

All Hallows Catholic High School

Crabtree Avenue, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 0LN

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students at All Hallows Catholic High School receive an outstanding education that prepares them extremely well for their future.
- All groups of students make outstanding progress and leave at the end of Year 11 with attainment that is well above that found nationally.
- There is a relentless focus on raising achievement for all students in the school and this is proving very successful.
- Much of the teaching is outstanding and is never less than good. Teachers have expert subject knowledge and use innovative activities that involve students well and help them to learn rapidly.
- Students' work is marked regularly and thoroughly. It successfully advises them how to improve and further develop their understanding.
- Teachers place great importance on learning being an activity that should be valued and enjoyed. As a result, students respond well, taking ownership of their development. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for high quality independent learning.
- Teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks that stretch students' thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Their attitude to learning is excellent and makes a large contribution to their success. They are respectful, courteous and confident.
- Students overwhelmingly feel safe and supported by both their staff and each other. Parents also share this belief.
- All staff are extremely caring about the students at the school and students respond to this by returning this value to their staff.
- Students and staff are extremely proud of their school. This is illustrated by comments such as, 'I have worked at this school for a number of years and absolutely love it' from a member of staff and, 'the school has a family feel where everyone looks after each other' from a student.
- Parents and students value the school very highly and believe that the staff will do the very best for them.
- Governors and senior leaders set themselves very high standards. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching are robust and affecting further improvement in achievement.
- Opportunities for staff to develop their own skills of school management are central to the school's belief in growing talent and this has been extremely effective over the years.
- The headteacher, senior and middle managers are vigorous in their constant drive to improve further the quality of teaching in the school and this is enhancing provision and driving standards higher.
- The school's ethos of 'growing together' is central to its belief that it works in partnership, not isolation, with all participants.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 41 lessons and nine parts of lessons taught by 40 teachers. Observations were carried out jointly with four members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors also listened to groups of students reading, investigated behaviour in all aspects of the school and observed the special guidance programme which is used to equip youngsters with a range of skills and knowledge about society.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, racist and bullying incidents, the school’s view of its performance, the checks made on the quality of teaching and also information about teachers’ professional development.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, a group of learning managers in charge of subjects, governors and the school’s improvement partner from the local authority. Meetings were also held with four groups of students from across the school.
- The 107 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 66 responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed and information from two parental telephone calls was considered.

Inspection team

Colin Scott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Chris Griffin	Additional Inspector
Michael Blaylock	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All Hallows Catholic High School is an average-sized secondary school which has specialist technology and languages status and is heavily over-subscribed.
- The school is a national support school and the headteacher is a national leader of education supporting other schools across both the local authority and diocese contributing to headteacher training and induction.
- Staff, including support staff, are deployed to support the development of staff in other schools in the local authority and diocese.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those whose parents are in the forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students assessed as school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Almost all students are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic groups or at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- A small group of Year 10 students also study health and social care at Cardinal Newman College in Preston.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, by including opportunities for high quality independent learning as seen in the best lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students make outstanding progress and achieve high standards. Students enter Year 7 with attainment that is above average. By the end of Year 11, their attainment is significantly above average for indicators found nationally.
- Results from appropriate early entry of English and mathematics indicate that the school will this year gain its highest ever results in these subjects. This reflects outstanding progress.
- The school's own data indicates clearly that progress in all subjects is set to rise even further this year. The evidence from the inspectors' analysis of progress agrees with the school's own tracking.
- Although the proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics dropped in 2012, attainment was still well above national figures. Inspection evidence indicates that improvements have already occurred. The decrease in attainment on this measure has not only been arrested, it has been reversed.
- All groups of students in all subjects make outstanding progress throughout the school. This includes students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- Scrutiny of work carried out by inspectors during lesson observations shows that students make sustained and rapid progress in all subject areas. Attainment in most subjects is high with students making particularly outstanding progress in science, physical education and religious education.
- The small numbers of students who are eligible for pupil premium funding achieve almost as well as their peers and better than typically found. Due to the small numbers in this group, there are some variations but the school is reducing this gap in attainment over time. The pupil premium funding is being appropriately used for their targeted support and monitoring.
- Students who receive part of their curriculum off site are monitored carefully and also make outstanding progress.
- The school prepares students extremely well for their future. Their literacy, communication and numeracy skills are very well developed.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Much of the teaching is outstanding and during the inspection was never less than good. In the best lessons, teachers know their students exceptionally well and plan lessons that take into account their prior learning. Activities are imaginative, inclusive and inspire all groups of students to develop their understanding independently.
- Many lessons develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding by encouraging reflection and discussion of issues, such as diversity of communities and the differences in beliefs.
- Teachers in most subjects try to relate their lessons to actual examples in society and where possible plan their lesson in support of that. For example, in one science lesson, Year 9 students were challenged to create speeches, in character, for and against the creation of a limestone quarry, while the teacher played the role of the chair of the town council. This resulted in great excitement and keenness to participate allowing students to understand the impact of planning decisions taken by local government.
- Many teachers use innovative activities and techniques to generate high levels of interest and involvement to help students grasp the more difficult concepts. For example, in one information and communication technology lesson, Year 7 students were learning how to use a spreadsheet to model affordability and the teacher was able to fully involve them and hold their interest by applying this concept to theme parks. This context resulted in students being fully active in pursuit of solutions to the problem.
- Teaching assistants and other support staff, including teachers in training, are used extremely

