

Holy Family Roman Catholic and Church of England College

Pot Hall, Wilton Grove, Heywood, Lancashire, OL10 2AA

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
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 good school.

- Senior leaders have high expectations of staff and students. They are committed to improving the quality of teaching and increasing the rates of progress made by students. Improvement plans are well focused as a result of accurate self-evaluation.
- Teaching is good and there is an ever-increasing focus on teachers sharing the best practice that is seen in outstanding lessons.
- The college gives excellent support to disabled students, students with special educational needs and those entitled to the pupil premium. This support is helping them catch up with the standards reached by other students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted through the joint faith ethos of the college, a broad and balanced curriculum, excellent extra-curricular opportunities and strong, supportive relationships with staff.
- Parents have a strong belief in the ability of the college to teach and look after their children well.
- Students' good behaviour and highly positive attitudes make the college a safe, friendly and harmonious place.
- Skilled, experienced governors provide challenge and effective support to the school's leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students are not routinely provided with opportunities to act on the advice given in written feedback. Some teachers do not fully challenge students of different abilities. On occasion, too much explanation is provided by teachers rather than giving the students opportunities to think things out for themselves.
- Students' progress and achievement, across the range of subjects, are not outstanding. Although leaders have accelerated the rate of progress students make in mathematics, some students' attainment at the end of Year 11 is not as high as it should be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, taught by 30 different teachers. Two of these observations were conducted with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors also visited an assembly, a tutorial session and a leavers’ ceremony for Year 11, and listened to Year 7 students read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, heads of department, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, a representative from the local authority and a parent.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of students and spoke to others informally.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s improvement planning and leaders’ checks on how well it is doing, monitoring records, analysis of students’ achievement, performance management information, behaviour logs, safeguarding arrangements, minutes of meetings of the governing body and one letter from a grandparent.
- Inspectors considered 21 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed 23 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Bradford

Additional Inspector

Judith Tolley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holy Family is a joint faith college serving the Catholic parish of Our Lady and St Joseph and the Church of England community primarily in Heywood and extending across the Borough of Rochdale.
- This college is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for funding from the pupil premium (which is provided to support the learning of students who are known to be entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of forces families) is in line with the national average.
- A large proportion of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than average.
- The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is very low.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is slightly higher than the average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college works in partnership with Siddal Moor High School and Hopwood Hall College, to extend the range of option courses for Key Stage 4 students.
- A large building project, intended to improve accommodation and learning resources, began in December 2011 and has been ongoing for almost 18 months on the same site as the college. This is now nearing completion. Senior leaders have been heavily involved in managing this project.
- There has been staffing instability in mathematics for the past three years. This has now been resolved.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment further in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the proportions of students making and exceeding the progress expected from their relative starting points are consistently higher than those found nationally
 - ensuring that students are supported in developing their numeracy skills in all subjects.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - continuing to provide opportunities for teachers to share the outstanding practice that already exists
 - providing students with opportunities to act on the advice given by teachers in written feedback to enhance their learning
 - ensuring that all teachers plan learning activities that fully challenge students of differing levels of ability
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning allows students to discuss their thinking and deepen their understanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the college in Year 7 with average standards. By the end of Year 11, as a result of good teaching, students have reached standards that are above average in many subjects, including English, science and languages, having made good progress from their starting points.
- There was a slight dip in the proportion of students who achieved five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics in 2012. The GCSE results in mathematics were lower as a result of staffing issues. However, this has now been addressed and the strategies put in place by senior leaders to restore attainment and rates of progress in mathematics are robust and effective. Data provided by the school indicate that current Year 11 students are expected to achieve in line with expectations. This was confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of work.
- Students' achievement is good in English, religious education, science and languages.
- Students are articulate, and literacy is a continuing focus across the college. From their entry into Year 7, students are encouraged to read in all subjects and there are daily opportunities for reading in form time. Catch-up funding provides additional literacy support for students who enter the school with low reading ages, but the impact of this has yet to be fully evaluated.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs typically make good progress. This is because teachers take every opportunity to help these students to develop their personal as well as their academic skills. Teachers have high expectations of their achievement and provide well-targeted support for these students.
- Pupil premium funding is used well in a variety of ways, including learning coaches and personalised courses, to support the learning of those known to be eligible for this funding. In-class or additional one-to-one or small-group mentoring helps students to catch up in their learning. The college ensures that all students can access extra-curricular experiences and activities. These strategies mean that students achieve nearly as well as others in the school.
- The gap between the achievement in English and mathematics of students eligible for free school meals and that of other students is less than one grade and is closing steadily over time as a result of the focused and intensive support they receive.
- Students who study vocational courses within college and under partnership arrangements make good progress in their learning.
- The quality of teaching and students' good behaviour both contribute to the high standards which allow students to progress further in their chosen pathways. Furthermore, students are motivated and well prepared socially, morally, spiritually and culturally to go confidently out into the world.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' strong subject knowledge helps to create lessons which students enjoy, and their calm approach to behaviour management means that students remain on task.
- Teaching is typically characterised by excellent classroom relationships, the provision of a variety of well-constructed activities and students working collaboratively in pairs or small groups.
- Most teaching is good or outstanding, but there is still a minority of teaching that requires improvement. In the best lessons teachers ask probing questions and encourage students to discuss their ideas, speculate and hypothesise. This was seen in a very effective physical education lesson in which the teacher constantly challenged students to think things out for themselves. In an equally successful history lesson, students working in pairs made excellent progress because the teacher encouraged them to question and challenge each other's responses. This enabled them to produce very high quality answers to examination questions. In some lessons teachers provide too much explanation themselves rather than allowing students

