

St Antony's Catholic College

Bradfield Road, Urmston, Manchester, M41 9PD

Inspection dates

3–4 July 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.

- Students' achievement is inadequate. Too many students do not progress as well as they should and reach the levels of attainment of which they are capable.
- The proportion of students achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics, declined in 2011 and 2012 and is now significantly below average.
- The quality of teaching varies too much across the school and between different subjects. There is not enough good and outstanding teaching to enable all students to make good and better progress and to raise standards quickly.
- The rich information about students' achievement is not used well enough by all teachers to plan lessons that are matched well to students' abilities to ensure best possible progress.
- Marking does not always ensure that students know how to improve their work. The policies for marking, assessing students' attainment and providing them with feedback about their progress are unclear and not consistently applied across all subjects.
- Students are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy across different subjects.
- Systems to improve the quality of teaching and learning are not consistently applied by senior and middle leaders or by teachers. This is mainly because there is no specific person designated to lead on this work.
- Governors are still developing the skills they need to ask searching questions so that they can hold leaders fully to account for the college's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The new 'Core Group' of leaders, governors and college partners is providing additional focused challenge and support to speed up the college's improvement.
- The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school and as a result teachers are very keen to improve their teaching skills. The proportion of good teaching is growing.
- Students feel safe in school. Their conduct is generally good and they are courteous and polite. The school is becoming more effective in reducing fixed-term exclusions.
- Students' attendance has improved considerably over the last three years; persistent absence has been reduced significantly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 part lessons taught by 36 teachers, including one that was observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, a representative from the Salford Diocese, representatives from the local authority, members of staff and groups of students. A meeting was also held with a National Leader in Education from Loreto Grammar School, who is supporting the college to improve.
- The views of 44 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as the views of 23 teachers and support staff.
- The inspection team observed the college's work and examined documentation including records of students' current attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documentation relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gary Kelly, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Additional Inspector
Michael Cooper	Additional Inspector
Janet Pruchniewicz	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

- St Antony's Catholic College is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. The large majority of students are of White British heritage. There are an increasing proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and this is now above average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children that are looked after by the local authority and children from service families, is above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Some Year 10 and 11 students study vocational and personal development subjects at a range of local learning and skills providers off-site as part of their Key Stage 4 studies. These providers include Rathbone Training, AIM, Gorse Hill Studios and Trafford College, Wellacre Academy and the Dean Trust.
- A 'Core Group' has been established to strengthen the leadership and governance of the college. It includes representatives from Loreto Grammar School, Salford Diocese, the Trafford local authority and the governing body.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good in all subjects and all year groups, in order that students make consistently good progress and attain GCSE results that are at least in line with national expectations by:
 - eradicating the small minority of inadequate teaching that remains
 - using high quality assessment information to plan lessons that provide appropriate activities for students of all abilities, including the most- and least-able
 - making sure that all teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and provide them with work that is exciting so that students' attitudes to learning are always good
 - providing more opportunities for students to be able to work independently and in groups, to question each other and their teacher in order to improve their own understanding
 - ensuring students do not repeat work that they can already do and understand so that they have more opportunities to be challenged further and so that important learning points are not missed
 - ensuring the marking of students' work is regular, of high quality, and gives students insightful and challenging feedback, and that they are expected to respond to this feedback
 - ensuring there is a consistently strong focus on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
 - ensuring staff learn from the best practice in the college and in other schools.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by ensuring that:
 - systems to check and improve the quality of teaching and students' progress are consistently applied by all senior and middle leaders and teachers
 - sharp and achievable timescales and targets for improving teaching and students' achievement are identified on school improvement plans and that progress towards achieving them is checked regularly
 - members of the governing body have the skills to ask searching questions when holding leaders to account for the college's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students' achievement is inadequate. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics has declined since the previous inspection. In 2011 and 2012, it was significantly below national standards. In both years, students' rate of progress in English and mathematics was significantly below national expectations, placing the college in the bottom 20% of similar schools nationally.
- Students' attainment on entry to the college varies from year to year but it is typically below average. From their starting points in Year 7, too many students make inadequate progress across a number of subjects by Year 11. Students who join in Year 7, having reached the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 6, are not challenged enough. In recent years, not enough students have made the progress expected of them and too few students reach the higher grades of A* to C in their English and mathematics GCSE examinations.
- The college's most recent information about students' attainment and progress in 2013 is more positive particularly in mathematics where the proportion of students making expected progress has increased significantly. In many of the lessons observed by inspectors, students clearly made progress in their learning. This reflects the improving quality of teaching now evident across the school, as a result of the leaders' actions.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs has been too variable. In 2012, for example, those students supported at school action plus made inadequate progress. For other students with special educational needs however, including those with a statement of educational need, progress was better but still required improvement. The college's most recent assessment information and inspection evidence shows that students with special educational needs are now making better progress because of better quality teaching and more sharply focused intervention and support.
- In 2012, the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by the pupil premium was lower than their peers and similar students nationally in both English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the in-college gap between the attainment of the two groups was not as wide as that seen in most other schools. This is because attainment overall was low.
- Recently, the college has made better use of information about students' progress to target the spending of pupil premium funding with more precision, on extra support and intervention for example. This shows that there is now increasing equality of opportunity at the college. However, it is still early days and the impact of this focused support has yet to be fully realised.
- The college receives extra funding to help those who join the college with below-average reading ages. While these students benefit from targeted intervention and support, too few have enough opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills widely across all subjects.
- The college's strategy to enter students early for GCSE examinations is being reviewed because it is not improving their attainment.
- The behaviour and progress of students in Years 10 and 11 who study vocational and personal development courses off-site is improved because of this provision.
- The numbers of students not in education, employment or training when they leave the college in Year 11 are small.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching and its impact over time on the achievement of students is inadequate. Although the quality of teaching is improving and some is good and occasionally outstanding, too much still requires improvement or is inadequate.
- Teachers do not always plan activities at the right level of difficulty for their students, with whole groups completing the same tasks, challenging for some but far too easy for others, particularly the more-able. Low expectations of what students can achieve occasionally results in minor

misbehaviour which disrupts learning. Lessons are not planned well enough to stimulate students' interests and as a result, attitudes to learning are not always good. This is reflected in the poor quality of students' work seen in some students' books.

