

# Our Lady's RC High School

Alworth Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester, M9 0RP

**Inspection dates** 10–11 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics by the end of Year 11 is below the national average. Overall, progress has improved, particularly in English, but in mathematics it remains too low and requires improvement.
- Teaching is not consistently good. In some departments it remains too variable. Not all staff are consistently using the school's agreed marking and feedback policy to support students to improve.
- Teachers do not always ensure that students use good spelling, punctuation and grammar in all subjects.
- A small proportion of students sometimes arrive late to lessons and this results in a loss of learning time.
- Gaps between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged students and their classmates still remain in some year groups and subjects.
- Disruption to staffing in the past has impacted on students' achievement. Students have not made the progress of which they were capable.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have already secured good improvements to teaching, learning and behaviour. Well-informed plans on how to continue this journey to be consistently good in all areas are securely in place.
- There has been a rapid improvement in students' progress and attainment in English. In most subjects, students are now well taught.
- Students behave well and are happy in school.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is effective and students feel safe.
- Leaders and governors ensure good quality support for students' well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs or disabilities all make good progress
- Students who attend alternative provision are supported well and are making good progress towards their personal goals.
- Teaching is improving quickly as a result of good quality staff training and support from all leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a large number of lessons, covering every department of the school and observed the majority of the teaching staff in the school who were present during the inspection. A significant number of these observations were completed jointly with senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at students' books, folders and projects across subjects and for each year group. A large number of books were also looked at jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, those responsible for students' behaviour and students with special educational needs and disabilities, representatives of the governing body and local authority, and with groups of students. Phone calls were made to the alternative provision used by the school.
- The 10 responses to the Ofsted online survey site 'Parent View' were included in the evidence collected, alongside the school's own parent questionnaires and staff questionnaire responses.
- A large amount of documentation was included in the inspection evidence, including the school's records for behaviour, tracking of students' progress, performance management and monitoring of teaching, minutes from meetings, and the school's plans for improvement.

