

Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic College

Ormerod Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 3AA

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Leaders, well supported by governors and parents, have been focussed and successful in continuing to improve the achievement of students since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of students' learning. High standards are expected and this has had a positive impact on progress and achievement.
- Students' attainment has risen markedly so that it is now close to the national average. Achievement in English is outstanding.
- The extra help provided to students who have a special educational need or who are supported by pupil premium funding, is well organised, so that their good progress matches that of others.
- Students are looked after well and behave courteously to others. They are developing into highly moral individuals who accept others from different backgrounds, sexualities or beliefs. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Students are keen, highly engaged and very smartly dressed. Students feel safe.
- Leaders have meticulously raised standards across the college at a rate which demonstrates rapid development. The relatively new headteacher has been supported well by governors and has been fundamental in driving the improvements seen.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress students make in mathematics, although improving rapidly, has not reached that made in English.
- The college does not make full use of the data it has at its disposal in order to identify opportunities to fully support the progress students make, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching does not yet result in enough students making outstanding progress.
- Some students feel that the advice they are given for future careers is not clearly given to them. This leads to some feeling confused about their options.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 40 lessons and part lessons, two of which were observed jointly with managers from the college.
- The inspectors observed the college’s work and looked at a wide range of supporting documents and records, including those that relate to safeguarding and child protection, the college’s own view of its performance, the monitoring of progress in lessons, achievement data, governing body minutes and records of support from Lancashire local authority.
- Formal discussions were held with the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders, four groups of students and the local authority.
- Students were spoken with additionally in lessons to ascertain their views of behaviour and learning across the college.
- Scrutiny of students’ work was carried out during lesson observations and additionally as four separate exercises.
- Inspectors listened to the Year 7 pupils who participate in the reading support programme as part of the college’s approach to improve standards of literacy across all subject areas.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons, at break time and lunch time. They also considered the opinions of staff, pupils and parents towards behaviour in the college as a whole.
- Inspectors analysed 83 responses to staff questionnaires, 91 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter to the team from a parent.

Inspection team

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Additional Inspector

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Additional Inspector

Michele Costello

Additional Inspector

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Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic College is larger than most secondary schools and is oversubscribed.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average, accounts for almost of a quarter of the population and is rising. This funding is available for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average. The number of students supported this way has reduced over the last two years.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage with very few who are from ethnic minority backgrounds or at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- A small number of students spend time following courses at alternative providers either full-time or part-time. These providers include Nelson & Colne College, Coal Clough High School and Burnley College.
- The college enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the achievement of all groups of students, particularly in mathematics, so that they make the rapid rates of progress currently achieved in subjects where standards are highest by:
 - extending relevant aspects of the college's effective practice in teaching to help students make rapid progress in mathematics
 - improving the stability of staffing in the mathematics department, so that students are fully supported in their learning
 - using the good quality data available to quickly identify any issues relating to the progress groups of students make and ensure swift intervention to address them.
- Further improve the quality of teaching to secure outstanding learning by:
 - ensuring all staff consistently follow the college's best practice in assessment and marking so that students know exactly the standards they have reached and how they can improve further
 - ensuring other adults in the classroom, such as teaching assistants, are fully used at all times to support students' learning, and that they are fully involved in planning that support with the classroom teacher.
- Improve the advice given to students so that their career pathways are clear and supported fully.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students make good progress from their individual starting points and leave Year 11 with standards that are broadly average and rising rapidly. Attainment has risen rapidly over the last two years and is set to rise further. Inspection evidence supports the college's view that the progress students have made this year is continuing to improve. The proportion of students who left the college last year with five A*-C grades, including English and mathematics, was much higher than in recent years and overall attainment is now much closer to the national average.
- The progress made by students across the college has improved rapidly and the proportion of students who exceed the expected progress in English is now higher than found nationally. This marked increase in their rates of progress and the standards they now reach, represents good progress in their achievement overall.
- The progress students make in mathematics, particularly those who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, is not yet as strong as in English. However, the rate of progress made by this group of students has increased markedly since the previous inspection and the gap between their progress and attainment and that of their peers, in mathematics, is closing rapidly.
- The achievement of students in science last year was not strong. However, due to the keen diligence of school leaders, swift action was taken to improve standards and students now make the good progress expected of them in the subject. Early entry to GCSE science demonstrates that the standards now reached by students are comparable to national figures. Inspection evidence supports the college's view of good progress in science this year.
- In other subject areas, such as geography and history, students also do very well attaining results in examinations which are higher than found nationally.
- Students who are entered early for GCSE examinations achieve well. Leaders consider carefully who they enter early for examinations and the reasons for doing so in order to ensure that students are able to reach their potential in those subjects.
- The drive to improve literacy across all areas of the school has had a marked impact on the progress students make in many subject areas. Students are supported well to have the necessary reading and writing skills which will enable them to fully access the curriculum.
- The few students who are disabled or have an identified special educational need make the same strong progress as that of other students and are supported well in their everyday needs.
- Students targeted for the Year 7 catch-up programme are making good progress to reach the same standards as their peers. Their reading skills are developed well, supporting their chances of achieving higher results as they move through the school.
- The most able students are supported well. The standards they reach are now much higher and the progress they make, for example, in English, exceeds that typically found nationally.
- Students who are supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, broadly make the same progress as similar students nationally. The gap between their standards and that of other students in the school is narrowing. At the time of the last inspection, this funding was not seen to be used fully to support those students. However, additional funding is now used well to impact positively on the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium. This shows the effectiveness of the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.
- The few students who receive their education off-site enjoy their learning, attend regularly and are achieving well in the studies they pursue.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching leads to good learning and progress over time for students. It is equally strong across Key Stages 3 and 4. The impact of recent changes shows that activities now inspire and enable students to do well. Teachers demonstrate their own enthusiasm for their subject and this

