders, working with effective support from the local authority, have improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection. There is some good and outstanding teaching.
- Students achieve well in the performing arts, drama, history, physical education, modern foreign languages and religious education.
- The great majority of students feel safe in school.
- The headteacher has set new and higher expectations for how students should behave in lessons, so that teachers can teach and students can learn. This is proving to be very effective. Behaviour has improved and is now good in most lessons and around the school.
- Good quality personal support and specialist teaching for disabled students and those who have special educational needs help these students to often make good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 teachers in 36 lessons. Two of these were joint observations with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher responsible for developing teaching and learning. In addition, the inspectors visited guided reading sessions, small-group sessions for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and other staff, members of the governing body, groups of students from every year and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at students' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- The views of 29 parents who completed the on-line questionnaire ,'Parent View', were noted, as well as letters from parents who wrote directly to express their views.
- The team also took account of the 20 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector
John Leigh	Additional Inspector
Clarice Nelson-Rowe	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized secondary school where the great majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- An above average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for additional government funding through the 'pupil premium'.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is average but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A very small number of students attend vocational courses at Stockport College.
- The school has specialist status in arts (media) and recently received the Artsmark gold award. It has several other nationally recognised awards, including Sportsmark and Healthy School status.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2011.

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

- Eliminate the small amount of inadequate teaching and ensure more lessons are good or better by:
  - ensuring that teachers' lesson plans identify clearly what students will learn, where they might need further explanation or practice and which students might need more challenging work
  - giving students more opportunities to think for themselves
  - designing lessons which will actively involve students, keep their interest and inspire them
  - setting higher expectations for the quantity and quality of work in students' books, so that they have effective notes from which to revise
  - making sure that marking is regular and frequent, particularly in mathematics and science
  - providing comments in books so that students know exactly what to do to improve their work
  - developing a dialogue between students and teachers to take learning further.
- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
  - developing clear strategies to support the highest attaining students
  - narrowing the gap between the attainment of girls and boys
  - further narrowing the gap between the attainment of all students and those supported through the pupil premium
  - embedding systems to speed up progress in Key Stage 3 as a better preparation for GCSE.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
  - enabling all staff to learn from the best teaching in school
  - ensuring middle leaders, when observing lessons, accurately base their judgements on students' progress and the quality of their learning, rather than on what the teacher is doing
  - rigorously checking students' work in their books and folders
  - appointing staff to support and make checks on the development of literacy and numeracy across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Attainment is average in mathematics and English by the end of Year 11. Attainment in science has been below average for over three years but is slowly improving. Many students are capable of reaching above average standards but this has not happened because some teaching has not been challenging enough to ensure students make good progress. This is starting to improve but there is much more to do before achievement is good.
- Students are entered early only for GCSE mathematics. The school has recognised that this does not always result in the best achievement and will review its policy for early entry next year.
- Boys and higher-attaining students do not achieve as well as similar students nationally in both mathematics and English.
- Students supported through the pupil premium funding are starting to make better progress, but the gap between their achievement and that of others is narrowing very slowly.
- Students make good progress on some courses, such as BTEC business studies, BTEC information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, English literature, French, drama, media and communication studies and statistics.
- The very small numbers of students who attend vocational courses at Stockport College make progress at the same rate as other students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to such students nationally, in both mathematics and English, because they receive individual help when they need it. Some individual students make exceptional progress from their starting points. These students often make more progress and achieve better in the vocational courses rather than in traditional GCSE courses.
- Reading skills are promoted in special reading sessions but, across the school, there is no clear policy to promote reading, writing and mathematics. Therefore, achievement is haphazard, rather than planned and properly tracked.
- The number of students who gain at least three A\* and A grades at GCSE is increasing, but is still too low.
- In most classes, the attitude of students to their work is positive and the great majority are keen to succeed.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- In some lessons, teachers' plans are not strong enough to identify which tasks are most suited for students of different levels of ability and to make sure that lower, middle and higher attaining students can all make good progress.
- Sometimes the resources used are dull and uninspiring. For example, in some science lessons, there no equipment is used and very limited use is made of textbooks and interesting images.
- In the lessons which require improvement, teachers often talk for too long, so that the students stop listening properly, have too few opportunities to think and work by themselves and their learning is slow.
- Sometimes students make no meaningful notes in lessons to record their learning so there is nothing to revise or build on to help them progress.
- Where teaching is good or better, lessons progress at a much faster pace because teachers constantly check students' understanding and know when they can move on to the next step. Teachers in these lessons have much higher expectations of what students can achieve. Excellent examples were seen in drama, Spanish, religious education and physical education.
- In better lessons, students are actively involved and enjoy their learning. Teachers ask open-ended questions, which encourage students to think for themselves. Students complete a wide

variety of activities which keep them interested and involved in the lesson. For example, in a design and technology lesson, students were working in groups, each with a specific role. In a good science lesson, activities were timed and built on previous learning so that each activity deepened students' knowledge and understanding.

