

# St Patrick's Catholic College

Baysdale Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham, TS17 9DE

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 a good school.

- Students' achievement is good; the vast majority make good progress from their starting points to exceed national averages on a number of measures.
- Students' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning create a positive environment in lessons. Students work hard and are eager to do their best.
- Pastoral care is excellent. It underpins students' strong feelings of safety and security. Students whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are extremely well supported to achieve their best. Parents overwhelmingly agree their children are safe in school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well developed, especially in religious education lessons.
- Teaching has improved quickly as a result of highly effective training and support. There is a high proportion of good teaching and some that is outstanding. Many good teaching strategies and imaginative resources fire students' enthusiasm for learning even further.
- Leadership and management, including governance, have strengthened considerably since the previous inspection. The headteacher's inspirational leadership drives improvement at a swift pace. A highly effective senior leadership team has been established which leads by example in its ambition and rigour.
- Good systems for checking the performance of teachers and students give the college an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching and students' achievement are not outstanding. Teachers do not all consistently challenge the most-able students to reach the highest grades or fully support the least able to achieve their best.
- Middle leaders have not yet developed a consistent approach to improving performance in their subjects through specific training for their role and by sharing the best practices that exist in the college.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons. Six of these were shared observations with college leaders.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, subject leaders, members of the governing body and students.
- Inspectors viewed the college's work and checked the work in students' books in lessons. They also undertook a longer examination of students' work from the last year in English, mathematics and science. They looked at a range of documentation including that relating to students' progress over time, school evaluation and improvement planning and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View); they also took account of 52 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jim Bradley

Additional Inspector

Adrian Biddulph

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-size secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is 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.)
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage, with a small number of students from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is below average; so, too, is the proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The college meets the current government's floor targets, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college makes use of alternative provision for a small number of students whose circumstances could make them vulnerable.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and improve students' achievement to outstanding by:
  - continuing to capture and share the most effective teaching methods for the benefit of students in all subjects
  - ensuring consistency of high quality marking and feedback to students, and by making time available in lessons for students to act upon advice to improve their work
  - increasing the proportion of students who achieve A and A\* grades, especially in English and science
  - improving the progress and achievement of lower-attaining pupils, especially in English and science in Key Stage 3.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle leaders by:
  - providing training so that all have a shared understanding of their accountability for their department's performance
  - ensuring that middle leaders have dedicated time to monitor the work of their departments so that they capture and share the most effective practices
  - sharing the excellent practice that has accelerated progress in the mathematics department.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The proportion of students who attained five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was significantly above the national average in 2012. The college's performance in mathematics was significantly above the national average, including at the highest grades.
- College tracking data and inspection evidence confirm a rising trend since the previous inspection, and that this trend is being sustained across all year groups. Some students are entered for their mathematics and English examinations at the end of Year 10, and sometimes re-entered the following year to improve their grades. Results in mathematics indicate that early entry is not adversely affecting the grades that students reach.
- Students' attainment is rising quickly, especially in mathematics at both key stages. In some subjects, including English and science, too few of the most-able students are reaching the highest grades. This is because checks on their progress are not identifying quickly enough when they are ready to move on to more challenging work.
- Some lower-ability students do not always make the progress of which they are capable in English and science, especially in Key Stage 3. The college has taken effective steps to improve the attendance of these students, which is helping to accelerate their progress. However, more could be done in Key Stage 3 to improve their literacy skills and scientific knowledge so that they are better prepared for the challenges of examination work in Years 10 and 11.
- The college has recently introduced an accelerated reading programme designed to improve reading skills for all ability groups and to encourage students to read widely for enjoyment. This has been welcomed wholeheartedly by students, who say they look forward to these sessions, and it is well supported by staff in all departments.
- Students who are supported at school action or school action plus make good progress because of the college's effective systems for checking their learning and providing individually tailored support to meet their needs. Students who are educated off site for part of the week benefit from regular monitoring to ensure that their needs are well met and that they are well cared for.
- The college is very successfully narrowing the gap in achievement between students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups of students. In 2012, the progress of this group was significantly above the national average for all groups of students, and their overall score for attainment was half a grade below the average for the college.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good because there has been a relentless drive to improve staff skills and share good practice.
- Teachers make regular checks on students' learning to plan new work that is well pitched to motivate and challenge them. In the best examples, teachers have a range of tasks available for the class so that students can begin working at a level that is manageable then move quickly on to a higher level when they are ready. Year 9 students, working on data comparison, made good progress in a mathematics lesson because they were all able to work at a level best suited to them. In some lessons, teachers do not use information about students' learning well enough to fully challenge the most able.
- Staff have high expectations of students' effort in lessons. They set clear targets for learning and, in the best examples, check students' progress towards these throughout the lesson. Year 9 students made excellent progress in developing their writing skills because the teacher circulated the room picking up where students needed a prompt or support to keep them moving forward. As a result, students were highly motivated and eager to complete tasks to impress the teacher with how well they were learning.
- There are excellent examples of marking and feedback to students on how to improve their work, especially in mathematics where good advice helps students to improve. In mathematics

