

Leyland St Mary's Catholic High School

Royal Avenue, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 1BS

Inspection dates 7–8 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leyland St Mary's has experienced a considerable amount of staff absence and unrest, low morale and little unity of purpose. This situation has not been resolved and has contributed to the significant decline in the school's effectiveness, which is now inadequate.
- Senior leaders, subject leaders and governors are ineffective and are not doing enough to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Standards by the end of Year 11 have declined over the past two years from above average to below average. Students' achievement is inadequate given their above average starting points.
- Gaps in the standards that disadvantaged students attain compared to their peers or other students nationally are not closing quickly enough.
- The school does not communicate effectively with parents. They have lost confidence in the school, particularly in its leadership and management, the quality of the teaching and students' achievement.
- Governors have not been given clear information about the progress of students. As a result, they are not able to hold leaders and managers to account well enough for the progress students make.
- Teaching is inadequate. Staff expectations of students' capabilities are often too low and the targets the students are set have not been challenging enough. Marking is not of a sufficiently high quality. Consequently, not enough students make the progress of which they are capable.
- Students' behaviour and safety require improvement. A small minority of students do not behave as well as they should do, nor do they take enough pride in their work. Leaders do not check sufficiently that students are taught about how to keep safe.

The school has the following strengths

- Many leaders, governors and staff care deeply about the school and want it to improve as quickly as possible.
- A number of improvement initiatives have been put in place; these are appropriate, but it is too early to see what impact they are having.
- Progress in some subjects, such as English, is good.
- Most students behave well and are positive about the school and their experiences there. They say that they are happy, feel safe and that they are well looked after.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons across the school. Four joint observations were undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspectors made short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors examined information about current students' learning and progress, as well as information about the learning and progress in 2013-14. The inspectors also looked at current work in students' books and a sample provided by the school from the previous academic year.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, the associate headteacher, and some leaders in charge of subjects.
- Meetings were held with four governors, including the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority. A telephone conversation took place with the Director of Schools and Colleges at the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Several meetings took place with students with a wide range of abilities and backgrounds. In addition, inspectors took many opportunities to talk to students in classes, at breaks and at lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school development plan and reports of two recent audits carried out by the local authority. One of these related to students' behaviour and the other to the quality of leadership and management in the school.
- The inspectors scrutinised records of attendance and behaviour, as well as information about the quality of teaching and the performance of staff.
- The inspectors took account of the 118 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and other communications from parents. They considered the issues raised in recent parental complaints to Ofsted, but did not investigate the individual complaints.
- Inspectors also took account of 47 responses from members of staff to the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Billings	Additional Inspector
Lesley Powell	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Leyland St Mary's Catholic High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to the school for students entitled to free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of students study part-time with a national construction company. A very small number of students are dual-registered at a nearby special school.
- In September 2013 a substantial part of the school was destroyed by fire. Following a period of two weeks when the school remained close, all students were transported to a school building nine miles away. This resulted in a reduced curriculum offer for that time. After a further two weeks students in Year 7, 10 and 11 returned to the main school site and received their full curriculum offer. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 remained at the school nine miles away until 16 December 2013. Some classes are currently in temporary accommodation on the main school site. The new building is due to be completed and ready for use by September 2015.
- At the time of the inspection over 20% of teaching staff were absent; a significant number of these were staff with management responsibilities.
- The school has an associate headteacher who started in May 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently, improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels, including governance by:
 - improving communication between governors, school leaders and staff to rebuild broken relationships so staff can work as a cohesive team with a unity of purpose
 - reducing staff absence so that students' learning is not disrupted and is more consistent
 - monitoring teaching more rigorously and ensuring that teachers are perfectly clear about which aspects need to be improved, in order to eradicate teaching that leads to progress which is less than good
 - developing the role of leaders in charge of subjects so that they are more accountable for the quality of teaching in their departments and for the progress their students make
 - providing governors with clear information about the progress of all groups of students in all subjects in all years, so that governors are able to hold the school to account more effectively for students' academic performance
 - checking regularly that strategies for improvement undertaken by the school are having the desired impact
 - ensuring that the school's website is compliant with the Department for Education regulations
 - responding to the letter received from the Department for Education in January 2014 requiring that an external review be carried out into the performance of disadvantaged students and ensuring that governors act swiftly on any recommendations of that review
 - improving the behaviour of a small minority of students, including some who attend part-time provision off site
 - checking that students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe

- communicating with parents more effectively to restore their confidence in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all students, particularly those who are disadvantaged, those of middle and lower ability, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, achieve well in all subjects, especially in science and humanities, by:
 - making sure that teachers set targets for students that are appropriately challenging, and reviewing those targets regularly
 - planning and teaching lessons that meet the needs of all students
 - raising teachers' expectations of students' capabilities, in order to ensure that the work students are given to do stretches them, makes them think hard and deepens their understanding
 - taking immediate steps to address gaps in students' knowledge and understanding in order to make up for weaknesses in teaching over time
 - ensuring that marking gives specific advice on how students can improve their work and providing students with opportunities to respond to the advice given
 - insisting that all students take a pride in the presentation and quality of work they produce.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Inadequacies in leadership following the previous inspection have slowed the pace and momentum for improvement. These weaknesses were present before the upheaval ensuing from the fire in September 2013, but have nevertheless been exacerbated since then.
- There has been a lack of effective communication between senior leaders and staff and among senior leaders themselves, which has led to a culture of mistrust and fear. Staff do not pull together; many of the staff, including some leaders and governors, are frustrated at how long it is taking to resolve grievances. Ongoing staff absence is impacting negatively on students' achievement.
- Communication with parents is weak, resulting in them having a lack of confidence in the school's leadership and management, the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Almost two thirds of parents who responded to the online questionnaire would not recommend the school to others.
- Leaders and governors have failed to secure essential improvements over time in teaching. In the past, their view of the school's performance has been over-generous and targets set for students' achievement have been too low. Leaders run sessions to help teaching improve but these do not inform individual teachers precisely what they must do to improve their practice and raise students' outcomes.
- There is wide variation in the effectiveness of middle leadership, including subject leaders, resulting in it being inadequate overall. There are some effective leaders, and students perform well in the subjects they lead, however, too many leaders are either new in post or ineffective. They are not holding the teachers in their departments to account well enough for the quality of teaching or for the performance of their students.
- In January 2014 the school received a letter from the Minister for Schools requiring an external review to investigate the poor performance of disadvantaged students. This had not been carried out at the time of the inspection; the poor performance of disadvantaged students has not been addressed.
- The variation in performance between different groups of students indicates that the school does not promote equality of opportunity or tackle discrimination well enough.
- The school receives regular reports on the performance and behaviour of students attending alternative provision. In the main, the progress of those students requires improvement, as does the behaviour of some of them. These issues are not followed up rigorously enough.
- Performance management systems are beginning to strengthen accountability. Pay is beginning to be linked to teachers' performance, although there has been an over-generous view of performance in the past.
- Safeguarding meets current government requirements. Child protection arrangements are fit for purpose. Security around the building site is good, although some parents have had some concerns over this.
- The curriculum is not reviewed regularly enough to ensure that it meets the needs of all students, including teaching them how to keep themselves and others safe. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision has not been revised to ensure that students are prepared for life in modern Britain. The students welcome the extra-curricular activities on offer and talk positively about some of the trips they have experienced, such as the residential visit to Ampleforth, where they gained experience of co-operation and new friendships.
- Careers guidance is appropriate. Year 11 students who discussed this aspect of the school's provision with inspectors stated that they feel that they have been given useful careers guidance and know where they want to go when they leave the school.
- The local authority helped the school to minimise the disruption to the students' education following the fire. It has also been delivering some hard messages, especially around achievement and leadership, for some time. It stepped up its support in the spring term of 2014, undertaking an audit of leadership and management. Following that review, an associate headteacher joined the school. However, the increased support from the local authority has not yet brought about sufficient improvements in the outcomes for students.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed and passionate about the school. They are determined for it to improve as quickly as possible. The governing body has been strengthened by a restructure. It has a new Chair and some new members have been appointed. Governors have received some training and are becoming increasingly knowledgeable in their understanding of performance data. They have a superficial, rather than detailed, knowledge of how the money that is available to support

