

St Joseph's Catholic High School, Business and Enterprise College

Harrington Road, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 3EE

Inspection dates

12–13 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- A minority of most-able students do not reach, or exceed, the standards of most-able students nationally.
- Standards in English in 2012 declined to below those reached by most students nationally. Standards in mathematics declined in 2011 and 2012 to well below standards reached by most students nationally.
- Teachers do not always plan tasks and activities carefully enough, or use their detailed marking and assessment, to plan teaching that challenges the most-able students to make consistently good or better progress from their starting points.
- Some leaders, including some subject leaders, have only recently been appointed and their plans for improvement have not yet had time to improve the progress of all students, including the progress of most-able students.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not sufficiently improved the teaching of the most-able students so that it consistently increases their rate of progress.
- The school relies on additional teaching for small groups of students who learn more slowly or who have gaps in their learning to ensure they learn effectively. Fewer most-able students who fall behind receive this support.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards by the end of Year 11 are rising overall and were in line with the national average in 2013.
- The headteacher, well supported by senior leaders and governors, has recently improved teaching so most groups of students in the school, including those students supported by the pupil premium funding, disabled students and those with special educational needs are improving their rates of progress.
- Teaching is now good overall and a small minority is outstanding.
- Students' behaviour in and around school is good and students support each other well in lessons. They say they feel safe and express confidence that all staff will help them to succeed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 parts of lessons and 32 teachers. They held discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders about teaching, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, and about assessment and students' attainment and progress. They also talked to students in lessons informally, to several groups of students, and to the three governors who chair governing body committees.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of students' written work, data from assessments and school records to measure improvement in students' progress, behaviour, teaching and safeguarding documents. They also looked closely at the school's evaluation of its work and the school's plans for further improvement.
- The responses of 15 staff to the inspection questionnaire were considered. The inspectors also took into account the school's records of parent, staff and students' views and 33 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Nell Banfield, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Additional Inspector
Peter William Harrison	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is slightly higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found nationally.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and a very small proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is slightly higher than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, for students who are looked after and for the children of service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has appointed an additional senior leader and has agreed a new half-time additional leader from January 2014 to extend the capacity of the leadership team. Two new leaders for mathematics and geography have also been appointed since September 2012.
- The school works in close partnership with the local authority.
- A small proportion of students attend courses and provision away from the school site at The Lakes College and West Cumbria Achievement Zone for some or all of the time.
- The school has specialist status in business and enterprise, is a strategic partner in the Cumbria West Coast Teaching Alliance, a lead school in the Network of Excellence for the teaching of Computer Science and is a Fair Trade School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase further the proportion of teaching that is outstanding so that students across all subjects make increasingly rapid progress, particularly the most able, by:
 - adjusting tasks, teaching approaches and resources to make sure all students gain new knowledge and develop their understanding of progressively more complex concepts
 - using the already detailed assessments and marking of students' work to identify students' starting points in all lessons so teaching can be planned which takes all students further in their learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring all subject leaders consistently support and challenge teachers to match their teaching to the range of students' starting points so that all groups of students are challenged to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly the most able.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most students join the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are similar to national averages. From 2010 to 2012, the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades (including English and mathematics) in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 declined from above the standards of most students nationally to below the standards reached by most students nationally.
- Unvalidated results for 2013 indicate that students' attainment in English and mathematics rose and was similar to standards achieved by most students nationally in 2012. More students in Key Stage 4 are now making at least the expected rate of progress from their starting points because of recent improvements in the quality of teaching. However, too few of the most-able students across the school are making good or better progress because not enough lessons provide them with work that is challenging and which takes them forward rapidly in their learning. Therefore, achievement requires improvement.
- Most students in 2012 made progress at a slower rate than that made by most students nationally but this rate is now accelerating as a result of improved teaching. However, the most-able students, despite improving their attainment in 2012, made slow progress over the last three years.
- Students supported by pupil premium funding, although they improved their rates of progress slightly in 2013, have made slow progress over the last three years. The school's analysis of progress made by students currently supported by the pupil premium in Key Stage 4 indicates they are continuing to increase their rates of progress. This is due to the impact of good teaching.
- In Year 11 in 2012, those students known to be eligible for free school meals achieved standards in all GCSE subjects, on average, around one third of a grade lower than other students in the school.
- Teachers' assessments indicate that students in Key Stage 3, including those supported by pupil premium funding, are attaining higher standards and are beginning to make more rapid progress in English and mathematics because teaching is now much stronger. The most-able students at the end of Key Stage 3 are making slower progress because teaching is not closely matched to their starting points.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs, from their individual starting points, is improving because teaching is well-matched to their individual needs. As a result, their achievement is closer to that of similar students nationally.
- The very small proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as most other students. This demonstrates the school's effective commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
- The school is using Year 7 catch-up funding to provide well-targeted and specialist literacy lessons for individuals who are behind in their reading. This enables them to improve their writing and to read materials in lessons more successfully.
- The small proportion of students who follow courses away from the school site make good progress, and the majority attend well because their individual needs are being met. The vast majority gain qualifications as a result of suitable courses that engage their interests and talents. Their progress is followed closely by the school to ensure they benefit from more tailored provision.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching seen in both key stages during the inspection was good, with a small minority that was outstanding. Review of students' work over time also indicated progress for most students is good, demonstrating the good impact of teaching over time for these students.

