

# St Paul's Catholic School

Phoenix Drive, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes MK6 5EN

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students do not make consistently good progress throughout the school, particularly the more able. There is also variation in standards between subjects at GCSE level.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations and do not plan lessons which challenge students according to their assessed needs, particularly those that are more able.
- Students are not enabled to understand how to improve their work and take responsibility for improving their progress.
- There are not enough opportunities in lessons for students to talk about their work and to work independently. Teachers do not consistently use questioning to challenge thinking and move learning on.
- Since its last inspection leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and achievement across the school are good.
- The school's plans for the future are not linked closely enough to checks on the school's work and do not have clear steps for improvement which can be monitored by leaders and governors.
- Subject leaders are not involved enough in improving teaching in their areas and their observations of teaching are not focused on the progress that students make in lessons.
- The sixth form requires improvement as students do not achieve well enough on all courses.

### The school has the following strengths

- Standards at Key Stage 4 have remained broadly average over the last three years.
- Students achieve well in vocational subjects at Key Stages 4 and 5.
- Attendance has remained above average and students feel safe in school.
- The specialist units are good. Students are well integrated into school and receive exceptional support from well-trained staff. They make good and in some cases outstanding progress in their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 40 lessons or part-lessons. Seven of these were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of students from Key Stages, 3, 4 and 5.
- A telephone conversation was held with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors reviewed the 57 responses to the online survey Parent View, correspondence from parents and the returns from 125 staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised the school's own documents, reviewing its performance along with its plans for the future, records of students' recent attainment and progress, those relating to the management of the performance of staff as well as behaviour and attendance records. Safeguarding policies and procedures and how the school follows these were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Andrew Cooper	Additional inspector
Gordon Jackson	Additional inspector
Gary Kirkley	Additional inspector
Josephine Lewis	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- There are a wide range of ethnic backgrounds represented in the school, the largest groups being White British and Black African. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is below average.
- The school receives the Year 7 and 8 catch-up funding for a few students. This is additional government funding for students who did not reach the expected Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A small number of students attend the Bridge Academy, a pupil referral unit.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There are three specialist resourced provision departments within the school, one for the hearing impaired, one for the visually impaired and one for students with autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 38 students.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education and is currently working with Thomas Becket Catholic School. The headteacher is also Chair of the Stephenson Trust, which includes Stephenson Academy and the Bridge Academy.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - teachers have higher expectations and plan lessons which challenge all students according to their assessed needs, particularly the more able
  - students understand how to improve their work through high-quality feedback that enables them to understand how to move to the next level and encourages them to take more responsibility for their progress
  - students have opportunities in lessons to talk about their work and to work independently so they are more actively involved in learning
  - teachers further develop their questioning skills to challenge all students' thinking with a range of different questions.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - school development planning is linked more closely to rigorous checking on the school's work and clear planning for the future, with steps for improvement which can be monitored and evaluated by senior leaders and governors
  - subject leaders take a more active role in developing teaching in their subject areas
  - observations of teaching are more closely linked to the progress students and groups of students make.
- 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

### requires improvement

- Students do not make consistently good progress throughout the school, especially the most able. There is variation between standards in different subjects at the end of Key Stage 4, with students making less progress in science, languages and humanities than in English and mathematics.
- The sixth form requires improvement as students do less well in some subjects than in others. Students' AS performance is less strong than in A level. Students do better in vocational qualifications, where they gain outcomes above national levels.
- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The proportion of students achieving five good GCSEs with English and mathematics has remained broadly average over the last three years. Provisional results for 2013 show a similar level of attainment overall.
- The proportion of students achieving five A\* to G grades at GCSE has been above national levels over the last three years. In the English Baccalaureate, 28% of students achieved this group of subjects in 2012, and provisional data shows this increased to 29% in 2013.
- The students known to be eligible for free school meals receive a wide range of support, including literacy coaches, support for entering work, pastoral support, holiday revision sessions and extra staffing in Year 11. There was a gap of just under a grade in English and mathematics between these students and others in English and mathematics in the examinations in 2012. Provisional data from 2013 shows this gap narrowed slightly. Across the school, progress is starting to accelerate for these students but it is not consistently good.
- The school has focused additional help in literacy for the students entitled to Year 7 and 8 catch-up funding. Progress is mixed, with some students making good progress but some making less progress. The students who receive additional support for reading who are behind on entry to the school achieve well because of the targeted, effective support from well-trained staff, and there are examples of these students making rapid gains in their reading. This is an example of how the school is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for students' learning.
- The school has used early entry for mathematics GCSE in Year 10. Students who do not gain the required grades sit this again in Year 11 so they are not disadvantaged by taking the examination early.
- Although Black African students have achieved better recently, they, and White British students, do not make consistently good progress in the school.
- Students who attend alternative provision are supported in achieving better in school by the specialist support they receive which helps them to focus more on their learning.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are given a wide range of additional activities, including support in class and in small groups. This is very effective in accelerating progress for these students and in narrowing gaps between them and their peers. Their progress is improving and is good across the school.
- Students in all three units often start the school with attainment well below the rest of the cohort. Specialist support is extremely effective and teaching assistants follow up teaching from mainstream lessons to ensure students understand fully and make good progress. As a result, students make at least good progress and in some cases outstanding progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is not enough consistently good teaching at all key stages and across subjects for students to make consistently good progress. Teachers do not have high enough expectations and do not plan lessons which are challenging enough for all students, particularly the most able. There are very few opportunities in lessons for students to talk about what they are doing and to work independently so they are more actively engaged in the learning process.
- Teachers do not use a range of questioning skills to help students understand work and to

develop students' learning. In the mathematics department, staff have high expectations of work in books and students present their work neatly. Work is regularly marked by teachers with next steps for students, and this is starting to improve progress in the department. However, across the rest of the school, students do not routinely receive high-quality feedback that helps them understand how to improve their work and move it up to the next level. Consequently, students do not take responsibility for improving their own progress.