- Some teachers mark books in a way that ensures students know how well they have done and what will improve their work. However, others either do little or no marking, or do not provide students with any useful advice on how to improve. This was particularly the case with a number of mathematics and science books. Expectations for the quality of work in students' books are sometimes too low, so that books are untidy and do not provide sufficient good quality work for later revision, which will enable students to achieve well. Some students ignore requests to repeat or complete work and there is no dialogue between students and teachers to show that students have responded to instructions or suggestions.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students consistently behave well in lessons and around the school. They work well with others and show respect for adults and their peers.
- Students feel safe in school and understand how to keep safe in various situations, such as on the road, when using the internet and mobile phones and when playing sport.
- Students are confident that bullying is rare and is mainly limited to name-calling. Nearly all students spoken to knew that they could go to any member of staff for support if they needed it.
- Students and most staff agree that behaviour has improved rapidly since the arrival of the new headteacher. Many students say that new rules to make sure everyone arrives at lessons with the right equipment and ready to learn are improving their experience in class and helping them to make better progress.
- Attendance is usually average. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has decreased slightly.
- The majority of parents expressed the view in the on-line questionnaire that their children were safe and that behaviour is generally good.
- Students are generally proud of their school and are keen to be involved in making it better.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other leaders, has taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching which is becoming more engaging, involving students more actively and encouraging them to work things out for themselves. Departments where students have underachieved for some years have been given intensive support and extra training. Teachers whose work was inadequate have either left or been helped to improve. Nevertheless, there remains a small proportion of teaching which is sometimes inadequate.
- There is a new sense of purpose and ambition in the school over the last 18 months which is shared by most of the staff and the students. Morale is high because members of the school community have confidence in the headteacher and know that the school is improving. A rigorous system to track students' progress shows where it could be improved.
- Checks on the quality of teaching by senior leaders are now accurate and systems have improved since the last inspection. However, some middle leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching and marking have been too lenient and inaccurate to ensure improvement.
- The school currently has no members of staff responsible for developing literacy and numeracy across the range of subjects. Staff have had some training on literacy but there is no proper policy or system for checking on what is happening within the school.
- Many new ways of approaching teaching have been introduced but it is too soon yet to see strong improvement in students' achievement.

- The improvement in behaviour and students' attitudes to learning clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of senior leaders. The curriculum has improved significantly and is much better suited to the students.
  - The school is not yet able to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to achieve because of the gaps between the achievement of girls and boys, all students and those known to be entitled to the pupil premium funding.
  - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spirituality is fostered especially through the example of the behaviour of adults in school. Students are rightly proud of their links with schools in South Africa and their work in fund-raising for charities at home and abroad.
  - The school has a good partnership with parents who are happy with most aspects of the school's work. Parents particularly praise the way the school provides good care for students in difficulties or with problems.
  - A senior manager is designated to monitor the attendance and safety of the very small numbers of students who attend vocational courses at Stockport College,
  - The local authority has provided strong support, especially for the English department which is improving.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Since the last inspection, the governors have appointed a new Chair of the Governing Body and a vice-chair and all have undertaken training in understanding progress data and processes to bring about school improvement. As a result, the governors are now much better informed about how well the school is doing and what still needs to improve. Governors have set up their own action committee to find out for themselves about what is happening in school instead of waiting for regular termly meetings with the headteacher. They are involved in decisions about the budget and checking on how pupil premium funding is spent and in making sure that it is starting to make a difference to the students involved. They have a clear grasp of the link between performance management and teachers' salary progression and are actively involved in checking on improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Safeguarding arrangements are secure because governors have a clear understanding of their statutory duties.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106144
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	400822

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	670
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sara Bayley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Meredith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 432 8162
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