to develop their ideas verbally or to think for themselves.

- Teachers support students well in their learning, sometimes with the proactive help of teaching assistants. One excellent example of this was seen when a small group of students with special educational needs were taken to an allotment for their lesson. The teacher, accompanied by two teaching assistants, prepared the students in advance and all adults took every opportunity to engage individual students in discussion about the project. There was an outstanding focus on the development of oral communication, literacy, numeracy and science skills and every opportunity was taken to extend and consolidate students' learning.
- Most teachers provide useful feedback to students on their written work but opportunities for students to improve their learning are missed because students are not given time to act on this advice.
- Some teachers do not always challenge all students to work hard enough and ensure their progress is rapid enough because work is not always matched to their individual levels of ability. This means that students do not always attain as highly as they could.
- Although there is a school-wide policy for developing numeracy, some teachers miss opportunities that would help students to use and develop numeracy skills in real-life situations.
- Most students know their targets and are keen to know how to achieve them.
- In the past, some students have been entered early for their mathematics examinations but senior leaders and the new head of the mathematics department have decided that this is not now in students' best interests. The new entry strategy is that, in future years, all students will take their examinations in the summer of Year 11.
- Students have many opportunities within lessons and outside of the normal day to develop leadership and work-related learning skills, learn how to get on with people and to make the most out of their lives. Students are motivated and enjoy the variety of experiences offered.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the college is good, including at lunchtime and break. Students consistently show respect towards one another. They say they like the system of vertical tutor groups because they enjoy socialising and working with students of different ages. Year 7 and Year 11 students are 'buddied up' when they are in Years 6 and 10 respectively. Year 7 students say it helps them to settle into the college quickly and Year 11 students enjoy supporting and helping the younger students. There are ample opportunities for students to assume leadership roles.
- Students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, disabled students and those who have special educational needs are extremely well supported. They socialise and study with other students. One parent told inspectors that the college does everything it can to make things easier for her physically disabled daughter.
- Bullying is uncommon, incidents of racist and homophobic bullying are very rare and the college deals with these effectively. Students know how to protect themselves when they are online and the college gives them ways of dealing with cyber-bullying.
- Parents believe that the college manages behaviour well and that their children are safe; students confirm this view. Students attending vocational courses off-site behave responsibly.
- The number of exclusions was higher than average in 2011, but is steadily reducing as a result of improved behaviour management strategies and the college's close monitoring and support of students whose behaviour puts them at risk of exclusion.
- Attendance is above average and improving, and better than for similar schools overall. There is very little persistent absence.
- Leaders actively seek feedback from students with regard to their views on many aspects of the college's provision. When inspectors asked students how they thought the college could be improved they were unanimous in saying that they were very happy with it as it is.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders are extremely accurate in their monitoring and evaluation of the college's performance. They know how to improve teaching and learning and have comprehensive plans to raise further the quality of leadership and management, teaching and achievement. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding, because teaching is not yet helping all students to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Over the last year and a half, alongside successfully overseeing a major building project, senior leaders and governors have made leadership and management more rigorous so that leaders at all levels are now motivated to accept only the highest performance from both staff and students. Improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement are evident over time in leaders' observations, discussions and documentation. Subject leaders told inspectors that they feel well supported and valued by senior leaders. They are given increasing responsibility for driving improvement.
