

Savio Salesian College

Netherton Way, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 2NA

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
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.

- Although students' progress is beginning to accelerate, achievement in English and mathematics over a three-year period has been, and still is, inadequate.
- In 2011 and 2012, attainment in English and mathematics was low. In 2012, for example, less than half the average percentage of students made the progress they should have done in English and few made better than expected progress.
- Teaching is inadequate over time, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to learn independently.
- The quality of marking and feedback is too variable and students are not fully aware of how to improve their work.
- Good and exemplary classroom practice is not shared well enough among staff.
- The school's literacy and numeracy policies are not yet used consistently by teachers. Consequently, students do not have enough opportunities to practise and reinforce their skills in English and mathematics in all the subjects they study.
- Attendance is low overall and as a result, students' behaviour and safety overall require improvement. There are wide variations in the levels of attendance across years.
- The procedures used by leaders to monitor the quality of classroom practice do not enable them to consistently make and maintain accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning over time.
- The evaluation and monitoring by some heads of academic departments of the quality of learning in the classroom is not sharp enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, managers and governors have a realistic view of the school's weaknesses and are clear about what is needed to bring about improvement. They have introduced a variety of strategies which are now improving teaching, achievement and attendance.
- Students supported at school action plus make good progress.
- For most students, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Pastoral care is strong. Students are proud of their school and feel safe. They have a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility. Behaviour during the inspection was good.
- The impact of the school's specialist business and enterprise status is strong. Careers education is impressive. In 2012, all Year 11 students took up further education, training or employment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in parts of 33 lessons. One lesson observation was made jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also attended an assembly.
- Inspectors met with five groups of students. They also had discussions with heads of academic departments, including associate leaders, heads of year, the special educational needs coordinator, the specialist status coordinator and the senior leadership team. They also met with four members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the school's former School Improvement Partner.
- There were insufficient replies to enable inspectors to gain access to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors, therefore, took account of the school's own internal parental questionnaire. There were no questionnaires returned from staff.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at students' exercise books and files, internal and external student progress and attainment data, school development planning and the school's procedures to help it gain an accurate view of its performance. They also considered documentation in relation to specialist business and enterprise status, safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

James Kidd, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	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

- This is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. There are slightly more boys than girls.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also in line with that usually found.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after) is high, at nearly twice the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Most students are White British and there are very few who speak English as an additional language.
- Small numbers of students attend alternative provision. Thirteen students from Years 10 and 11 attend a local authority centre to help them manage their behaviour better.
- The school continues to be a specialist college for business and enterprise and students have won national competitions in this area. The school holds the Merseyside Citizenship Award, the National Standard for Enterprise Education and International School status. Staff and students also won first prize in the Observer National Eco Kids competition for the bird or bat ('Bob') box project.
- There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection. The school no longer has a sixth form. Some heads of academic departments have been appointed internally as associate leaders to improve departmental performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is at least good and meets the varying needs of all students closely enough in order to raise standards and accelerate progress further so that students make at least good progress, particularly in English and mathematics by:
 - giving students more opportunities to find things out for themselves and thus take more responsibility for their own progress
 - improving marking and written feedback so that students are fully aware of what they need to do to improve their work
 - extending the sharing of good and exemplary classroom practice across the school
 - ensuring the school's literacy and numeracy policies are applied consistently by staff so that students can practise and reinforce their skills in English and mathematics in all subjects.
- Build upon the school's strategies to improve the attendance of those students who do not come to school as regularly as they should.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - improving the procedures to enable all leaders to make and maintain accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning over time

- sharpening the evaluation of the quality of learning in the classroom by academic department heads.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- In 2011, students' attainment at the end of Year 11 in English and mathematics was low and progress in these subjects was inadequate given students' previous broadly average starting points on entry to the school. Achievement in English declined further in 2012 and, although there were improvements in mathematics, the percentage of students making expected progress was much lower than nationally. In English, for example, less than half the national average of Year 11 students made the expected three levels progress. A much greater percentage of students made expected progress in mathematics but in both subjects, below-average percentages of students made more than expected progress.
- As a result of a range of strategies to address this underachievement, students' progress is now beginning to accelerate but current rates of progress in English and mathematics remain are not fast enough. Students' achievement over a three-year period, therefore, is inadequate overall. The school has reviewed and changed its early examination entry policy. There are now fewer early entries to ensure that more-able students, in particular, can reach their potential.
- Although not yet consistently used by all staff, the school's literacy and numeracy policies are starting to have a positive impact. For example, the range of reading clubs, including paired reading with students in Year 11 is helping younger students to become better readers and to see the vital importance of reading to their progress in all the subjects they study. As one Year 7 student commented, 'Reading is the baseline for everything. It improves our vocabulary and helps us with our writing too.' However, students do not always have enough opportunities to practise and to reinforce their skills in English and mathematics in all the subjects they study.
- Achievement in a minority of subjects is good. In the applied business double award GCSE course, for example, attainment is significantly above average and more students reach the higher grades of A* and A than seen nationally. Indeed, business and enterprise is a strength of the school. Progress and attainment in science are accelerating strongly and achievement in information and communication technology is also good.
- The school uses pupil premium funding, including the Year 7 'catch up' funding, to provide breakfast and homework clubs for students known to be eligible for free school meals and for those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The impact of this funding was not seen fully in 2012, when there were marked gaps between the attainment and progress of these students and other groups in school. The attainment and progress of students supported by the pupil premium are now beginning to improve and the gaps are closing.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, particularly those supported at school action plus, are making good progress in English and mathematics as a result of strong support and teaching which meets their individual needs.
- The welfare and progress of the small numbers of students who attend alternative provision are monitored closely and they achieve well.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate overall because, over a three year period, weaknesses in teaching have led to students' poor progress, particularly in English and mathematics. However, as a result of the leaders' actions the quality of teaching is improving but there is still inconsistency across and within subjects. During the inspection, examples of good and outstanding teaching were seen, but the sharing of good and better practice across the school is not yet as extensive as it could be. Too much teaching still requires improvement.
- In too many lessons, teachers direct students' learning too much and students are not given

sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves. As a result, they are not always encouraged to take enough responsibility for their own learning and are very often passive. In those lessons where students lead activities and where they work in pairs and groups to support each other, in business studies, for example, learning is effective and students make good and sometimes better progress.