- Strengths of teaching across the school are the subject knowledge of staff and positive relationships between staff and students. In the teaching of vocational qualifications, where students achieve particularly well, one-to-one support for individuals is a strength, helping them to make faster progress.
- In the better teaching, particular strengths are the carefully targeted activities which support all students making good progress, and opportunities to work in pairs, groups or independently. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson linking different themes, students used a variety of activities and had opportunities to work independently and in pairs, which helped them to make good progress.
- Teaching is also mixed in the sixth form and there is not enough that is good across all subject areas for students to make good progress. There were examples of stronger teaching, particularly in Year 13, for example, in a media lesson where students were examining coursework questions. They worked in groups to discuss students' answers using questions to get them to think about different aspects of the writing and the exam mark scheme to assess the work. They were encouraged to discuss and share their ideas. The teacher questioned students expertly both in the group sessions and as a class, supporting students in learning from each other and to think more deeply. As a result, they made good progress.
- Students in the units receive support from highly skilled teaching assistants. They support students in lessons and in additional time outside lessons so students learn well. In a particularly strong session as part of a Year 10 English lesson, a student was encouraged effectively by the teaching assistant to understand the text and worked with them in a debriefing session after the lesson to make sure all aspects of the lessons were covered. This ensured excellent progress.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### require improvement

- Students do not always have strong attitudes to learning to drive their faster progress. Sometimes in lessons they are passive and do not take part, particularly during questioning sessions or when listening to the teacher, and they are not involved in independent activities. Students wait patiently if they finish early and on occasions become a little distracted. Students do not routinely know their targets so they can think about improving their work in lessons for themselves to help them make faster progress.
- Behaviour around the school is generally good. Students are polite to each other and adults. Students from different backgrounds get on well with each other. The school promotes good relationships and ensures there is no discrimination. The school has a system to call out staff if there are issues in lessons, and the use of this has decreased markedly over the last few years.
- There are a range of rewards to celebrate students' success, including merit points, award assemblies, award evenings, year awards and termly trips.
- Students say they feel safe in the school and most parents agree with this view. Students say there is very little bullying but that it does occur. They say staff deal with it and it is not a concern to them. They learn about different types of bullying, including homophobic and racial bullying and e-safety.
- Students and staff are equally positive about the chaplaincy support and the care and development which are provided by staff. The school works closely with other providers to make sure students who are educated on other sites are safe and well cared for. Sixth form students are positive about the support they receive for moving into Key Stage 5 and also for university and career options when they leave school.
- Attendance has remained above the national average over the last three years.

## The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching is good enough for students to make consistently good progress. School development planning is not sharply enough focused on the difference that actions already taken are having. The school's plan for the future does not have clear steps for improvement which can be checked on by senior leaders and governors to make sure they happen on time and make a difference.
- Subject leaders are also not focused enough on the effectiveness of their actions, particularly about developing teaching in their subjects, to make sure there are high standards of teaching in their areas and whether they are offering helpful support to staff to ensure this is the case.
- All staff are observed teaching. However, observations are not focused on the progress students and groups of students make in lessons, which means leaders think teaching is better than it is.
- Performance management systems are in place and teachers are given targets which are reviewed annually. These are linked to progression up the pay spines. Although most staff receive pay awards, there have been occasions where these have been withheld. There are examples of where teaching has improved, particularly for teachers new to the profession who have been supported to teach to a good standard.
- The school offers a wide range of traditional GCSE subjects and all students study physical education, a modern foreign language and religious education in Key Stage 4. There are a few vocational subjects which students can also choose to take.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through Catholicism, with highly effective wrap-around pastoral care. There is an extensive network to support students and the chaplaincy supports their care and development. There is a wide range of sporting activities, and students take part in a range of teams, including athletics and football. There are also further opportunities for students to take part in snowboarding and mountaineering.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement. Although the school has increased the range of subjects on offer to students, teaching is not consistently good so students do not make good progress on many courses. Students do well on the vocational courses that are on offer.
- The leadership and management of the specialist resourced departments are good. Staff ensure students receive the highest levels of care and support, are integrated extremely well in the school and achieve well.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. There is a clear policy in place which staff understand and follow. The leader receives regular training and ensures training for staff is kept up to date. The procedure for investigating incidents is clear and is closely adhered to by the school.
- The local authority has had a light-touch approach with the school over recent years because of its previous outstanding inspection judgements. They have worked closely with the headteacher to provide support to local schools, particularly around teaching and curriculum developments.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are aware of the published data on the school and that results were disappointing in 2013. They oversee performance management and receive updates from the headteacher about the quality of teaching in the school. They sign off recommendations for pay awards and are aware of where support has been provided to address underperformance. Although they are aware that some subjects do less well than others, they have not linked the quality of teaching presented by the headteacher with the progress students make. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is being spent but do not receive regular updates on students' progress in the school so they can see if this is making a difference. However, they know that the gap has narrowed in Year 11.

## 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>	110517
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	412153

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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,766
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	376
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Rhodes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Manley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 September 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 669735
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