supports the knowledge gains of students well.

- Teachers are making more use of assessment information and adapt targets so that students are constantly challenged to do even better. For example, in one art lesson, the students' assessment sheets had targets written down that had been changed many times once the challenge had been achieved and this led to a rapid rate of learning for them. However, there is still variability in the quality of target setting by some teachers, leading to learning that is not as rapid.
- The teaching of literacy is strong throughout the school. This enables students to be highly successful in understanding the particular challenges of the subjects being taught and supports improvements in the standards of English well. For example, in one religious studies lesson, students were asked to critique a piece of text that they were reading so that its punctuation and grammar were correct.
- The rate of learning made by students in mathematics is now much stronger and inspection evidence of current progress, through lesson observations, work scrutiny and the analysis of school data, supports the view that this represents good achievement. However, the teaching of mathematics is not yet leading to progress that is as rapid as seen elsewhere in the college. Factors influencing this include, staffing difficulties in the mathematics department and some inconsistencies in the use of data.
- Students speak very highly of the skills of their teachers. They have absolute confidence in their knowledge and are keen to learn from them. Over 90% of parents agree that their children are taught well and the same amount say their children make good progress.
- The quality of marking is good overall. There are examples of exemplary practice which enables students to consolidate their understanding through very high quality feedback, gives them time to reflect on it and continually challenges them to improve and do harder work. However, not all marking is of best quality and as a result, some students are not as well informed of exactly how they can improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe, such as in practical lessons, and that the school also helps them understand how to be safe when using modern online technologies, such as social media. The overwhelming majority of parents, 99%, who responded to Parent View, agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Procedures to check the credentials of staff are well kept and systems to record any incidents of bullying are secure.
- The college works hard to ensure there is a culture of fairness, inclusivity and acceptance. As a result, students are very highly considerate of others, regardless of their background, faith, culture, sexuality or disability.
- Students say that bullying is rare but when it does happen, it is dealt with quickly and effectively when staff are aware of it. They recognise that the school is doing a good job of supporting the correct use of language, although they also say that some name-calling still occurs.
- Attendance at the school is average and has risen over time. Persistent absence rates overall compare favourably to those seen nationally. For some pupil premium students who are persistently absent, the percentage of absence is slightly higher than average. Despite this, the college knows exactly the reasons why this is the case and the context for the absence. They can demonstrate clearly how the progress of those students is supported so that they continue to make learning gains. The work of the home-school liaison staff member is exemplary.
- Fixed-term exclusions at the school are well-below those typically found nationally. Permanent exclusions are rare and used as an absolute last resort. This supports the school's view of its inclusive ethos and support for all students.
- The behaviour of students is good. They are highly interested and involved in their work. Books are immaculately looked after by students. The presentation of their work is good and improving over time. This is due largely to the strong quality of teaching which helps to keep students

enthusiastic.

