

St Mary's Catholic High School

Woburn Road, Croydon, CR9 2EE

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' achievement requires improvement because it is too variable across subjects and between groups of students.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Some teachers do not always plan activities that meet the needs of all students.
- Learning is not always sufficiently challenging for the most able students.
- Teachers do not always use information about the ability of their students to plan learning that meets their needs and challenges them.
- Teachers do not always help students reflect and act upon guidance.
- Students are not always aware of how to keep themselves safe in all situations. Currently they are too reliant on the school providing that support.
- Middle leaders are still too dependent upon senior leaders for direction in ensuring all teachers are raising the achievement of all their students.
- Governors are not providing sufficient challenge to the school's leadership. They do not yet fully understand all the aspects of governance.
- The range of courses and subjects in the sixth form is not successful at attracting and retaining students.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly identified strengths and areas needed for improvement. Many new processes being put in place are addressing the weaknesses and leading to an improving picture.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students, those who are disabled or have educational needs is improving rapidly.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school.
- Relationships between staff and students are good and this helps students feel safe. Students say behaviour has improved.
- School staff effectively monitor the provision for students who attend off-site education.
- Achievement in the sixth form is improving and is now at national averages.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 28 visits to classrooms to observe students' learning. Members of the senior leadership team accompanied them on seven of these visits. Inspectors observed an assembly. They also did a series of shorter visits to observe students' learning across the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, and leaders in charge of subjects, year groups and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors also met with recently qualified teachers new to the school.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. She also met with the exclusion and reintegration officer from the local authority and two police officers attached to the police schools' team.
- Inspectors had a number of discussions with teaching staff. They examined a range of documents, including the school's review of its own performance, its plans for improvement, and students' progress information.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's own information about exclusions, attendance and behaviour. They considered evidence of how effectively the school staff monitor the progress of those of their students who are receiving their education in other settings.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work in lessons.
- The inspection team took into account 18 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and considered questionnaires completed by 50 members of staff.

Inspection team

Jackie Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Raminder Arora	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Maraspin	Additional Inspector
David Grant	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic High School is an 11 to 19 school in the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is a smaller than average secondary school.
- The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. He took up his appointment in September 2014. There have been significant changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection.
- The students come from a very wide range of backgrounds including White British, African, Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and White and Black Caribbean. The vast majority of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is nearly four times the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, and those looked after by the local authority) is just below double the national average.
- There are 41 students for whom the school receives Year 7 catch-up funding. This is funding for students who did not achieve Level 4 (the nationally expected level) at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is 37%. This is double the national average.
- A very small number of students receive their education from two outside providers. They attend Springboard and Educational Excellence.
- The school is being supported by the Archdiocese of Southwark Croydon local authority and a national leader in education. The school is also taking part in the Securing Good programme run by the London Leadership Strategy.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement and the quality of teaching further by ensuring that:
 - all staff develop their use of class data to plan learning so that students, including the most able, meet their challenging targets
 - make sure that students' literacy skills are developed across all subjects
 - there is consistency in the use of the school's assessment practice so that students are clear on how they can improve their learning and respond effectively.
- Ensure that all students fully understand how to stay safe and manage risks, particularly in relation to the internet.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the confidence and ability of middle leaders so that they are fully effective in their roles raising students' achievement.
- Strengthen the curriculum for sixth form students to ensure that they are making the right subject choices, so improving retention and outcomes.

