

Trinity Catholic College

Saltersgill Avenue, Middlesbrough, TS4 3JW,

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Students' achievement in mathematics is inadequate. As a result, achievement overall is judged to be inadequate. Too many students do not make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics because too much teaching in the subject is inadequate.
- Some teaching in other subjects requires improvement. The level of challenge is not always well matched to students' needs.
- More able students and those supported at school action do not make enough progress and so do not reach the standards they should.
- Despite the school's strenuous efforts, students' attendance remains below the national average, although the gap is closing.
- The leadership of mathematics is not providing enough challenge to eradicate inadequate teaching rapidly.
- Due to recent changes of roles, there is some variation in the quality of leadership across departments. There has not been sufficient time for some leaders and managers to apply their skills and expertise consistently.
- The governing body's knowledge of the school's performance is not accurate enough for governors to hold school leaders fully to account.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE passes rose steeply this year to reach the national average. These are the school's best results since it was formed in 2009. Achievement in English and art is good.
- Teaching is improving; more than half seen during the inspection was good and some was outstanding. Students make good progress in an increasing number of subjects.
- Students' behaviour outside lessons creates a calm atmosphere: in lessons it is usually good. Students follow the rules well, showing respect for each other. Students say they feel safe in school.
- The school is progressing well on a number of fronts. Senior leaders have successfully led it through significant challenges to improve teaching and students' performance since the previous inspection. Leaders in the sixth form have quickly improved provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 51 lessons or part-lessons. Five of these were shared observations with senior staff.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, subject leaders, members of the governing body, students, a representative of the local authority and an external consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, checked students’ books during lessons and undertook a more detailed scrutiny of students’ work in mathematics. They looked at a range of documents including those relating to the students’ progress over time, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement planning and safeguarding procedures.
- Twenty nine responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as well as a letter from one parent and 119 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
James Bradley	Additional Inspector
Mark Patton	Additional Inspector
Sonya Williamson	Additional Inspector
Colin Scott	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is well above average.
- Most students are of White British heritage; very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is average. An average proportion is also supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection in May 2011. In September 2011, the two schools from which it was formed moved onto a single site. At the same time the school incorporated an adjoining sixth form college into its provision. From that date, there have been a number of changes of both senior and departmental leaders, as well as the appointment of some new teaching staff. There is no timetabled alternative provision used by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of all teaching to at least good so that all students, including those in the sixth form, the more-able and those supported at school action, achieve better outcomes by:
 - capturing and sharing the best teaching methods so that all students benefit from good teaching
 - ensuring that marking policies and procedures in all subjects match those in the high performing subjects and are implemented by all staff
 - improving teachers' marking and feedback to students so that they have clear targets for improvement and regular opportunities to act upon advice
 - requiring teachers to make use of up-to-date information about students' learning when they are planning lessons
 - developing teachers' skills in assessing, through close observation and questioning, how well students are progressing in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers keep explanations brief and to the point so that students have plenty of time for learning through activities.
- Urgently raise students' achievement in mathematics by:
 - eradicating all inadequate teaching in the subject
 - quickly raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers regularly mark students' work and give prompt advice on how to improve, in line with the policies in the most successful departments
 - holding teachers more closely to account for the progress made by their students in mathematics by setting clear performance targets for teachers, rigorously checking progress

towards achieving them and taking prompt action if they are not met.

- Raise the attendance of the small minority of students who are persistently absent, and whose achievement suffers as a result.
 - Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing training and support to enable the leaders of mathematics to monitor effectively the work of the department, hold colleagues to account and support them to improve outcomes for students
 - ensuring that the good practice in checking and assessing in the most successful departments is shared with all subject leaders, so that there is greater consistency and accuracy in the school’s evaluations
 - setting clear and measurable performance targets for all teaching staff to ensure that they meet the Teachers’ Standards
 - developing governors’ knowledge of the school’s performance, so that they are better able to hold the school to account for students’ progress and teachers’ performance.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- The proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics rose steeply in 2012, as a result of successful interventions for specific groups of students. Nevertheless, this proportion remained significantly below the national average in the subject, for the third successive year.
- Too much teaching in the subject requires improvement or is inadequate because some teachers do not check enough on students' learning through regular marking of books. They do not pick up quickly enough where students need help or more challenge during lessons. Because of the inadequate achievement in this key subject, students' overall achievement is judged to be inadequate.
- By contrast, students' progress in English exceeded the national figure this year, continuing an upward trend in the subject. In other areas of the curriculum students' progress is also accelerating because of improvements to leadership and to teaching. The school's data and lesson observations indicate that students' progress is beginning to improve in Key Stage 3. The proportions of students at, or close to, the expected level for their age is increasing, because improvements to teaching are enabling more students to make expected progress between Years 7 and 9.
- Despite a recent drive to extend the use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, this is not firmly enough in place in all subjects. However, students do have regular opportunities for reading and their attainment in this subject is generally at the expected level.
- Students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs make similar progress to other students because of the well-planned support they receive, which is based on accurate checks on their learning.
- Students supported by school action do not progress as well as other students because teachers do not pinpoint precisely enough what they need to learn next. Often the steps in learning are too big and students lose heart for tasks that are too difficult. More-able students do not always make enough progress and so do not reach the highest grades.
- The attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school receives additional funds (pupil premium), is below that of other students in their overall average point score at GCSE and in their basic skills. However, the careful targeting of these funds is paying dividends. The performance of these pupils in the 2012 examinations improved significantly and the gap between their performance and that of other students has narrowed.
- The attainment and progress of students in the sixth form is improving steadily, and progress is comparable with sixth form performance nationally, though attainment could be higher. The range of subjects and pathways available in the sixth form has been extended substantially in response to students' interests, so that they engage more enthusiastically in their learning.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving across the school. However, while more than half of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and some was outstanding, teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure good progress for all students.
- Teaching in mathematics is inadequate overall. Too many teachers do not review students' work accurately or often enough to know when they need extra support or more demanding work.
- There is over-dependence in mathematics on regular tests at the end of topics to establish what students know and where there are gaps in learning. This method of checking learning fails to pick up quickly enough where students are either struggling with new work or are coasting because it is too easy.
- Too many teachers do not mark students' work in mathematics, but give students answers and

rely on them to mark their own or others' books. This lack of regular marking and feedback means that many students are not receiving the support and challenge they need to maximise their learning.