disadvantaged students is used and its impact. Governors recognise that an external review of the performance of disadvantaged students is imperative and urgent. They accept that they were not able to challenge the school as effectively as they might have done as they were not always given clear information about the performance of students or the quality of teaching. Governors recognise the need for improved communication between themselves, school leaders and staff to rebuild broken relationships. They also recognise the need for transparency when making staff appointments and the need for the school's website to comply fully with the Department for Education's guidelines.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because some students' attitudes to learning are not as good as they should be. This also applies to some students' behaviour when they attend education part-time off site.
- Some students choose not to behave for some teachers, but do behave for others. There is low-level disruptive behaviour in a few lessons. This tends to be manifested in students talking at the same time as the teacher or involves students not listening to other students when they respond to the teachers' questions.
- Nearly 40% of parents who responded to Parent View felt that the school does not ensure that students behave well. About a quarter of staff who responded to the questionnaire also do not agree that students' behaviour is good.
- Year 11 students said that behaviour is getting better and rated it somewhere between seven and eight out of ten. They said that it tends to be the same people who misbehave, but that there are some teachers for whom all students behave well because there is mutual respect.
- Inspectors found students to be polite and courteous. Students move around the school sensibly at breaks and lunchtimes and in between lessons. This is despite corridors in the temporary buildings being narrow and an absence of bells to signal the change of lessons.
- Attendance is generally above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. Inspectors followed up issues around student safety in some depth, as a few parents had expressed concern to Ofsted before the inspection.
- Many systems are in place to secure students' safety, including risk assessment for off-site provision, but leadership review and oversight of safety requires improvement. Leaders do not check students' experience of the teaching of safety issues so they do not know how well students understand how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Even though parents have concerns about some areas of the school's work, the majority are confident that their children are kept safe and are well looked after.
- Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying. They say that virtually no bullying occurs and that when people fall out, it tends to be over friendships. Students are confident that adults in the school keep them safe.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching over time, students make inadequate progress.
- Gaps in students' knowledge and understanding are not being addressed quickly enough.
- Teachers do not always set targets for students that are appropriately challenging or communicate targets sufficiently clearly to students. Many students were unable to tell inspectors what their targets are.
- Students do not always make the progress they are capable of because they are often set work that does not stretch them or deepen their understanding. This is particularly true for middle and lower-ability students. Too often progress is limited, as teachers tend to focus on making sure that students have carried out a set task, rather than checking what they have learnt.
- Some teachers' expectations of their students are too low. Incomplete work or poorly presented work is not always commented upon. When it is identified, there is lack of follow-up to make sure that the teachers' comments have been acted upon.

- Marking is inconsistent and not always of a high quality. Some marking gives students helpful advice on how to improve their work, but some is superficial and does not guide students well enough. There are few opportunities for students to respond to any comments the teacher has written.
- Some teaching results in students making good progress over time, for example in subjects such as English, modern languages and physical education.
- The effective use of teaching assistants is variable across the school. Teachers sometimes have a patchy knowledge of the needs of their students and do not always make it clear to teaching assistants what is required of them. Nevertheless, some teaching assistants are very capable and skilled at simplifying work into small steps and, as a result, move on the learning of the students they support.
- Students' skills in literacy are improving with the increasing focus on literacy in lessons. Reading has a high profile and students are not being held back by an inability to read. There is less effective teaching of numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, with too few opportunities for students to apply them.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students enter the school with standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above average, but too few students make the progress, or attain the grades expected of them.
- The proportion of students attaining GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, fell from above average in 2012 to broadly average in 2013 to below average in 2014. Students' progress from their starting points was inadequate in 2013 and in 2014.
- Progress in English continues to compare favourably with all students nationally, but the proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics has fallen considerably. Progress in history remains inadequate, as does the progress of students of middle and lower-ability in science.
- The school is unable to provide clear or accurate data about the progress of students across the school, because progress has been measured against targets that were set too low. The school has now set more appropriate targets for the current academic year.
- The progress of students currently in the school is too variable. There is some good progress, such as in English, modern foreign languages and physical education, but progress remains inadequate or requires improvement in too many subjects. This is because of the inadequate teaching and the low expectations of some teachers.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged students has not been targeted precisely enough to meet the needs of those students for whom it was intended. Whilst the school provided case studies to illustrate some improvement, work scrutiny carried out during the inspection of the work of disadvantaged students revealed that the progress of students who are eligible for pupil premium remains inadequate overall.
- Gaps in the standards that disadvantaged students attain compared to those of their peers are not closing enough, nor are they closing in relation to other students nationally. In 2013, at the end of Year 11, disadvantaged students attained one GCSE grade below their peers in English and nearly two grades below in mathematics. The school's analysis of the 2014 results shows that this still remains the case. When compared to non-disadvantaged students nationally, disadvantaged students in this school were two grades behind in English and three grades behind in mathematics in 2013.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs underachieve. Leaders have not had clear or accurate data on the progress that these students make so interventions have not been targeted precisely enough. This situation is improving a little this year, with more appropriate target-setting and some good support from teaching assistants in class and in small-group work.
- Most-able students make better progress than other students; they are particularly well motivated and the work that they are set usually meets their needs and challenges them. This is especially true of the most-able students in English and in the separate sciences.
- Some of the most-able students have previously been entered early for their GCSE examination in mathematics. This does not appear to have limited the grades they achieved. Students are no longer entered early for any examinations.
- A small number of students study construction part-time off-site with a national construction company. There is evidence from reports the school receives that the progress of some of these students requires improvement.

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	119816
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	449169

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	624
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathleen Cooper
Headteacher	Kathy McNicholas
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2011
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