well to offer additional support to students. For example, in one physical education lesson a trainee teacher was deployed effectively to support groups of students learning new skills in cricket so that all groups were able to make equal progress.

- In the best lessons, teachers constantly challenge students appropriately. They adapt the lesson frequently to stretch students' thinking in order to deepen their understanding of the concepts being taught and they give students time to reflect and work independently. This is not the case in all lessons.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations and their students respond extremely positively to this by wanting to do well and succeed in their work. Students are confident to ask their teachers questions when they find some concepts difficult to understand. Teachers are quick to work with students to ensure that their learning is able to continue and so that they progress at the same rate as their peers.
- Students say that teaching is always good and lessons are fun. They say that their teachers give them work that makes them think and is not always easy. They recognise that this helps them learn more rapidly. Ninety-nine per cent of parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are taught well. Ninety-seven per cent also say that their children make good progress at school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is outstanding. They are courteous, confident and respectful young learners who respect each other and their staff. The relationships built up by staff with students are exemplary. The passion shown for the school by both students and staff supports the climate for learning extremely well.
- Students are skilled in recognising how to stay safe in and around school, in practical lessons and when using new technologies. They say that they are very safe and this view is overwhelmingly supported by parents who responded to Parent View, where 99% believed that their child feels safe in school.
- Students are overwhelmingly positive about their school, the staff and their peers. They say that they have many opportunities to take part in activities in and out of school. They are especially excited about their involvement with local communities and the chance to experience international links.
- The school's ethos strongly supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of life in the community and in the wider world enabling students to be confident, caring and supportive young people.
- Bullying is extremely rare and the school has excellent systems in place to immediately deal with any incidents should they occur. Similarly, the systems in place at the school for students who may require help and guidance are secure and effective in giving support to those who need it.
- Exclusions are very low and have been falling over time. There have been no permanent exclusions this year. For the very few students who have received a fixed-term exclusion over recent years, the school has worked closely with them and their families to make sure that they continue their learning and succeed in examinations.
- Attendance is well-above average, persistent absence is well below average and students are keen to arrive at lessons punctually. This strongly evidences the school's belief that students enjoy school. Students themselves see their attendance and punctuality as important to them.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership and management are exemplary. All leaders, including governors, share a common purpose and view of the school's future. They are determined to maintain high standards and improve further. Leaders apply rigorous performance management processes that continue to improve the quality of teaching across the school and this helps to maintain the strong progress of students.

- Staff development is key to the school's continued success. Significant recent changes in senior and middle management are seen as an opportunity to enable more staff to develop their strategic skills and to raise further the achievement of students. The school actively seeks the personal growth of individual teachers to aspire to become leaders themselves and staff appreciate the personal support they are given by the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The headteacher has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and shares this information successfully with key leaders and governors to create effective strategies to develop the skills of staff further.
- The outstanding leadership and high expectations demonstrated by the headteacher ensures that staff and students are positively challenged to succeed.
- The school receives support for its improvement from the local authority. This support is seen as crucial by the headteacher and governors as a way of independently verifying performance and instigating effective challenge to the school to raise standards.
- Gaps between the performance of different groups of students is narrow and closing over time due to the excellent equality of opportunity for all groups of students ensuring they make outstanding progress.
- The curriculum and spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision are outstanding and meet both the needs and interests of students extremely well. This results in students who are keen to learn and achieve high standards.
- The school shares its practice through its designation as a national support school and through its strong and varied partnerships across Lancashire and the Archdiocese of Liverpool. This excellence is highly-regarded by others.
- All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met both on and off site. The school makes excellent use of international links and partnerships which are valued by students. This includes exchange visits and work experience. In these cases, the school has taken appropriate risk-assessments for safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very strong and has pursued excellence. They are well trained and understand data relating to the students' achievement well, ensuring that they have the skills to accurately hold school leaders to account for the performance of students and staff.
 - Governors ensure that the training and the performance of teachers are well managed so that salaries and promotion reflect performance.
 - Governors have a good knowledge of how the pupil premium funding is being spent to bring about positive outcomes for students.

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	119802
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	413313

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	893
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Perry
Headteacher	Chris Riding
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2007
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