

Blessed Trinity RC College

Ormerod Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 3AA

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although more pupils are now making the progress expected of them, not enough pupils at the school are doing better than this. This is particularly the case for some more-able pupils.
- While pupils' progress in mathematics is improving, they do not achieve as well as they should in this subject.
- The school has only recently been able to demonstrate the impact of the additional funding provided through the pupil premium. Although the attainment of pupils supported by this money is increasing, it requires further improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Pupils are making better progress in all of their subjects than at the time of the last inspection. This is most clearly seen in English and in religious education.
- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Much of the teaching at the school is now good or outstanding. However, it is taking time for this better teaching to overcome previous levels of underachievement.
- The support provided for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is good. As a result, the progress made by this group of pupils is improving rapidly.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel very safe in school. They show respect to each other and to teachers and other adults. Pupils are keen to learn and want to do well. They say that bullying and other hurtful behaviour is very rare.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have been very effective in improving the school. They have been well supported in this by the work of the governing body.
- School leaders and governors regularly check how well the school is doing. Decisions about pay and promotion are closely linked to how well teachers help pupils to learn and achieve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 part-lessons, of which four were observed jointly with managers from the school.
- The inspection team made a series of short visits to registration sessions and an inspector visited a nurture group for a small number of pupils in Year 8. The lead inspector conducted a focussed scrutiny of pupils' workbooks in mathematics and undertook some short visits to a series of mathematics lessons in order to sample the quality of teaching. An inspector also sampled some lessons to judge the quality of education provided for disabled pupils and pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, with members of the governing body, school staff and with a representative from the local authority. In addition, inspectors observed school leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- Twenty-seven responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were received by inspectors. Inspectors also took account of the school's own surveys of staff, pupils' and parents' and carers' views.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, looked closely at pupils' work and other material and examined a range of documentation, including in relation to safeguarding. They also scrutinised information regarding pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, together with minutes of meetings of the governing body, school planning documents and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Lee Northern, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector
Chris Griffin	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Blessed Trinity Catholic College is larger than most secondary schools.
- It was judged to require Special Measures at its previous inspection in June 2011. This was due to inadequacies in achievement, in the quality of teaching, in pupils' behaviour and safety, and in leadership and management. Prior to this inspection, inspectors carried out four monitoring visits. In the last two monitoring visits, the school was judged to have made good progress since being subject to Special Measures. Inspectors took into account evidence gathered at previous monitoring visits.
- Approximately one-fifth of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding to support the achievement of children in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children whose parents serve with the armed forces. This proportion is slightly below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is greater than the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or supported at school action plus, is close to the national average.
- Around nine-tenths of pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is slightly lower than for other secondary schools.
- The school has specialist status in humanities and sport. A small number of pupils spend some of their time attending programmes run by alternative providers. These providers are Nelson & Colne College, Burnley College and ACERS.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement by ensuring that all teaching is good and more is outstanding by:
 - providing consistently high levels of challenge in all lessons, including for more-able pupils
 - ensuring pupils are more actively involved in their learning
 - expecting better and more extended responses from pupils during class discussions
 - improving the impact of leaders' checks on teaching by linking information from lesson observations more closely to evidence of learning in pupils' work.
- Increase further the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring new learning is built step-by-step on what pupils already know and can do
 - placing a greater emphasis on developing pupils' deeper understanding of the mathematics they learn.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils are now making much better progress, across all of their subjects, than they were at the time of the last inspection. This is because the overall quality of teaching has improved significantly. However, owing to the levels of underachievement that had built up in previous years, it is taking time for this better teaching to lead to good achievement overall. This is particularly the case in mathematics and for some more-able pupils.
- Pupils' attainment when they join the school is very close to the national average. Inspectors confirmed the school's view that pupils' attainment when they finish Year 11 is also average, having improved steadily since the time of the last inspection. However, as staff recognise, there remains room for further improvement before achievement is good.
- Examination results in English in 2012 rose markedly. Pupils' progress in English is continuing to improve because teaching in English is of consistently good quality. Results in mathematics in 2012 also rose, but not at the same rate. There remains some variation in the quality of mathematics teaching, although school leaders are taking effective steps to tackle this.
- In many lessons, pupils make good progress in their learning. This is being helped by the way the school ensures that pupils build up their literacy skills. Extra support for pupils who need help with reading and spelling has had a noticeable effect. In addition, most lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. However, not enough emphasis is always given to how well pupils express themselves or to the depth and detail of their responses to teachers' questions.
- Pupils who are supported by additional funding are also making much better progress. However, in 2012, the average point score reached by these pupils in English was equivalent to one GCSE grade lower, per pupil, than those of other pupils. In mathematics, it was equivalent to one-and-a-half GCSE grades lower per pupil. Although attainment had risen for all pupils, these differences had not changed much from the previous year. This was because the school had used this extra funding to support a range of activities that had benefited all groups of pupils. School leaders have improved the way they use pupil premium money in order to target support more carefully. As a result, these differences are now being rapidly reduced. However, the overall level of achievement for this group of pupils still requires further improvement.
- The school makes very limited use of early-entry to GCSE examinations. In a small number of instances, pupils take examinations in mathematics before the end of Year 11. Where this is done, the school makes sure that this approach does not restrict pupils' attainment. A few pupils in Year 10 follow a vocational course at a local college for one day every week. This course is very well matched to their needs and interests and they achieve well.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are also making faster progress. In some cases, these pupils are making even better progress than other pupils in the school. This is because there are excellent systems in place to check on how well pupils are doing and provide extra help quickly and effectively if needed. The team of staff who provide support for pupils with additional needs are very well led.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' books are marked regularly and that feedback is provided. Pupils say they appreciate the comments that teachers write. However, some comments, although detailed and supportive, do not pinpoint clearly enough what pupils need to do to improve.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good and outstanding teaching is helping to raise attainment and to make up lost ground but has not had time to make pupils' overall achievement good. The quality of pupils' learning is improving because teaching is better and behaviour has improved significantly. This has helped to create positive relationships and develop good attitudes to learning.