- In the lessons with good or outstanding teaching, students work rapidly and at increasingly challenging levels so that they learn very effectively. In a Year 11 business studies lesson, the carefully selected resources and information and the teacher's excellent subject knowledge engaged students' interest quickly and extended their knowledge exceptionally well. The students' use of clues stimulated their interest and curiosity and led them to construct a clear business management structure. The task was adjusted to match students' differing stages of learning and, as a result, all students made significant progress in understanding the theory and practice of leading and managing a business.
- In a Year 9 religious education lesson, students were questioned carefully so they explained their thinking and ideas about different kinds of prayer. Thoughtful questions were then asked by students, such as why some prayers are answered by God and not others; the teacher used this question to explore the different ways in which prayers can be answered. As a result, students developed their ideas and thinking rapidly and considered which kinds of prayers are most and least likely to be answered.
- Scrutiny of a range of students' books highlighted that marking and feedback from teachers are well developed in a number of subjects. Specific comments are made by a minority of teachers so students understand what they have done well. Detailed suggestions are made by teachers about what students can improve, and most students respond by practising the new skill. Although this is not yet consistent across every subject, feedback to students is rapidly developing and the progress of most students is accelerating as a result. Students complete different kinds of writing tasks and demonstrate improvement in these tasks over time.
- Too little teaching is tailored to the starting points of most-able students to enable them to make rapid enough progress and so reach their potential. Teachers do not always use assessments, or information from their marking of students' work, to plan activities so that the most-able students, in particular, can make good progress to the next stage in their learning. The tasks and resources that students start with are not always effectively adjusted to match each student's starting point. Fewer most-able students who fall behind receive support through small-group teaching.
- Some explanations of topics and ideas give students too much information and take up lesson time so little scope is left for most-able students to find things out for themselves. In some lessons, tasks are not carefully structured so students have to think hard about how to complete the task. As a result, students, particularly most-able students, use ideas and facts they already know and do not develop their understanding or extend their knowledge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Students move safely around the school and the vast majority show respect and consideration for others when moving around the narrow corridors. They are helpful to adults, visitors and each other. Students have a positive approach to their learning, behave well in class and take part regularly and responsibly in paired and group work. They behave well, take turns with other students in the dining room and shared areas in the school, and take care of equipment and classrooms.
- Students say they feel safe in school and have a high level of trust that staff will help them with their work or if they are worried or upset. There is a clear ethos in the school of tolerance for different ways of life and different religions and customs. This is helped by joint work with schools locally through the school's business and enterprise specialism and links and communication with schools internationally.
- Students know the different forms that bullying can take and the risks involved in the misuse of mobile telephones and social networking. They say bullying is rare in school because students look out for each other and understand and accept differences in attitudes and belief as a part of life. They say that if bullying occurred they would seek out an adult and be confident they would help.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. The number of boys and students supported by pupil premium funding who are excluded from school, despite being lower than

that found nationally, remains higher than other groups in the school. The school provides areas available for students to work away from the classroom, as well as giving them access to skilled adult support and these are helping students to improve their work and progress.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- One area for improvement from the last inspection has not been effectively addressed by the leadership. As a result, there are still lessons where teachers do not challenge most-able students sufficiently and so they do not make rapid enough progress. Additional small-group teaching is too often the strategy used to increase the progress of students falling behind. Leaders, including subject leaders, and managers are not currently looking carefully enough at how teachers plan lessons so teaching consistently challenges students with work that is matched closely to students' starting points.
- The actions of the headteacher and senior leaders, particularly in the last 12 months, have ensured that teaching has improved steadily over time, so that most is at least good, with a small minority that is outstanding.
- All staff now have a wealth of accurate measures which tell them how well students are doing. As a result, the number of students, particularly those supported by the pupil premium who are making faster and more consistent progress, is increasing.
- The school's self-evaluation, although documented in a self-evaluation summary, also takes place through the evaluation of development plans. Some self-evaluation concentrates on making sure actions are carried out rather than identifying whether the actions have improved teaching and students' progress.
- The headteacher and governors have used national standards to agree a system for setting targets for teachers to check their performance. Responsibility points, rewards and increases in salary are now closely linked to effective teaching and students' progress.
- The small proportion of staff who responded to the questionnaire expressed very positive views of the improvement in most students' behaviour and learning, and agreed that students are safe and well cared for.
- Parents express very positive views of the effectiveness of the school in supporting their child's learning and progress and were overwhelmingly positive about the school. The school provides very effective support for students who have individual needs so they can make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's business and enterprise specialism offers students many opportunities to learn about education, work and training after school and students are suitably ambitious as a result. The curriculum choices offered meet the needs of students well and students are carefully guided to appropriate courses for the future. Regular opportunities to learn about other religions and ways of life develop students' spiritual, social, cultural and moral understanding very effectively.
- The school only enters a very few students for examinations earlier than the end of Key Stage 4 if teachers are confident they can achieve well.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and ensure that students who attend courses away from the school site are safe.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school which has helped it to improve standards and accelerate progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors say they have made rapid progress in the last 18 months in understanding how the school is improving the quality of teaching and learning, how leaders are using pupil premium funding to best effect and how performance management is used to support teachers to improve students' progress. They have experienced the impact of steps taken to improve teaching at first hand through 'Governor in School' days. They are now skilled in evaluating the effectiveness of the school. They use data and progress measures and are clear about how effectively additional funding is used to increase the rates of progress of students in Year

7 and in Key Stage 4 and which students have improved rates of progress. They are well placed to continue to challenge and support the headteacher and school leaders.

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	112401
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	429101

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	656
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hayes
Headteacher	Thomas Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2012
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