and some other subjects, there is an increasing use of self- and peer- evaluation of work. This makes students more alert to their own errors and misconceptions and allows them to learn from each other, often without realising they are doing so. Older students comment that this particular development, together with time set aside in lessons to make improvements, has helped them to improve well in the last two years; they also comment that 'it is a pity it is not the same in all subjects.'

- Where teachers are skilful in their questioning, as seen in a Year 7 physical education lesson, students' understanding and application of new knowledge leads to rapid skill development and excellent learning. This is an aspect of teaching which the college rightly continues to develop.
- Students hold their teachers in high esteem and parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are well taught.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- College records confirm that students' behaviour is good over time, and that exclusions have dropped significantly in the current year. Students are friendly and courteous; they show high levels of respect for themselves and others.
- Students' good attitudes to learning ensure that time is well used in the vast majority of lessons. Students mostly work hard and develop good levels of persistence because of teachers' expectations and the excellent pastoral care they receive. Where this is not the case it is sometimes because the teacher talks too much throughout the lesson so that students are hampered from getting on with independent work.
- Students are well taught to assess risks to their well-being. They are able to explain different forms of bullying and the risks of the internet. They are sure that bullying is not an issue and that any concerns they have are taken seriously by staff. Their parents agree.
- Students willingly contribute to improving the school, supporting local communities and others further afield. They are constantly raising funds for charities and delight in seeing the impact of their efforts.
- Students whose circumstances put them at risk of becoming vulnerable are exceptionally well supported by the work of the pastoral team. They provide excellent support to students and their families to overcome any barriers to their learning and emotional well-being.
- Attendance has improved this year because of the college's determination to help every student achieve their best. School data show that the progress of former persistent absentees has improved markedly because they are attending more regularly.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leadership, including governance, is ambitious and determined in its drive to continually improve the school. Strong improvement to all aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection is accelerating students' progress at a good rate.
- Excellent leadership of teaching, and of systems to track students' learning, support the college's drive for excellence. There are rigorous procedures to evaluate teachers' performance. Staff are well supported to improve and know they are accountable for the progress that students make. The college links performance robustly to salary progression.
- The skills and expertise of middle leaders are developing well, but are not yet consistent in their quality or effectiveness. There is some excellent practice, notably in the systems and practices in the mathematics department, where the good impact on outcomes for students is clear. However, this has not yet been shared across other departments.
- The college rightly recognises the need for training for middle leaders to improve their skills of evaluating and improving performance in their subjects. There are plans in hand for more systematic sharing of the most effective practices so that students experience parity of achievement across all subjects. The college is also aware of the need to provide specific time

for middle leaders to check on the work of their departments.

- The curriculum has been rigorously reviewed and developed since the previous inspection. It now provides a good range of pathways to examination success and future employment for all students. Improvements to the curriculum have played a part in improving attendance in the current year as students who were previously disaffected have found their learning more engaging and purposeful.
- The college deploys resources well to ensure that students enjoy equal access to what it has to offer. Students who are eligible for pupil premium funding are provided with resources and support to remove barriers to their learning. The effective use of these funds is clear in the good outcomes for these students.
- Safeguarding meets requirements.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the college.
- **The governance of the college:**
  - is effective in supporting improvement and identifying where further improvement is needed. Governors are well involved in the work of the college and bring a good range of expertise and experience to its service. They are well informed about the college's performance in examinations and hold the college to account for the achievement of all students including those who are eligible for the pupil premium. They understand the college's appraisal system and how this links the quality of teaching to students' achievement and salary progression.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111759
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	400079

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	532
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father Pat Hartnett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 613327
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 618227
<b>Email address</b>	contact-us@stpatricks.stockton.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