- Much more teaching is now consistently good than it was at the time of the previous inspection, particularly in English and in religious education. This is because teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and they work hard to make sure lessons are interesting and enjoyable. Some variation in quality remains, however. For example, in mathematics, although teaching is rapidly improving, it is not yet as consistently effective as in other parts of the school. This is because not all mathematics teaching ensures that pupils build new learning on what they already know and can do, or places enough emphasis on developing pupils' deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and ideas.
- In most lessons, planning is detailed, with a variety of activities that interest and engage. The best lessons ensure that all pupils are challenged to produce their best work. For example, in a geography lesson for Year 8 pupils, the teacher had made sure tasks were adapted so that low-attaining pupils and the most-able were able to make excellent progress. Pupils worked together very well to share their ideas and come to their own conclusions about the problems the teacher had posed.
- In a design and technology lesson for Year 7 pupils, the teacher used the pupils' responses to his questions to adapt the pace and direction of the lesson. He made sure every pupil knew exactly what to do to succeed. As a result, their finished 'pop-up cards' were very well produced and the pupils were able to explain clearly the skills they had learnt.
- In the minority of less successful teaching, some more-able pupils are held back because teaching does not move them on quickly enough to more challenging work. Similarly, although pupils persevere and try hard in their lessons, opportunities for them to be more actively involved are sometimes missed.
- Pupils' understanding of spiritual, cultural and moral issues is developed well throughout the curriculum. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and show great respect for other cultures and faiths. They get on well with one another and are courteous to adults and visitors. A group of Year 11 pupils very much enjoyed their music lesson, listening carefully to the pieces being played and applying their knowledge and skills very well. They thrived on the experience and all made outstanding progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in school. Their movement around the site, including in parts of the school that are congested at certain times, is calm and orderly. They are punctual to their lessons and overall levels of attendance to school are typically in line with national averages. Registration time is used to check routines and reinforce expectations; it is underused, however, as an opportunity for a more purposeful start to the day.
- The leadership of behaviour and safety is very strong and this has led to dramatic improvements since the last inspection. Expectations are high and are clearly understood by staff and pupils. Effective systems have been established to check on behaviour and respond quickly to any concerns. The emphasis on rewarding good behaviour is much appreciated by pupils, many of whom wear their 'star' merit badges with pride.
- A small number of pupils who are at risk of disaffection spend part of their week attending alternative provision. This is helping them to engage more positively with school and their attendance is improving.
- Pupils show very good attitudes in lessons. Teachers work hard to capture and sustain their interest and pupils enjoy being actively involved. In some lessons, pupils are happy to rely on the teacher to prompt and guide their learning. This is the chief reason why behaviour is not yet outstanding.
- Pupils reported that there is very little bullying in school and, where it does occur, they have confidence in staff to deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of the potential dangers associated with new technologies and the school community is one where all groups of pupils feel safe and valued.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his senior team provide a clear sense of drive and ambition for the school. They have focused very effectively on necessary and fundamental strategies that have secured rapid improvement. They rightly recognise the need to refine and adapt these approaches in order to maintain the momentum for further improvement.
 - Leaders who have responsibility for subject areas or who manage pastoral aspects of the school's work also contribute very well to school improvement. They welcome the increased levels of responsibility they have for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They are now more systematically and rigorously held to account for the quality of their work.
 - Appropriate decisions about pay and promotion are made in line with records of teachers' performance and national standards. Challenge and support have been provided where improvements in teaching have not met leaders' expectations.
 - Checks on the quality of the school's work are regular and accurate. The records of these checks provide useful information to school leaders. However, although leaders carry out regular visits to lessons to check on the quality of teaching, they do not yet link the outcomes from these visits with evidence from pupils' work about how good learning is over time.
 - The wide range of training available for teachers has been an important part of the rapid improvement in the quality of teaching. Support for individual teachers has been carefully matched to their needs and the needs of the school. As a result, the proportion of teaching that requires improvement is declining quickly.
 - Following the last inspection, the local authority acted promptly and effectively to help the school to improve. More recently, the level of external support has diminished in proportion to the growth in the school's own capacity to maintain this improvement. Nevertheless, the school continues to draw on valuable external support, including to further strengthen provision in mathematics.
 - The curriculum is generally well matched to pupils' needs and there is a good focus on developing pupils' literacy skills. Plans are in place to further develop the curriculum ready for the start of the next academic year.
 - The school takes the feedback of parents and carers, and pupils and staff carefully into account and reflects fully on the findings. Their generally positive views are rightly indicative of the extent of improvement since the last inspection.
 - At the time of the inspection, arrangements for safeguarding and safer recruitment met government requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has played a key role in helping the school to tackle the improvements required at the previous inspection. They know the school well and are able to use data about the school to hold leaders to account for performance. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching at the school and are able to support senior leaders in improving it further. They check that additional money is spent on things that help pupils to learn. The governing body is highly organised and keeps up to date by attending appropriate training. They evaluate the quality of their work well and have identified how it can be improved further.
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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

Unique reference number	134997
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	409634

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	1,211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Tyson
Headteacher	Richard Varey
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2011
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