

St John Vianney School

Rye Bank Road, Stretford, Manchester, M16 0EX

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and her team, ably supported by a knowledgeable governing body, have set a very clear direction for the school to continue its improvements, particularly in its provision for pupils and students with autistic spectrum disorders.
- There is high staff morale.
- The great majority of pupils and students make good or better progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and social and communication skills.
- The sixth form is good. Students leave the school with a range of accreditations and the great majority go on to further education or into employment. Equal opportunities are promoted well through a practical, vocational curriculum.
- Teachers make good use of information on pupils' and students' learning and behaviour to plan lessons so that there is good progress across subjects.
- Pupils' and students' behaviour in and around school is good and a strength alongside their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff sensitivity to pupils' and students' needs leads to a welcoming and safe environment for learning to take place.
- Partnerships with other professionals are very strong and contribute well to pupils' and students' emotional well-being.
- Senior leaders and governors have overseen improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection so that they are now never less than good.
- Governors have managed the school finances very well so that decisions about increasing staff and resource levels can be made.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching assistants and learning support staff do not yet benefit from formal appraisal. As a result, when providing help for students and pupils, their roles are not always clear enough to ensure that they do as well as they can.
- The school's work in sharing best practice is not yet fully developed in the wider community.
- Leaders are not yet fully aware of students' progress once they leave school and enter into further education or employment and are therefore not able to provide the additional support which some students need.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 full or part lessons taken by 13 teachers. The headteacher joined an inspector in two of these observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, five other professionals and six governors (including three parents). A telephone conversation was held with the school's improvement partner.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils and students representing the younger and older ages in the school. A discussion was held with two students about their work in hair and beauty.
- School documents, including the school's self-evaluation report, the school development plan, school policies on safeguarding, child protection, curriculum, behaviour and attendance were examined.
- The 14 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as a recent survey undertaken by the school and the views of three parents on the governing body.

