

St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic Centre for Learning (VA)

Cumber Lane, Whiston, Liverpool, Merseyside, L35 2XG

Inspection dates

13–14 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Progress in some subjects in Key Stage 3 and particularly in mathematics is too slow. Due to this a small but significant proportion of students do not make enough progress.
- The gap between the attainment of those students who are supported by the pupil premium and their classmates has not closed enough, particularly in Key Stage 3.
- Those students who have special educational needs and disabilities do not make enough progress in Key Stage 3.
- The proportion of most-able students reaching the highest levels of which they are capable is too low.
- Behaviour requires improvement because low-level disruption slows the pace of learning in some lessons. Rates of exclusion are higher than the national average, and have recently increased.
- Teaching requires improvement because not all staff are consistently following the school's policies for managing behaviour and for giving students feedback on their work. Due to this, students do not make consistently good progress.
- Not all subject leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching and learning effectively. This means that support and challenge for teachers is not as robust as is needed to ensure consistently good provision in all departments.
- Some leaders have had recent significant changes to their roles and responsibilities, which has slowed the pace of improvements. Due to this, the impact of their work on students' achievement and well-being is limited.

The school has the following strengths

- The achievement of students is improving and in some subjects, such as English, students are making good progress and attaining well.
- The school's pastoral support for students is very strong, and students are particularly knowledgeable about safety.
- Governors are well informed and have high expectations and ambition for the school, which is improving. They are receiving good quality support from the local authority and external consultants, which is having a positive impact.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 parts of lessons, including three joint observations with the leader responsible for teaching and learning. An assembly, registration period and specialist reading sessions were also seen.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, acting head of school, consultant headteacher, middle leaders, those with specific responsibility for students with special educational needs and disabilities, those supported by the pupil premium and those responsible for monitoring teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with students in groups and within lessons and heard students read.
- The data and paperwork relating to student progress, the school's self evaluation and development documents, policies, minutes and paperwork relating to safeguarding were all scrutinised.
- The 183 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account.

Inspection team

Rebecca Lawton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Georgiana Sale	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a slightly larger than average centre for learning. A very small number of students attend the Meadow Park Centre on a different site.
- The proportion of students supported by school action or with statements of special educational needs or disability is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is high, being almost double the national average, and nearly half of the school.
- The school is currently supported by a consultant headteacher during a period of significant change to leaders' roles and responsibilities.
- The school is no longer submitting students for early entry to examinations.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that all staff are applying the school's policies on behaviour and marking consistently.
- Improve students' progress and attainment by:
 - improving students' progress across Key Stage 3 so that gaps in the progress of those supported by the pupil premium and their classmates are closed
 - increasing challenge for the most able, so that more reach the top grades of which they are capable
 - improving the progress of those students with special educational needs and disabilities in Key Stage 3.
- Improve students' behaviour by:
 - continuing to improve attendance, particularly for those students who are persistently absent
 - improving students' attitudes to learning to reduce low-level disruption in lessons
 - improving leadership and management by sharing accountability for teaching and learning more effectively across leaders at all levels.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher, head of school and consultant head teacher have worked together to ensure that improvements continue during a period of significant change. The new building, large number of new staff and change in some leadership roles and responsibilities have all been managed well.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not currently distributed across the school. Due to this, not all departments are improving at the same rate, and not all staff are consistently following school policies, particularly those for giving students feedback on their work and for managing behaviour.
- The school has a high proportion of staff new to teaching, and although generally the support for these staff is of good quality, the procedures for supporting these staff in managing student behaviour requires improvement, so that disruption to learning does not occur.
- Although leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is too generous overall, the information that leaders are using to judge the impact of their work is gathered regularly, subject plans and actions are well planned and areas for improvement are correctly identified and addressed.
- Procedures for the management of teachers' performance are in place, but targets for improvement are too ambiguous to hold teachers, particularly middle leaders, to account for their areas of responsibility effectively.
- The pupil premium funding is spent effectively and is having a positive impact on progress, and on students' reading and attendance in particular.
- Good-quality training and support are provided for staff at all levels, and there is a strong desire from staff to improve their skills. Staff are very supportive of each other and these good relationships help to increase the speed of change and sharing of good practice.
- The school's curriculum is rich and varied and is a strength of the school's work. Students are helped to find courses that meet their needs and support them well in their career aspirations. Due to this, almost all students move into the next stage of education or employment successfully.
- The school works closely with the local authority which has been supporting the school well and has brokered good-quality additional support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed, well trained and have high expectations and ambition for the school. They have supported the school well through a period of change and are planning robustly for further improvements and the school's future. They are managing support for the school well.
 - Safeguarding procedures meet requirements, and training in safer recruitment and child protection are all in place. The governing body has a good breadth of expertise to support student achievement and well-being equally well.
 - The governing body is monitoring the spending of the pupil premium funding, and is able to use national and regional data comparisons to monitor the impact of teaching on the progress of this group and of all students.
 - Evidence gathered during the inspection showed the positive impact of challenge and support from both the governing body and from the senior leaders and local authority.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In a small but significant number of lessons students' weaker attitudes to learning slow the pace of learning for themselves and for others, usually when the activities in the lesson are not challenging them or capturing their attention.
- When students are in lessons where the activities are well matched to their abilities, their behaviour is much more positive. They work well together and are able to explore problems and sustain their attention on tasks without constant supervision.
- Students' pride in their work is not consistent across subjects. In some subjects they work hard to present their work well, complete tasks and respond to teachers' comments regularly. However, this is not maintained across all subjects or by all staff.
- The school behaviour management system is not being implemented consistently by all staff. Due to this, time is lost from lessons by those staff who are following the system having to correct, for example chewing or standards of dress throughout the school day, which frustrates both students and staff.