- In the minority of mathematics lessons where teaching and progress are good, students are challenged well. They work at a brisk pace showing great enthusiasm for the subject because tasks are pitched at just the right level. Such a lesson was seen in Year 10, where students worked quickly to solve problems involving symmetry because they were well prepared by the teacher's probing questions that developed their thinking.
- Where teaching and learning are good, teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and effort, which keeps lessons moving at a brisk pace. In the best lessons students' progress accelerates when they are expected to work independently and think for themselves. Regular, careful marking of students' work gives teachers a clear idea of what students need to do to move to the next level. In good lessons teachers use this information well to provide a range of activities so that all students are supported to succeed.
- In other lessons, teachers talk for too long instead of challenging students to think for themselves, share and develop ideas. In such lessons students become bored and disconnected from the learning and do not achieve as much as they could.
- Teachers' planning varies in quality and is often not based on a good understanding of what students need to learn next. Some teachers' planning is a description of what students will do in a lesson rather than what they will learn.
- Marking policies vary from department to department and are not consistently used to improve students' learning by giving them advice and then time to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Attendance is improving; although not at the national average, there has been a sizeable reduction in persistent absence and overall attendance is moving closer to average. Exclusions have fallen significantly in the last year, from when the school moved on to a single site.
- A strong, supportive and positive ethos is developing well across the school. Good pastoral care is based on clear, well-understood systems. Students feel, and their parents rightly agree, that they are safe in school.
- Students say they know how to keep themselves safe. They are taught how to assess risks in practical lessons and those relating to internet use, drugs and alcohol.
- Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection because effective systems are firmly in place throughout the school and behaviour management procedures are consistently followed by staff. Supervision is well planned and effective in maintaining a calm, safe atmosphere when students move between lessons on this large site.
- Behaviour in lessons is usually good; it supports learning and allows students to work cooperatively and learn from each other. In lessons where teaching is good or better, students show ambition and determination to succeed. In a few lessons, behaviour deteriorates and some disruption occurs, usually because the work is not well pitched to ensure that students are motivated and fully occupied by their tasks.
- Students say there is some bullying but that it is dealt with effectively because prefects and staff are always on hand to offer support, and they take all incidents seriously. Older students believe that, 'The school 'works' because everyone has come together from the two schools and we help each other', and 'The ethos of the Catholic school helps us to be better people regardless of our religion.' Students' positive attitudes and tolerance of difference demonstrate the effectiveness of the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students in the sixth form speak highly of the support and feedback they receive to improve their progress. They, and other students, also value the extra-curricular provision which offers a wide choice of activities to widen their horizons and develop new interests.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have been effective in improving some significant aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection, although achievement in the key subject of mathematics is inadequate. The quality of teaching, outcomes in GCSE examinations, behaviour and attendance have all improved and continue to do so. A neighbouring sixth form college has been successfully amalgamated with the main school.
- Much has been done to create a single identity and shared vision that is supported by a majority of staff. These achievements indicate the school's capacity for further improvement and now require time to embed and develop before the full impact of this work is evident.
- Systems to check the school's work are developing, but there is some way to go before they are rigorous or consistent enough to ensure the school makes rapid progress towards its goal of becoming a good school.
- Not enough of the successful practice that exists in some departments is captured and shared to strengthen the weaker ones. Some department leaders, such as for mathematics, need more support from senior leaders to implement systems and policies with staff who are reluctant to accept the need for more rigour.
- The management of teachers' performance is inconsistent and consequently having too little impact on improving teaching in some subjects. For example, not all staff are aware of their targets for this school year, while others were not held sufficiently to account for underperformance in the last school year.
- A significant proportion of staff raised concerns about the amount and quality of professional development available to them, while others voiced concerns about inconsistencies in implementing school policies.
- Students' progress is tracked regularly. Despite this, not enough is done in some subjects to ensure that more-able students reach the highest grades or to help students supported by school action to make similar progress to their peers.
- Equal opportunities are not well promoted, although good improvements are evident in the progress of students supported by the pupil premium, due to additional support and careful tracking of any possible underachievement. However, this is not the case for all groups of learners.
- The curriculum has improved to take better account of students' needs and aspirations at all key stages. For example, there are now four pathways available to students in Key Stage 4 to allow them to follow a mix of academic and vocational courses. Sixth-form provision has been enhanced by a similar breadth of opportunities.
- The use of basic skills across the curriculum is not sufficiently embedded. The school does not monitor how well these are developed in all subjects.
- The local authority's support for the school has been effective in helping the school's leaders to improve teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school but do not have a clear view of its weaknesses. While governors have given good support and challenge to develop the school and restructure staffing, they do not have enough detail of the performance of different departments to hold the school fully to account for students' outcomes. Their knowledge of teachers' performance targets is limited, so they have not been able to challenge the school over the performance of staff in the mathematics department. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	135606
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	406611

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1450
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Wood
Headteacher	Peter Coady
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2011
Telephone number	01642 298100
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