

Blessed John Henry Newman RC College

Broadway, Oldham, Lancashire, OL9 9QY

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' achievement requires improvement. Progress and attainment, particularly in mathematics, have not been good enough.
- In 2013 for example, the proportion of students making the progress expected of them was below average in English and well below average in mathematics. Most able students did not do as well as they should have done in either subject. In mathematics, disabled students and those with special educational needs underperformed.
- In mathematics, students' understanding of key mathematical concepts and their skills in using them are underdeveloped.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to use and reinforce their mathematical skills by solving problems related to real-life situations.
- Over time, teaching has not been good enough across the curriculum to promote students' good progress. Teachers' lesson planning does not always make the best use of student progress data to ensure that all students learn well, whatever their ability.
- The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent.
- Students' presentation of their work, including their handwriting, is not always good enough.
- The sharing of good and exemplary classroom practice is not sufficiently extensive.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of school performance.
- Leaders have put into place well founded strategies which have led to improvements in all areas of school life since the previous inspection. Students' achievement is accelerating, including in mathematics, and is particularly rapid in English.
- Students show much pride in their school. Behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. They are keen to learn and settle to work quickly. They feel safe and speak highly of the adults who work with them.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and have a wide range of responsibilities within school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 44 part lessons, taught by 44 teachers. Two lessons were observed jointly with a deputy headteacher. Inspectors also visited five registration sessions at the beginning of the school day and listened to students in Year 7 read.
- Inspectors spoke to five groups of students, including sixth formers. They also had informal discussions with students at breaks and lunchtimes and during the Year 11 breakfast session, prior to students taking a GCSE examination.
- They also held discussions with three members of the governing body, including the Chair and vice-chair. They met with heads of academic subjects and faculties, the special educational needs coordinator, pastoral staff, the head of sixth form and members of the senior and extended leadership teams.
- In addition, they had meetings with the school improvement partner, a representative of the local authority and senior staff from a National Support School.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and met formally with 10 parents on the first day of the inspection. They also took account of the 120 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and considered internal and external student progress and attainment data, students' work in mathematics and English, school improvement planning and the school's view of its own performance. They looked at external reports commissioned by the school in relation to performance in English and mathematics.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jim Kidd, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rodchester	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized secondary school. The school opened as a new school in September 2011. Students and teachers worked on the separate sites of the two former schools until the new site was opened in 2012.
- When the school was inspected in February 2013, it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Subsequently, the school was inspected on three occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making reasonable progress.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is extra money for those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- There is an above average proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages, with the largest group of Pakistani origin. The proportion of students that speaks English as an additional language is nearly twice the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school cooperates with a range of local providers to provide tuition for students under the age of 16. This alternative provision will stop at the end of this academic year.
- There have been many staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, additions to the senior leadership team and new appointments at assistant director level in both the English and mathematics faculties.
- The school is a Rights Respecting School and has full International School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning to accelerate achievement further by:
 - ensuring teachers make even more use of information on students' progress when planning lessons, so that students of all abilities have interesting work that helps them to do their best
 - improving consistency in the quality of marking and feedback so that students always respond to teachers' comments and are fully aware of how to improve their work
 - extending the sharing of good and exemplary classroom practice which already exists
 - developing and improving students' presentation and handwriting.
- Further raise students' achievement in mathematics in both key stages by:
 - developing students' understanding of key mathematical concepts and their skills in using them
 - giving students more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems related to real-life situations
 - accelerating the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students generally enter the school with average levels of prior attainment. Standards by the end of Year 11 are, overall, broadly in line with that seen nationally. This demonstrates that students' achievement requires improvement from their starting points on entry to Year 7.
- In 2013, the proportion of students making and exceeding the progress expected of them was below average in English and was well below that usually seen in mathematics. In both subjects, most able students underperformed and did not reach the standards their ability warranted.
- Inspection evidence, including observation of teaching and learning, scrutiny of students' work and a close consideration of internal school data, demonstrates that achievement in English is accelerating apace and that progress in this subject is now better than ever before. Most able students are now beginning to reach the higher GCSE grades of A and A*. In the current Year 11 cohort, for example, there is a 32% increase in the proportion of students making better than expected progress. There are examples of students making outstanding progress as a result of the teaching they receive.
- As a result of the school's emphasis on improving students' speaking and listening skills, and also the many opportunities students have to read, in the 'Year 7 hub', for example, students are now extending their vocabulary. This is having a positive impact on their confidence in speaking and on the quality of their writing.
- Progress and attainment in mathematics are also beginning to improve, but not as quickly as is in English. One of the reasons for this slower progress is the large turnover of staff in the subject and the subsequent inconsistency in teaching quality. As a result, students' understanding of key mathematical concepts and their skills in using them to solve problems remain underdeveloped.
- Pupil premium funding is spent wisely and provides more focused tuition for those entitled to support. As a result, the gaps between the performance of students known to be eligible for free school meals and others are closing. In the current Year 11, for example, school and external marking of 'mock' examination papers demonstrate that the gaps in progress have narrowed by 13% in both English and mathematics. A just below average proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is on track to attain five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics. As such, the school promotion of equality of opportunity is sound.
- Students of Pakistani origin and those who speak English as an additional language continue to achieve well and to make better progress than other groups in school.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers in English but their progress in mathematics is still not as good as it should be. Although students' attendance at alternative placements is due to cease, the school keeps a close eye on their progress and attendance and both are good.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and, in 2013, progress and attainment in the two vocational courses offered, public services and health and social care, were above average.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been effective enough to ensure that students made good or better progress in their studies overall. However, as a result of an overriding emphasis on improving classroom practice, teaching is improving rapidly and there are examples of students now making outstanding progress because of the teaching they receive.
- Students achieve well or better when teachers' lesson planning takes full account of the progress they have already made and ensures that lesson activities are interesting and helps students of all abilities to learn effectively. Most able students in Year 8, for example, are already evaluating sources in relation to 'Jack the Ripper' with a skill which would not go amiss in Year 9 or even in

GCSE history in Year 10.