- Students are extremely smartly dressed. They say their uniforms are important to them and they look after their appearance well. Inspectors remarked about the high standards of dress and how students ensured that their uniforms were worn correctly. Students also say that since the new headteacher has arrived, the dress-code has been applied more strictly. This means that students are no longer in competition with each other, for example, through the use of make-up, and bullying has reduced as a result.
- Teachers and students show a mutual respect for each other. There are many opportunities for students to take part in activities after school and during the school day. They say that they welcome the support they receive by staff both in and out of lessons.
- The group of Year 10 students interviewed told inspectors that they felt the guidance given to them for their future careers were not good and that they had to find out for themselves what options they needed to pursue in order to reach their goals. However, students who have a special educational need and receive extra support said that the advice they get for their future was excellent.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong drive and purposeful vision have already resulted in a school community that is solidly behind the drive to make the improvements that are needed. Out of the parents who responded to Parent View, 95% agree that the school is well led and managed and that they would also recommend the school to others.
- On appointment, the headteacher promptly identified areas for improvement and actions have already resulted in better outcomes, such as the GCSE standards in English, a rising trend of improved progress across other subjects, higher attendance rates and a low number of exclusions. The college's own evaluation of its progress and future needs is extremely accurate and clearly targets how improvements can be made in order to raise achievement further.
- College policies, such as marking and assessment and behaviour management, are not yet consistently applied by all teachers to effect positive outcomes for learners. However, students did report to inspectors that this has improved considerably since the arrival of the new headteacher.
- Standards are rising and the progress students make is now accelerating, as a result of higher expectations and stronger teaching since the previous inspection. However, the progress made by students in mathematics has not yet reached the same rapid rate as seen in English.
- The college has developed systems to regularly track students' progress. These demonstrate accurately the learning gains made by students. Teachers are using this information more effectively to match work to students' ability, with greater success in English and other subjects than in mathematics. However, this data is not yet being fully utilised by leaders to identify groups of students who may not be making the progress expected.
- The quality of teaching has improved markedly over the last two years. This has been due to the relentless drive by governors, the headteacher and the associate deputy headteacher to improve teaching. The quality of teaching is checked thoroughly and leaders have a clear and accurate view of strengths and aspects that need attention.
- Middle leaders have developed their practice well and take responsibility for standards in their areas of responsibility. They are more aware of the progress students make and effecting changes in practices to ensure that this progress is sustainable.
- Support for those teachers new to the profession is excellent. One newly-qualified teacher (NQT) who responded to the staff questionnaire stated, 'As a NQT I feel I have been very well supported and welcomed into the school.'
- Teachers are keen to further develop their abilities and access every opportunity given to participate in professional development, ensuring that they have the necessary skills to further support their practice. Teachers talk about how much these opportunities have improved since the new headteacher arrived. However, in their response to the staff questionnaire, some

support staff reported that they feel they are not yet given enough opportunities to improve their practice. In classes, some teaching assistants are not always used as effectively as they could be.

- The college gives students many opportunities to support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. For example, the college regularly raises funds for different charitable causes, making students more aware of the needs of others. There is also a very strong programme of support to eradicate the inappropriate use of language, such as 'that's gay'. This is proving successful. These programmes deepen students' understanding of different groups within society, allowing them to reflect on different values and attitudes.
- Leaders receive effective support and challenge from the local authority. They say they welcome this support and use it well to improve their practice. .
- The school promotes opportunities for equality well overall. Gaps between the achievement and attendance of different groups of students, including those students for whom the pupil premium applies, are small or narrowing. Discrimination is not tolerated.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body is confident, diligent and meticulous in its role. It is now very strong having undergone restructure and support to respond as much as possible to issues raised in previous inspections.
- Governors have a thorough understanding about the quality of teaching and the impact that has had on the learning of students. Progression up the pay scale is not automatic and robust practices make it clear to teachers about what it is they need to do in order to move to higher pay scales in the profession.
- Governors are trained in the use of internal and external data, and are astute in their questioning and challenge to leaders. They hold leaders to account and insist that their decisions are based on all available evidence, both internal and from external reviews and partners.
- The previous inspection identified that not all extra funding was used fully for what it was intended. However, governors do now have a keen understanding of how the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is spent to bring about positive outcomes for the students it was meant for, and are ensuring it is correctly used.
- Governors ensure safeguarding meets requirements.

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	134997
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	442417

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	1,210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Tyson
Headteacher	Richard Varey
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2013
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