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic day school for pupils and students from age five to 19 who have a range of disabilities and special educational needs. The largest group are those with autistic spectrum disorders. There are sizeable groups who have moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and some pupils and students with severe learning difficulties.
- It is a non-maintained special school admitting pupils and students from neighbouring authorities and Diocese. Current pupils and students come from Trafford, Stockport, Manchester, Salford, Rochdale, Tameside and Cheshire East.
- All pupils and students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils and students are admitted to the school at varying times during an academic year.
- Classes are often made up of mixed ages.
- The school has a sixth form which provides for students up to the age of 19.
- The majority of pupils and students are boys.
- The proportion of pupils and students supported by pupil premium is higher than average. This is additional funding for those pupils and students known to be eligible for free school meals or for those who are looked after by the local authority. The school has only received a limited amount of pupil premium funding due to current arrangements for receipt of this money in non-maintained schools.
- The school does not receive Year 7 catch-up funding (additional funding provided for pupils at the beginning of Year 7 who have not reached the expected level of attainment for their age).
- Most pupils and students are of White British heritage.
- There is a small minority of pupils and students looked after by their local authority.
- A range of other professionals work each week at the school including a school nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, educational psychologist, social worker, drama therapist, behaviour specialist and speech and language therapists.
- The school has recently achieved further Autistic accreditation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of pupils and students even further by deploying teaching assistants and learning support staff to:
 - ensure pupils and students receive appropriate levels of challenge and try to work things out for themselves
 - observe and record pupils' and students' progress on a regular basis and share this information with teachers in order to inform next steps for learning.
- Further improve leadership and management to make them outstanding by:
 - developing an appraisal system for teaching assistants and learning support staff to ensure that they have clear roles and responsibilities
 - sharing more widely the good practice in this school in meeting the social, emotional and learning needs of pupils and students who have complex learning difficulties, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders, in other local schools
 - ensuring that follow-up checks are made so that students who progress into further education or employment do so successfully over time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils and students come into the school working at standards well below those expected nationally for their age. The large majority, including those with differing disabilities or special educational needs and those who are supported by pupil premium funding, make good or outstanding progress in reading, writing, mathematics, social and communication skills.
- The school provides equal opportunities for all pupils and students, regardless of their disabilities or special educational needs, to achieve a range of accredited courses, including up to four GCSEs, by the time they leave the school. The great majority go on to further education or the world of work.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop good social skills and routines when working on table top activities. They showed an ability to communicate their needs to staff leading to positive relationships during class time. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development was promoted well as they cooperated well and tidied up after a lesson.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 listened well to stories and were able to match descriptions to characters in a book and related these to their own experiences. Pupils made use of their knowledge of letters and sounds when reading new words during lessons. The less able pupils were learning to count and the most able showed an understanding of place value when learning about tens and units during a practical mathematics activity.
- At Key Stage 3, students showed how well they could work together when making observations in an art and information and communication technology lesson. They used different methods to record their observations in their sketch books and were able to practise and develop their writing and communication skills to higher levels.
- At Key Stage 4, students with autistic spectrum disorders responded well when using visual prompts (pictures of themselves and friends on a residential trip) to reflect on what they might have been saying to each other. This encouraged them to think of more complex descriptive words and to use speech marks and other punctuation with independence.
- Only a small number of Key Stage 4 students are entered for GCSE examinations. None are entered before the summer term of Year 11.
- Overall, because of good use of information about pupils' and students' abilities in English and mathematics when planning for individual needs, the most able pupils and students make good or outstanding progress, particularly in the use of taught skills in reading, writing, mathematics and communication. For example, they investigated fractions of amounts with increasing understanding in a mathematics lesson.
- Pupils and students known to be eligible for free school meals make the same levels of progress and attain similar standards in English and mathematics as their peers by the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.
- Sixth-form provision is good. Students engage very well in practical, vocational activities such as gardening, hair and beauty and design technology. Students spoke enthusiastically about their experiences in cutting staff's hair, working on reception and preparing and serving food in 'Café V'. Reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills continue to be promoted well in the sixth form, although, on occasion, some students need to be further challenged in recording their work accurately and with understanding.
- In one or two classes in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, pupils and students were not fully challenged, for example, when support staff gave too much help in cutting out sentences for sequencing. Learning slows as a result. Support staff do not always take the chance to record how well pupils and students perform when working independently in order to keep a check on progress and to inform the next steps for learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good and occasionally outstanding.

The very large majority of pupils and students make good or outstanding progress. Much of this improvement is down to the calm and well-managed learning spaces around the school. These are especially inclusive of pupils and students with autistic spectrum disorders.

- Pupils and students respond well to the use of practical resources and clear questioning. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils developed their skills and understanding of 'tens and units' and make good progress. Expectations that they would behave well helped pupils to succeed.
- Teachers' consistent use of information about pupils' and students' ability levels ensures that tasks enable them all to make at least good progress. For example, in a Key Stage 2 English lesson, this meant that the most able were challenged to read independently and talk or write about characters in a book.
- Strong teacher subject knowledge and well planned activities contribute to pupils' and students' good progress. For example, in Key Stage 3, students made good progress in the use and understanding of technical language when recording their findings during a science experiment about noise pollution. Year 10 students were able to design and make some impressive items, such as a fully functioning table light with adaptable slats because they were shown carefully how to use different tools safely and correctly.
- Students in Key Stage 4 responded enthusiastically to the teacher and teaching assistant when role playing the expressions and actions of two characters from *Romeo and Juliet*. This led to the students trying this out in pairs and coming up with descriptive words like 'despicable' and 'frustrated' when describing the characters.
- Students develop their physical skills well. They learn technical aspects, for example, in high jumping because they have access to specialist knowledge and clear demonstrations of how to improve. Key Stage 3 students practised and refined their skills to make good progress. They were able to talk knowledgeably about their achievements.
- In the sixth form, good teaching and support, for example, in food technology ensures students develop their skills and confidence within a safe environment. Great opportunities are presented to students of all abilities to practise work-related skills within a range of subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' and students' behaviour is good. The school has very clear routines and expectations and levels of supervision are always good.
- Support from other professionals, including a drama therapist funded from limited pupil premium funds, ensures that all pupils and students receive good and, in some cases, outstanding provision. The small minority of looked after children benefit directly from drama therapy support, for example, in forming and keeping friendships. Their ability to talk about, rather than act out, their feelings has led to calmer behaviour around school.
- Pupils and students enjoy coming to school because they can meet their friends and the staff help them out when they have problems in their learning or behaviour.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection including the percentage of persistent absences, which the school works hard to reduce. While it is above the average of special schools nationally, attendance is yet to reach the national average for all schools and so needs to improve further.
- The majority of parents would recommend the school to others and are happy with what the school provides in regard to the safety and behaviour of pupils and students.
- All pupils and students responded very well at the start of the day when the teacher in charge talked quietly while pointing at signs on the stage that said 'whisper' and then 'silent'. This was a great example of the strong sense of community at the school.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons are invariably good because of consistent and sensitive behaviour management and purposeful learning.
- Behaviour around school and outside is mostly good. Occasional physical or verbal squabbles are quickly addressed so that quiet and order prevail.
- The school's work to keep pupils and students safe is good. They have a good understanding of