- In some lessons, students spend too much time repeating work that they can already do and understand. Not enough time remains to challenge them further and important learning points are sometimes missed.
- Although it is steadily improving, there is still inconsistency in teachers' marking. Some poor quality marking was seen during this inspection, which failed to challenge students and provided little or no guidance as to how students might improve their work. There is an over-reliance on simple ticks and a word or two of praise, and too little reference to improvement. However, in contrast, some marking is of high quality, where students' work is marked promptly and which gives students insightful and challenging feedback, and allows them to respond. As a result, students know precisely what they need to do to improve their work.
- Where teaching is good or better, students are encouraged and willing to participate in discussion and are keen to learn. Teachers ask searching questions to assess students' understanding and allow debate among students and ensure that they are clear about how to improve their work and technique. In two outstanding physical education lessons, for example, teachers had high expectations of all students, regardless of ability. Students were expected to make decisions about their own learning and development, with opportunities to test and assess each other throughout.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour requires improvement because in some lessons, low-level misbehaviour disrupts learning. This occurs when teachers do not plan activities that are interesting and challenging enough. Not all students show good attitudes to their learning.
- In the last two years, the college has worked hard and successfully to improve behaviour. Teachers now consistently apply the college's policy and procedures for managing behaviour. Across the school, there are fewer fixed-term exclusions than previously, although the number of exclusions in Year 10 is still quite high.
- Students' behaviour around the college and grounds is calm. They behave well at break and lunchtimes, are generally approachable and respectful to each other, adults and visitors.
- Students have a good understanding of internet safety and how to keep safe and are clear as to the various forms bullying can take. They say that they feel safe and that any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Robust systems to record and monitor any incidents of racist behaviour are in place and this effectively promotes students' understanding and appreciation of different cultures.
- Peer mentors in Year 10 regularly support younger students so that they are confident when they join the college. 'Student Forum' groups meet with adults in the college to discuss issues relating to behaviour and safety.
- Attendance has improved significantly over the last three years and the college's data indicates it is now close to average. The college works effectively with students and their families and has successfully reduced the number of persistent absences.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher provides clear direction and is strongly leading school improvement. Ambitious plans and precise actions to bring about improvement are underway and well communicated to staff, who now share a strong sense of purpose. Recent improvements in teaching are leading to improvements in students' achievement, although there is still more to be done. Where the headteacher has focused attention, for example, in mathematics and physical education, good and outstanding teaching was observed. Attendance and students' behaviour are also improving.
- Senior and subject leaders are becoming more effective in challenging weaker teaching and

supporting improvements in students' achievement. Consequently, the amount of inadequate teaching is reducing. Similarly, the work of the 'Core Group', which includes new and effective partnership arrangements such as with Loreto Grammar School, Salford Diocese and the local authority, is contributing to an improved quality of leadership. This is why the school is well placed to make the necessary improvements.

- Leaders have a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to rapidly improve the college's effectiveness. Even so, leadership and management require further improvement. Although the college's improvement plans identify the right priorities, it is not always clear from these plans the exact targets and timescales for achieving them or for checking progress towards doing so.
- Although teaching is improving, some inadequate teaching remains and too much still requires improvement. Systems to check and improve teaching and students' progress are not consistently applied by all senior and subject leaders. Leaders are yet to ensure that best teaching practices in the college and that in other schools are effectively shared among all staff.
- In the past, the targets set for students' achievement have been too low. The headteacher has been instrumental in developing new systems to track students' achievement. As a result the college now holds more detailed information about the achievement of individuals and groups of students. This is helping to improve teaching and to hold teachers increasingly to account for their performance and set more challenging targets.
- The college's curriculum is developing at a good rate. In Key Stage 3, the curriculum complies with National Curriculum requirements and is complemented well by activities which allow students to be creative and improve their personal skills. In Key Stage 4, the curriculum is in transition and the new model for the next academic year is broad and balanced and designed to better meet the needs of all students.
- A wide range of out-of-college activities, including extra lessons, extensive sports activities, annual trips and visits abroad, extend students' interests and experiences.
- The local authority has provided support to improve students' behaviour and to ensure students who join the college from minority ethnic groups are provided with additional language and literacy support. However, previously it has not provided the necessary level of support and challenge to ensure that teaching is good enough so that students' achieve well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has grown stronger during this year. Following the development of a 'Core Group' which includes the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, there has been a sharper focus on improving the college more rapidly. Governors now share a common drive for improvement with the Diocese and the local authority and are increasingly aware of how the college's performance compares with other schools nationally. Governors are now clearer about the use of pupil premium funding and its impact on the performance of the students it supports. They are improving systems for checking that pay increases are only awarded when teaching is good. Their ability to ask searching questions, so that they can hold leaders to account fully for the college's performance is developing but still requires further improvement. The governing body ensures the financial health of the college and ensures the college meets its statutory duties.

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	106372
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	412777

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	643
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Kerr
Headteacher	Keith Turmeau
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
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