- Teachers' ongoing assessment of students' progress is being used increasingly well. Some teachers are not afraid to modify their approach and the lesson activities to ensure that students are not in danger of underachieving. This is, however, not always the case and, in a minority of lessons, including in English and mathematics, progress slows when teachers do not provide activities that meet the varying learning needs of students closely enough.
- There are examples of students being able to practise and reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. However, the school's literacy and numeracy policies are not yet used consistently by all staff and, as a result, students do not have enough opportunities to practise and reinforce these skills across the curriculum subjects.
- The quality of marking and of written feedback is too variable across the school. The best marking is regular and students receive not only credit for their efforts but also detailed comment on how they can improve their work. Too often, however, marking is cursory and students do not receive sufficient advice on how to reach the next level or grade. The school recognises this and is currently examining the quality of teachers' comments and of students' reaction to it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- There are many positive aspects of students' personal development but, because attendance, although getting better, remains low, the students' overall behaviour and safety are judged to require improvement.
- The school's strategies to promote regular attendance, including the appointment of an attendance officer, are beginning to have a positive impact. However, the attendance of students in Key Stage 3 is not as good as the attendance of those in Key Stage 4. Too many students still do not attend school as regularly as they should. For those students who attend regularly their punctuality to lessons is good.
- During the inspection, in the majority of lessons observed, students' engagement with their learning was good at least and, on occasions, outstanding. Without doubt, relationships between students and between students and staff are strong. In a small minority of lessons, there was some low-level misbehaviour, but this was generally handled well by staff. Exclusions from school have been above average for two years but are now reducing.
- The vast majority of parents who returned the school's internal questionnaire believe their children are safe and happy in school and that they are cared for, guided and supported well. Students confirm these positive views about pastoral care and say, 'We are safe here. There are teachers on every corner and they are approachable if we have any problems. Our teachers want the best for us!' Students are also grateful for the Saturday and Sunday morning lessons which teachers put on for them.
- Students believe that bullying is not a problem and, on the rare occasions it occurs, it is handled sensitively and effectively by staff. They have a keen understanding of bullying in all its forms, including cyber-bullying. They add that racism and homophobia have no place in their school. Students' keen understanding of how to treat and respect others is just one example of how well the school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students have a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility and to support their younger counterparts. Trained 'Savio Angels' visit Year 7 classes to help students settle into school and school captains interview candidates for leadership positions. The school council represents students' views and sports leaders lead a range of activities in school and also for primary school pupils. Students speak highly of the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer, including sporting and other cultural activities.

- Business and enterprise status and the impressive careers programme have a positive impact on preparing students for the future. There are strong links with blue-chip companies and in 2012, no student left the school without a place at further education or training or without a job to go to.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The leaders are very clear that students' lack of achievement remains a major concern. Leaders have put in place a range of strategies to address the issue, such as improvements in teaching, the modification of the curriculum, the appointment of new staff and a greater emphasis on target-setting and on raising the aspirations of staff and students.
- As a result of these actions, learning and achievement are beginning to accelerate. The school's leadership therefore, although requiring improvement overall, has the capacity to enhance the school's performance. The evaluation of the school's overall performance is too generous and leaders recognise that this is because they do not evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time with enough accuracy. However, leaders understand what needs to be done to bring about improvement and where.
- The appointment of associate staff internally as part of the extended leadership team is designed to offer departments more support in improving practice in assessing students' skills, knowledge and understanding, teaching quality and, in turn, the achievement of students. Heads of department evaluate performance in their subjects on a regular basis and they now track the progress of their students more closely. Their skills in judging the quality of learning in the classroom are still not sharp enough.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced overall, but staff are now looking more closely at curriculum arrangements in Key Stage 3, in order to meet students' interests and to engage them more closely in their learning.
- Performance appraisal arrangements are now secure and, in the views of staff, 'fair but challenging'. The outcomes of appraisal lead to relevant in-service training, which is often led by staff, including associates and heads of department.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and practice fully meet current requirements. Although achievement is inadequate, the school's sterling work in business, enterprise and careers demonstrates that it takes the welfare of its students seriously. The leaders endeavour to promote equality of opportunity soundly. Discrimination in all its forms is rejected.
- The local authority provides the school with support in relation to strengthening subject leadership. It is also helping to improve students' academic performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In the past, the governing body has not been effective in holding the leaders to account for the school's performance. However, governors recognise that students' achievement is not good enough and they are now holding leaders and managers to account with increasing rigour. Heads of departments, for example, are now required to give the governing body regular reports on performance in their subjects and there is a major emphasis on monitoring students' progress and attainment. Governors are now well informed about the strategies the school is employing to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
 - The governing body oversees performance appraisal arrangements and ensures that staff only receive financial reward if they meet their classroom targets. They are fully aware of how pupil premium funding is used and are now looking more closely on the impact of this spending on the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals.

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	104959
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	412525

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	619
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Toyne
Headteacher	Fr J.G. Briody
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2009
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