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

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is too variable to ensure consistently good progress for all groups of students. Staff do not always ensure that students are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Strategies and processes to bring about rapid school improvement are not consistently embedded across the school.
- School leaders recognise that the performance of some departments, for example art, business, geography and physical education, is not as good as it should be. The introduction of new work-related qualifications in these subjects at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is starting to lead to faster progress.
- Middle leaders are not fully effective in their roles. Most understand what students need to learn and ensure that the courses that they follow are appropriate. However, too many are still reliant on senior leaders to set the direction of checks made on the performance of staff in their departments.
- The newly appointed headteacher and his senior leadership team have introduced many new strategies and processes which are beginning to bring about more rapid school improvement. Senior leaders have taken robust action to challenge underperformance. Consequently, staff performance is improving.
- Behaviour is improving since the appointment of the new headteacher and senior team. As a result, the number of exclusions is reducing.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. It informs a realistic plan to bring about improvements that have measurable outcomes.
- Training for staff is based on an accurate analysis of need. Staff spoke highly of the quality of training provided by the school, which is addressing the needs of individuals as well as the school's improvement.
- A new system for managing staff performance has been introduced. This clearly establishes how salary progression will be closely linked to good performance.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced in Key Stages 3 and 4, with a wide range of academic and extra-curricular activities. The school is preparing students well for life in modern Britain through assemblies as well as individual subjects. During the inspection, a student-led Year 10 assembly took the theme of tolerance as an introduction to the Speak Out Challenge.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strength of the school. The Catholic values and beliefs run throughout the school. During the inspection inspectors observed a lesson where the prayer at the end of the day was led voluntarily by a student, with the whole class respecting this time of reflection.
- Students participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as charity collections, visits to universities as well as sporting opportunities. Students have the opportunity to lead through the school council and sports leadership. They support the local primary school's sports day.
- Leaders effectively ensure there is no discrimination. All students participate in the activities provided by the school. The school uses additional funding for disadvantaged students to ensure they can participate equally in lessons. For example, funds are used to support students' academic learning, provide music tuition, and enable students to attend the school's annual Catholic retreat.
- The school effectively monitors the performance and wellbeing of those students who receive their education in other settings.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Leaders make very good use of outside agencies to provide support for students.
- The advice given to students about the stage of their education, employment or training is good. As a result, all students progress to education, employment or training when they leave the school.
- The school works well with parents. Parents are confident that their concerns are dealt with well by the school.
- The local authority is supporting the school effectively in improving the provision for all students.
- The newly appointed head of the sixth form has quickly identified strengths and areas needed for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is not effective enough because governors have not challenged school leaders sufficiently. The new governing body, under a new Chair of the Governing Body, is keen to improve its effectiveness.
 - The governors are starting to review student performance and setting the school's priorities through discussion of the school's views about how well the school is doing and its plans for improvement.
 - Governors are developing their ability to carry out their statutory duties. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know how student performance is measured and understand how well

the school is doing in relation to others nationally.