types of bullying and recently engaged in a poster competition which promoted anti-bullying. They say that homophobic or racist comments are rare, but that when they do occur staff address them swiftly and effectively. Pupils and students say social media are 'banned' in school.

- Occasionally, pupils and students say that lessons can be disrupted by bad behaviour, but this is rare. Fixed-term exclusions are used as a last resort and have related to only a small minority of pupils or students.

The leadership and management are good

- The experienced headteacher and her senior team, with the support of a knowledgeable governing body, have successfully moved the school forward since its last inspection. They have been especially effective in regard to how all leaders oversee the quality of teaching, moving it to invariably good which was not previously the case.
- The systems and policies at the school are detailed and wide ranging. The school's self-evaluation report and school development planning are not just the responsibility of the headteacher. Other leaders, for example, those who take responsibility for leading subjects, provide their own assessments and evaluation of each responsibility area so that there is a consistent approach to school improvement. Progress in each area is frequently checked, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders ensure that regular observations of lessons are conducted so that evidence can be gained about how well pupils and students are learning in response to the teaching and support provided. Policies on appraisal linked to performance in the classroom are in place and senior leaders make decisions about staff training needs. At present, teaching support staff do not receive formal appraisal and their roles are not discussed with regard to how they contribute to improving pupils' and students' progress.
- Teaching staff appreciate the support they receive from senior leaders and there is high morale because of a shared sense of 'mission' where every child is 'an individual' and 'unique'.
- The educational consultant is confident that the school is progressing well and requires only light touch support.
- The curriculum is strong. There are equal opportunities for pupils and students to access a wide range of accreditation, including GCSEs. Other opportunities for learning are provided through regular residential visits and local museum trips. Links with a school in Uganda have contributed well to pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While the majority of students then go on to further education, training and employment, the school does not check on whether or not they remain in their placements successfully over time or whether they require further support from the school.
- The use of primary sport funding is planned to provide additional trampolining resources and coaching but is yet to be used. It is anticipated that those pupils and students with additional physical and motor difficulties will benefit from this new provision in partnership with the physiotherapist.
- Partnerships with other professionals are a key strength of the school because these practitioners are keen to work, not only with the school, pupils, students and parents, but with each other. As a result, provision at the school, for example, through its recent Autistic accreditation, is becoming exceptionally strong. As yet, the school does not share this practice with other local schools in order for their provision to see the benefits.
- Parents spoken to were overwhelmingly supportive of the school, especially with regard to how their children have become more confident both socially and in their communication skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very well informed about the school's work and are regular visitors, writing reports about what they have observed, for example, when sitting in on lessons. With the support of the school improvement partner, they oversee the appraisal of the headteacher and confirm whether or not teachers advance through the pay threshold. There are regular committee meetings so that each governor has specific roles, for example, when considering

data regarding pupils' and students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and governors have undertaken relevant training in safer recruitment and in performance management. Their management of school finances and resources, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding, has been a particular strength. They know about the impact that the drama therapist has had for looked after children.

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	106167
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	437455

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Dr G F Byrne
Headteacher	Eileen McMorrow
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2011
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