- On occasions, students start to lose interest and their progress slows. This is because activities are not planned carefully enough to ensure that students of different abilities learn at a good rate and are interested in the work.
- Students comment that, at times, teaching in mathematics does not fire their imagination and that the problems they are required to solve are abstract and are not linked to their own experiences. When their assignments are linked to real-life situations, they see the purpose of completing them and their mathematical skills improve.
- The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent across subjects and also within subject areas and faculties. The most effective marking is regular, detailed and gives students accurate advice on how they can improve their work.
- When students are used to receiving such a wealth of comment on how they can raise their standards, they respond positively and are fully aware of what they need to do to make their work even better. Students do not benefit from marking when it is cursory and, on occasions, inaccurate work is marked as if it was correct.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support the learning of relevant individuals and smaller groups including disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Many students show pride in the presentation of their work and, when this is the case, their assignments are neatly written and work is always finished. However, the handwriting of some students is not as good as it should be and there is no common approach to improving handwriting or school policy on the development of handwriting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students enjoy their school and say that the students from the two predecessor schools get on well with each other. In addition, they speak highly of the adults who work there and say, 'We are proud of our school and our headteacher and other staff are proud of us too!'
- The school is calm and purposeful and students engage well with each other when taking advantage of the breakfast opportunities in the large open area on the ground floor and in the dining room. Behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes is good.
- The warning bell is effective in encouraging students to be punctual to their lessons and, on several occasions during the inspection, students arrived at their classrooms early. Conduct in lessons is good overall and, on occasions, outstanding. Students get on well with their work and are keen to do well. There are very few examples of off-task and minor misbehaviour in class, and these are generally handled well by staff. Students are firmly of the view that behaviour is good and that it has improved markedly in the last 12 months or so.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire and all who met inspectors during the two days believe their children are safe and happy in school. As one parent commented, 'The students here are known as individuals.'
- Students say they feel safe and that staff are approachable and more than willing to help when they have problems and feel unhappy. Students say that bullying does exist but is rare and that staff deal with it promptly and effectively when it occurs.
- There is a good awareness of the different types of bullying and students comment that they know homophobic name-calling exists, but that it has decreased and is now hardly ever used.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Students from different minority ethnic backgrounds get on well together. Students value the many opportunities they have to take responsibility. For example, sixth formers act as sports leaders and Year 10 students are literacy coaches for students in Year 7. Year 11 prefects have a range of duties and Year 7 ambassadors are proud to show parents and other visitors around school.

- Students support a variety of charity appeals and offer support to a local over-60s club.
- Attendance continues to improve and is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The dedicated headteacher, supported well by the two deputy headteachers and extended leadership team, is regarded highly by staff at all levels of experience and responsibility. In their words, 'Senior staff offer us so much support and although we know we have still further to develop as a school, it is a privilege to work here.'
- The school knows itself well and senior leaders have taken full advantage of the support from two teaching schools to put in place effective strategies to promote ongoing improvement. As a result, teaching, leadership, and behaviour and safety have all improved since the previous inspection. The school recognises, however, that the sharing of good and exemplary practice in teaching is not as widespread as it could be.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good overall and are complemented by the proactive work of the impressive team of faculty and subject heads. They play an increasingly effective role in delivering in-service training and in developing classroom practice in the areas for which they are responsible. As one middle leader commented, 'We have been given greater autonomy to develop teaching in our departments: this has undoubtedly made me a better leader.'
- Staff make positive comments about the school's arrangements for managing their performance, which, they say, are more robust than ever before and linked closely with students' progress in the classroom.
- The curriculum is under continuous review and the school places emphasis on entering students for examinations only when teachers are certain they can attain the grade their ability warrants. As a result, early entry has all but disappeared. Although narrow, the sixth-form curriculum fully meets the needs of the very small numbers of students in Years 12 and 13.
- Students speak highly of the many extra-curricular activities open to them. Sport, music and drama feature largely; there are junior and senior choirs, a brass ensemble and drama and performance clubs.
- Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice meet current requirements. The school ensures that discrimination in all its forms is rejected. Students themselves say that racist behaviour is a rarity and that students from both predecessor schools and from all heritages get on well together.
- The local authority continues to provide strong support for the school. It employs a school improvement partner who visits the school on a regular basis and keeps a close check on improvement. Senior staff have benefitted from visits to an outstanding school, which were arranged by the local authority.
- A 'core group' sets key challenging targets for improvement and holds senior leaders to account with the utmost rigour. This group includes the local authority head of school performance, representatives from the governing body, and senior staff from one of the two supporting National Teaching Schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Following the previous inspection, governors took advantage of an external review of their impact. Members are now much more aware of school performance in all areas of its life and they ask increasingly challenging questions of the leadership. Indeed, all faculties are supported and held to account by link governors, who visit subject areas, including lessons, on a regular basis.
 - Members of the governing body have many opportunities to analyse and evaluate student progress data. They have a good understanding, through the work of the governor responsible for the oversight of pupil premium spending, of the impact of this funding on the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals.

- Governors speak confidently and accurately about how the school attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result of their close monitoring of student progress, a significant number of staff did not receive financial reward in the latest round of performance management outcomes.

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	136432
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	441921

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1403
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Eugene Dolan
Headteacher	Mr Michael McGhee
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
Telephone number	0161 785 8858
Fax number	0161 785 7810
Email address	admin@newmanrc.oldham.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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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 and 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