- Governors manage the school's finances well and ensure that spending is linked to improving students' learning.
- Governors know how additional funding is used to support disadvantaged students. They know how good the teaching is and are aware of what is being done to reward good performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In lessons there are too many incidents of low-level disruption, which slow the pace of learning. Students do not always work hard.
- Students do not always move to lessons as quickly as they should and need staff encouragement to do so.
- Students confirm that behaviour had improved considerably this academic year. The implementation of the school's behaviour policy is more effective. Students appreciate the reward points and understand the implications of receiving behaviour points.
- Students take pride in their school. They wear their uniform well. They are well equipped for all their lessons.
- Students respect their environment, as shown by very little litter and no evidence of graffiti.
- Students generally conduct themselves well around the school and mix well at break and lunchtimes.
- Students are polite to visitors and are eager to engage in conversation.
- The school closely monitors the behaviour of students attending off-site schooling. As a result, students continue to make good progress.
- Staff and parents commented favourably on students' behaviour and the consistency with which it is now managed.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- The school is not active in raising students' awareness of the risks associated with the internet.
- Students say that they feel safe in school, a judgement confirmed by staff and parents. They are confident that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and firmly. Records show virtually no racist or homophobic bullying.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection. It is at national averages. The school has effective systems to monitor the attendance of students who receive their education at other settings.
- The rate of exclusions is now reducing as the result of new and effective systems being put in place.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. It is not consistently good across the school to ensure that all students make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- At times, some teachers do not set suitable work that is adapted for students' different abilities. Consequently, the most able students are not challenged and spend time on work that is too easy for them. This means that these students do not always make the best possible progress.
- School leaders have identified weak areas of teaching and are tackling underperformance. Not all teachers currently ensure their questioning regularly challenges students' depth of understanding, so slowing their achievement.
- Teachers' guidance to students on how to improve their learning, although effective in some classes, lacks consistency across the school. Teachers, using the new marking policy and practice, give students advice about how to further improve their work and learning. However, not all teachers help students reflect and act upon this advice.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are not yet taught effectively across the school. The school has just appointed a member of staff to lead on literacy. However, not all staff recognise that they are all teachers of literacy, and students' communication skills are not well enough developed across all subjects.
- Support for disabled students and those with special educational needs in lessons is effective.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because not all groups of students attain as well as others within the school.
- Students join the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. GCSE results in 2014 met the government's minimum standards for five A* to C grades including English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students making at least expected progress in English is below the national average, but in mathematics the proportion is above the national average.
- Students from different ethnic backgrounds achieved similar results to other students, except for those from a White British background. Their achievement in English was below national average, but broadly average in mathematics.
- Students who speak English as an additional language achieve in line with other students in the school in English. In mathematics their progress is not as strong as other students within the school.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make very good progress as the result of the support they receive.
- Disadvantaged students have previously achieved less well than others. The gap between the proportions of disadvantaged students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C and others is closing rapidly. In 2014 there was no gap in students' attainment in English and mathematics. Compared to students nationally, the gap in English attainment was one grade. In mathematics it was three quarters of a grade.
- The school uses Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to improve students' achievement in English and mathematics. This is funding for students who did not achieve Level 4 (the nationally expected level) at the end of Key Stage 2. Additional funding is used to fund specialised literacy and numeracy programmes and support. As a result, students are making good progress in both English and mathematics.
- The most able students' progress is now improving and is close to the national average in English and mathematics.
- The achievement of students who receive their education at other settings is monitored well by the school. As a result, they are placed on appropriate courses that enable them to make expected progress.
- The school enters some most able students early for mathematics. This is carefully monitored and students are not entered unless they are on track to gain their challenging targets for the top GCSE grades. Consequently, early entry has not affected students' attainment.

The sixth form provision**requires improvement**

- Students enter the sixth form with below average attainment. Their attainment is now in line with national averages, but the retention rate of students between the end of Year 12 and the start of Year 13 is below national averages.
- Students are not provided with a sufficient range of courses and, consequently, they often start a qualification that is too challenging. As a result, they choose not to continue this course after their AS levels.
- The curriculum in the sixth form does not yet have a balance between academic and vocational courses. School leaders have recognised this and new work-related courses are being introduced.
- Gaps in the progress of students needing additional help and that of others are closing rapidly. In 2014, there was no gap in average point scores between disadvantaged students and others. This is the result of better teaching and higher expectations from teachers.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Staff changes have contributed to the improvement in the quality of teaching and achievement.
- All students who completed their sixth form courses of study secured places at university.
- Students are positive in their attitudes to learning. They stated that the sixth form was like being in a family.
- They say that teaching is effective and that they are encouraged to become self-reliant in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. This is the result of the very targeted guidance from their teachers.
- Students in the sixth form play a leading role in the charity work of the school.
- All students follow the 16–19 study programme. All students benefit from work experience. Students who did not achieve a GCSE grade C in English or mathematics follow a course of study alongside their other subjects.
- The leadership of the sixth form is improving with the appointment of a new head of sixth form. There is a

clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and how the sixth form can improve further.

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	101814
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	453722

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	711
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Francis Conteh
Headteacher	Patrick Shields
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 February 2013
Telephone number	02086863837
Fax number	02087811264
Email address	office@st-maryshigh.croydon.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 2015