- Recent staff appointees are effecting necessary changes and improving standards. Examples of this can be seen in mathematics, information and communication technology and humanities. The new subject leader for mathematics has started to raise the profile of numeracy across the curriculum.
- The college's systems for analysing and monitoring students' progress are robust. Students in Years 7 to 10 are formally assessed half termly. In Year 11 they are formally assessed monthly. Potential underachievement is picked up by subject leaders and pastoral staff, and targeted support and intervention are helping to raise achievement in all subjects.
- The performance of teachers is linked to pay rises when these are justified. Teachers report that these systems contribute to improving their professional development by clearly linking targets to the national Teachers' Standards.
- Responses to staff questionnaires showed that staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the college and its leaders. One member of staff wrote, 'I have worked in a number of schools. I do, and always have thought that Holy Family is the best.'
- There is a process of lesson observations and good and outstanding practice is used to help improve the performance of other teachers. However, this has not yet raised the standard of teaching enough and some subject leaders would like to have more time to spend observing and helping colleagues.
- Strong leadership in English is helping to embed literacy across the curriculum but senior leaders have not yet fully evaluated its impact on outcomes for students.
- The curriculum is constantly being evaluated and refined to ensure that there is a suitable range of courses to meet the needs of all students. Students have good opportunities to engage in a range of activities outside the normal college day and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through all areas of the curriculum.
- The school has used the pupil premium to improve achievement in English and mathematics by providing small group and one-to-one sessions with specialist teachers and extra revision. There are good systems for monitoring students' progress.
- The college is inclusive and leaders effectively promote equal opportunities.
- The college benefits from taking part in collaborative groups facilitated by the local authority, for example, through subject networks for subject leaders and a data and assessment group for assistant headteachers, and it works in partnership with other local schools, sharing good practice, through these networks.
- The college's arrangements for safeguarding students meet all current regulatory requirements.
- **The governance of the college:**
 - Governors are committed and well organised in appropriate committees that systematically monitor the progress of the college's development plan. They provide challenge and support for college leaders, holding them to account for the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Governors understand and regularly review the college's data about students' performance and know how it is used to set targets. Governors have an accurate picture of the college's strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching and learning. They

understand the importance of good teaching and the difference that it can make to different groups. Governors are clear that only good quality teaching should be rewarded by a rise in pay. They manage teachers' performance well and ensure that resources and staff are efficiently deployed. Governors can account for the use of the pupil premium and they appreciate the need to become more aware of how it is contributing to the raised attainment of eligible students. Governors take advantage of the training provided by the local authority and staff training to keep themselves up-to-date.

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	131726
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	411780

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	574
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Paul Daly
Headteacher	Susan Casey
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2009
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