

Saint Bede's Catholic High School

Talbot Road, Lytham, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, FY8 4JL

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a good school where the students' attitudes are exceptionally positive and they thoroughly enjoy learning.
- Students, parents, staff and governors are very proud of their school and were keen to let the inspection team know this.
- Students' academic achievement is good and previous areas of underachievement have been tackled well.
- The percentage of students gaining five or more passes at GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been above or well above that found nationally for the last three years.
- Good teaching, with some that is outstanding, enables students to make good and sometimes better progress.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Students are extremely courteous and respectful to each other and to adults. Their safety is also outstanding. They are very aware of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader. He models and expects high standards from his staff and students. His drive towards improving the school is impressive and areas of relative weakness have been tackled well.
- Since the previous inspection, students' achievement has improved in many subjects. The quality of teaching has improved and attendance, which was already above average, has risen even further.
- The governing body supports the school very well and offers a good degree of challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of all groups of students is not consistently good or better in all subjects.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a little requires improvement.
- Teachers do not always make the most of the students' eagerness to learn to ensure that they progress as well as they can.
- The quality of teachers' marking does not always help students to improve their work.
- A few subject leaders are not sufficiently skilled in checking the quality of teaching. They do not always link the quality of teaching well enough to students' learning and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons of which five were joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors examined information on students' performance for the school years 2011/12, 2012/2013 and on current students' learning and progress. Inspectors also looked at work in students' books.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, students and members of the governing body. A telephone call was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 107 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and to staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school development plan, departmental plans and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Records relating to attendance and behaviour were also scrutinised along with information about the quality of teaching and the performance of staff.

Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector
Neil MacKenzie	Additional Inspector
John Dunne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Saint Bede's is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportions of students who are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, students in local authority care and those whose parents are in the armed forces. The school has some students who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has specialist status in business and enterprise and also in modern foreign languages.
- A very small number of students is educated off site at the specialist medical unit at the McKee Centre or are dual-registered and currently attending Lytham St. Anne's Technology and Performing Arts College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement so that it is consistently good or better for all groups of students and across all subjects by:
 - tackling the areas identified as requiring improvement for individual teachers so that teaching is never less than good and more of it is outstanding
 - ensuring that teachers always make the most of students' eagerness to learn by encouraging them to question and think deeply, and by involving them in reflecting on their learning
 - improving the quality of guidance students receive on how to improve their work and ensuring that they have opportunities to respond to it
 - ensuring that all subject leaders have the expertise to check rigorously the quality of teaching in their areas, linking it closely to how well students are learning and progressing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well. They join the school with generally above average skills and make good progress from their starting points to leave with GCSE results that are above average or significantly above average.
- In GCSE examinations taken in 2013 the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was significantly above average. This was an improvement on the same results of the previous year which had dipped a little.
- The percentage of students gaining A* to C grades in 2013 was above or significantly above average in many subjects, but the percentage of students gaining A* or A grades was not quite as high. This was particularly so in English and Spanish where the percentage gaining A* or A grades was significantly below average. The school took decisive action to tackle this. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, work scrutiny and talking to students, along with the school's own data, indicate that students, including the most-able students, are on track to attain the grades of which they are capable this year.
- The most-able students now achieve well because the work they are given challenges them to learn.
- During the previous academic year, students were entered for GCSE mathematics early, but this is no longer the case. There is no evidence to suggest that students' performance has been adversely affected by early entry for GCSE examinations.
- Students make good or better progress in most lessons because teachers match work closely to students' needs. This is true of most subjects throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 4. All groups of students make good progress, illustrating the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Some students in Year 7 receive additional help with reading and in mathematics through the Year 7 catch-up programme. This is having a good impact on their progress in both these areas.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals do not do quite as well as other students. In 2013 their average attainment was one grade lower in English and just over one grade lower in mathematics. The gap narrowed significantly in English compared to the previous year, but less so in mathematics. The progress of students known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly slower than that of other students. However, the majority makes good progress and their attainment is rising. Information provided by the school, and confirmed by other inspection evidence, indicates that these gaps in attainment and progress are narrowing securely.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive good additional help.
- The very few students who attend alternative provision make good progress and grow in confidence. The school checks on their progress and attendance rigorously.
- Students are prepared well for the next stages in their education, training or employment. The school pays close attention to literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). These aspects are integrated well into many lessons. Students speak clearly and confidently, and come across as very mature young people.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire felt that progress is good. Inspectors agreed with this view.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is ensuring good progress. There is some outstanding teaching but there is also a small amount that requires improvement.
- Most teachers have high expectations and plan lessons that enable students to learn effectively and develop their skills. This was illustrated well in a Year 10 mathematics lesson on using

algebra to solve problems. The problems were engaging and challenging, making the students think deeply and resulted in the students making good progress.

- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers capitalise well on the students' eagerness to learn and students make outstanding progress as a result. Teachers ask probing questions, give students time to think about their answers and work out things for themselves. They also encourage students to help one another to assess how well they are doing, for example in a Year 10 lesson on making choux pastry.
- However, sometimes teaching gives too few opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and the questions that teachers ask are not always challenging enough. As a result, students sometimes miss opportunities to deepen their understanding.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in many lessons, for example in drama, exploring the feelings of people with personal issues.
- Students' work is usually marked regularly and accurately. The more effective marking tells students how to improve their work and there is evidence of students responding to this advice. However, not all marking is of this high quality and this limits the progress that some students make.
- Students with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium are taught well. Effective additional help and targeted programmes are matched closely to individual needs and these students make good progress as a result.
- Most parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire felt that their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. It is impressive in many ways: from the pride students take in their school, the respect that they have for other people, their helpfulness towards visitors and for their highly positive attitudes to learning.
- At the start of the school day, breaks and lunchtime, students can be seen working purposefully on computers in the library, chatting quietly in the social areas around school, and engaging adults in conversation.
- In a significant number of lessons, students demonstrate a real love of learning, resulting in outstanding progress. Inspectors observed this in, for example, students' thoughtful contributions to discussion on sonnets in Year 11 English, working independently in preparation for field study in Year 10 geography, and their eagerness to answer questions in Year 8 French.
- Students told the inspectors how much they enjoyed school and they described the school as 'welcoming and encouraging' and as having a good 'community spirit'.
- Students have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying. They say that virtually no bullying occurs and, if people fall out, the school deals with it quickly and effectively.
- Students' attendance is consistently above national averages. The attendance of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium and students supported at school action plus was previously average, but is now above average.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. This view was echoed strongly by parents and staff.
- All parents who responded to Parent View and all staff who completed the inspection questionnaire agreed that the school keeps children exceptionally safe.
- Students have an excellent knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. They look after each other very well, particularly students new to the school. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe when using the Internet.
- Students worked very safely during the many practical lessons observed during the inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. He has tremendous energy and drive and has high expectations of all his staff and students.
- Along with his leadership team and governors, he has ensured that any underachievement that occurs is tackled effectively, such as that in English and Spanish.
- The vast majority of staff are extremely positive about all aspects of the school and many took the opportunity to voice their views to inspectors.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a drive to improve the quality of teaching and, in the main, this has been successful. Subject leaders are involved in this, but not all have the necessary skills to improve the quality of teaching as effectively as they might do. There is sometimes not enough focus on the learning that takes place when judging the quality of teaching.
- Systems for tracking students' progress are continually being refined, so that underachievement is picked up as early as possible. This has not always been the case in the past.
- The range of subjects and experiences provided by the school gives students a secure grounding in the skills of English and mathematics and provides them with the qualifications they need to move successfully into continuing education, training or employment.
- Students are particularly appreciative of the wide range of clubs and additional sports and arts activities that the school offers. There are many experiences to enhance students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including visits to Castlerigg Manor, the Diocese of Lancaster's youth retreat centre. One student told the inspectors how positive the visit had been in forming friendships and developing a tolerance of others.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View and students who spoke to inspectors would recommend the school to others, one student commenting, 'It's a nice place to spend five years of your life.'
- Safeguarding meets requirements. The school is vigilant in looking after all its students, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The local authority provides good support for the school and confirms the accuracy of the school's evaluations of its strengths and areas for development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are quite passionate about the school and highly ambitious for it. They know the school's strengths and areas for development well and are involved in ensuring that only good or better teaching is rewarded with promotion or additional pay. Governors undergo training, including that on the use of data about students' performance. They challenge the school, for example about the results of the most able in English last year. They know how the school's finances are used and to what effect, for example in improving the performance of those students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium.

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	119788
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	440455

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	770
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Drake
Headteacher	Phil Grice
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2011
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