- The rate of students excluded from lessons has recently increased, due to a change in the policy in the management of poor behaviour. The school works hard to get these students back into lessons as quickly as possible.
- The very small number of students who attend alternative provision are looked after well by the school, and they have strong pastoral support to manage their achievement so that they are able to progress to the next stage of their education.
- While students' attendance has increased, it needs to continue to improve, particularly for those nearing exams and those who are persistently absent. The school has resourced this area heavily and is having significant success, working hard to support families to improve student attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students are able to describe how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of contexts, and they have a good understanding of British Values. For example, they discuss topics such as protecting the environment, and different interpretations of beauty and morality in lessons. The school's citizenship curriculum supports the development of strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students say they are confident that the school will deal with any incidents of bullying that might occur and have a very good knowledge of how to stay safe online.
- The on-site police officer supports students' understanding of safety. Students welcome the police involvement and speak warmly of their interactions.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there is a significant amount of good teaching across the school, too many staff do not apply school policies for giving students feedback or policies for managing students' behaviour. This results in progress stalling for these students, particularly in Key Stage 3. In some subjects, such as English, teachers are using the school's marking policy consistently, and this is rapidly improving students' progress in all years.
- Where students are making the best progress, skilful questioning from teachers helps to extend their learning. In these lessons, teachers respond flexibly to the emerging questions from students and help them to investigate and truly understand the topic.
- The support students receive from additional adults in their lessons varies greatly. In some classes, the teacher and teaching assistant work together seamlessly to ensure that all students get personalised support and challenge. Not all teachers are planning effectively for teaching assistants to participate or support learning.
- Literacy is not supported consistently well in all subjects across the curriculum. The good practice seen in English and religious education has not yet been spread out to all subjects. For example, some students have spelt the names of the subject incorrectly on the front of their classbooks and these have not been corrected.
- Students get an excellent start to their reading from the year 7 reading intervention programme, and these students read widely and often. As the requirement to read, particularly within lessons, then decreases throughout their time in school, by the time students are in GCSE classes they say they do not read regularly.
- The broad curriculum ensures that students get a good balance of experience and skill development. The passion and expertise of teachers in, for example food technology, textiles and music give students good quality experiences which engage their attention and enrich their time in school beyond traditional academic subjects.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The good progress students make in some subjects is not consistent across other subjects. There are significant variations in progress across subjects, staff and year groups. Progress in English is significantly better than in mathematics and progress is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3.
- In 2014, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes, including English and Mathematics, was above the national average; however, the proportion making expected progress in mathematics, and the proportions of students making more than expected progress in both English and Mathematics were all below the national averages.

- The most-able students have not consistently reached the higher levels of attainment of which they are capable.
- In English and mathematics, 20% fewer disadvantaged students than their classmates make expected progress. This gap is starting to close again, after the last set of published data showed the gap had widened. However, pupil premium students remain roughly a grade below their classmates in their final attainment. The gap between their progress and the national progress of disadvantaged students is closing in English, at only 6% lower, but still remains significant in mathematics with 28% fewer making expected progress.
- There is a trend of improving attainment for students in English and mathematics and the progress students make by the end of their time in school is increasing. However, some groups of students, such as those who have special educational needs or disabilities, those supported by the pupil premium funding and those who are most able, need to improve their rates of progress further.
- Students are not making good enough progress in some subjects at the start of their time in school, and this is limiting their achievement overall. Teachers are closing the gaps in Key Stage 4 to ensure that by the end of their time in school, students are reaching levels of attainment that are more in line with their abilities.
- The programme to improve students' reading ability is improving skills at the start of their time in school rapidly and significantly. Many students gain a reading age of four months for every one month on the programme. Year 7 catch-up funding is spent effectively.
- Those students who have special educational needs or disabilities are making progress, but this is too slow in Key Stage 3. A new leader is leading on interventions to accelerate their progress from the very start of their time in school so as to close the gaps in their performance. However, his work has yet to have a significant impact on the achievement of this group.
- The school is working hard to promote equality of opportunity; however some discrepancy between the progress of students in different subjects and with different staff means that not all students make equal progress.

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	135481
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	449247

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	1042
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Robson
Headteacher	Martyn Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2011
Telephone number	0151 477 8770
Fax number	0151 477 8775
Email address	admin@seaonline.org.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