## Inspection team

Rebecca Lawton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than an average secondary school, and shares its site with another secondary school, North Ridge High School. A public bridleway goes through the school site.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students and those supported by the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage, but there is a minority of students who are from other ethnic groups. The proportion of students who have English as an additional language has recently increased and is now a significant group.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is broadly the same as that found in other secondary schools.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision off site, some at the Manchester Pupil Referral Unit and some at the Harpurhay Centre.
- The school has significant links with a large number of national leaders of education, other schools and St Ambrose Barlow School in particular.
- There has been a significant number of staff joining the school or new to role this academic year, particularly in the mathematics department.
- The school does not normally enter students early for GCSE examinations.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the variability in teaching and feedback to students by:
  - using feedback time more effectively, particularly in mathematics, to close the gaps for students who need extra support, and challenge the most able to achieve even further
  - ensuring all teachers are consistently reinforcing students' literacy skills by supporting correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in all subjects.
- Continue to improve students' progress and achievement in mathematics so that more reach the levels of which they are capable, and so that any gaps between disadvantaged students and their classmates is reduced.
- Improve students' punctuality to lessons, so that no learning time is lost.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The effective and rigorous actions of the headteacher, leaders and governors have secured improvements to many departments, and are improving rates of progress since the last inspection. They have worked hard to manage the staffing difficulties in some departments and these are now almost completely resolved. As a result, teaching is more stable and the pace of improvement is increasing.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Teaching and students' achievement in most subjects has improved, and is now good in many departments across the school. However, improvements to teaching and learning in mathematics have not fully impacted on all students. A legacy of weaker progress in mathematics means that students have the most improvements to make to reach national expectations.
- The structures in place to monitor the quality of teaching are rigorous. Staff have regular checks on the amount of feedback they give to students. Leaders are now moving to a more supportive approach and are focusing on checking the amount of progress students make as a result of this feedback.
- Plans for further improvement are focussing on the correct areas, and these are clear and well resourced. Training for staff and the use of external consultants to support teachers have both been used effectively.
- The local authority have an accurate view of the school's work, and have provided good quality links and support routes for training, particularly in regard to staffing and staff development.
- Middle leaders are particularly strong. They have improved their skills in all areas, and particularly use data on student's performance well. They are having a significant positive impact on the pace of improvements in their departments. Many have expertise that is being used to support the school and its partner schools.
- The pupil premium funding is used increasingly effectively to improve the skills of those students in most need. Students' skills in reading for example, are particularly well supported. The school monitors the use of the pupil premium robustly. Gaps in achievement are closing through well-targeted support, particularly in the learning support unit. Equality of opportunity is a key priority for the school, and there have been some improvements towards ensuring equitable outcomes for all groups. The school fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination effectively.
- The school curriculum is well matched to students' needs and helpful advice and guidance is given when choosing options for GCSE. The proportion of students who are not in education, employment or training when they leave school is low.
- The school's provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. The school's ethos is supported equally well in all departments, and gives students a strong sense of community. They are well prepared to be successful in modern Britain. The wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities enriches their experiences and ensure they have a good knowledge of other cultures and viewpoints.
- The school works hard to engage parents, and uses a wide range of projects and approaches. This is particularly strong when students join the school in Year 7, and when students are working towards their final examinations. Pastoral staff work effectively with a wide range of external agencies to ensure every student receives the good quality support they need.
- The arrangements for safeguarding students meets statutory requirements and are effective. Staff are well-trained and up-to-date with all aspects of safeguarding. Those students who attend off-site provision are checked regularly to ensure they are safe, behaving well and making good progress.
- Staff at the school have worked hard to secure the safety of the site, which has a public bridleway through the grounds. This is well-managed and all staff make sure students are safe at all times.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an accurate and well-informed view of the school's current performance and areas for improvement. They challenge the school to improve, and are increasingly successful in raising achievement and progress, and in improving teaching and learning. They have a robust programme in place to ensure that they review all aspects of the school's work and have a positive input into all aspects of school life. Governors are well-trained, use data effectively and have an appropriately high focus on safeguarding and student welfare. Governors are making sure the pupil premium is spent effectively, and have ensured that good teaching is rewarded by linking performance to pay. Governors are ambitious and have high expectations of the school and its staff and students, and are dedicated to the school community.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. They are kind, work well together and are ambassadors for the school community. They value learning and good teaching, and work hard when challenged.
- Attendance has improved in all year groups, and the small number of exclusions and internal removal from lessons have both reduced.
- Although a small proportion of students are sometimes slow to get to lessons, when they arrive they work hard. Teachers provide interesting starts to lessons that are good ways to remember the themes and key aspects of the previous lesson which students miss when they are late. Students are keen to improve, polite to staff, and respectful to visitors.
- Routines within lessons are well established, and are ensuring a consistently high expectation of good behaviour and good attitudes to learning in all departments. Students do not always take good care of their books or present their work well. This sometimes limits the speed of their progress.
- Students take part in a wide range of charitable and social events, and are well informed about spiritual and moral issues. They care about their community, and the wider world. They have informed discussions about world events, equality and discrimination.
- Students are confident and articulate, and although a few students are sometimes boisterous outside of lessons, the number of incidents of poor behaviour has significantly reduced in the last year.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in all lessons and around school. Students know how to keep themselves safe online and have a good knowledge of how to report any incidents they might encounter.
- Curriculum coverage of all aspects of safety is broad and balanced, and students say they are confident in all aspects, including drug awareness and road safety. Good-quality sessions delivered by experts in safety supports students' development well.
- Students who attend off-site alternative provision are monitored closely to ensure their safety is equally good.
- The school monitors break and lunchtimes very well, ensuring that the public bridleway on the school site is always well managed, and that students are safe at all times.
- Students say there are few incidents of bullying, and that staff deal with any incidents quickly. This was seen during the inspection, where staff on duty quickly intervened and ensured any minor falling out was resolved amicably before it escalated. Relationships between staff and students are very good, and this enables staff to work with students effectively. Records show the number of bullying incidents is very low.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- Although teaching overall has improved since the last inspection, and is now ensuring students are making good progress in a significant number of subjects, students' progress in mathematics is still not yet good. The quality of teaching and feedback to students, particularly in mathematics is variable. The teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar skills require further improvement.
- In mathematics, teachers are not consistently using the school's marking policy to ensure that all students are making the progress they are capable of. Not all planning is removing the barriers to learning or providing sufficient challenge for the most able. This is slowing the pace of improvement.
- The school checks on the quality of teaching and progress of students regularly. Middle leaders and senior leaders both have a clear idea of where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching are and have put support in place where needed and shared good practice effectively.
- Some changes to the monitoring of teaching and learning are now ensuring that leaders are focussing more on the outcomes for students rather than the actions of teachers. In some departments, this means that the arrangements for feeding back to students in some departments are insufficiently effective because too little time is available to support those who need extra help and to further challenge the most able.
- Support for disadvantaged students, and for those who need to catch up with their classmates in some areas is generally working well to improve their progress. The learning support unit is particularly effective in supporting students to close any gaps in their learning. Patient and caring staff support students to become more confident learners and improve their skills so as to ensure they reach higher levels of

achievement. Students particularly value this support.

- Homework is set regularly and is improving students' abilities. The use of online programmes and series of homework's spanning several terms are having a particularly strong impact on rates of progress.
- The provision for improving students' reading skills is very effective. Students read regularly and enjoy reading. In one class seen, students were eager to succeed so that they could help others read in their group and hear each other read aloud. The school's strategies for reading supports students' development of language and analysis skills particularly well.
- Not all staff are consistently developing students' literacy in all subjects. For example, in some subjects incorrect spellings of key words are not corrected. Poor grammar is used by staff when describing an answer. Due to this, some students are not reaching the levels of attainment that they are capable of and repeat mistakes.
- Numeracy is supported well across the curriculum, and students get a good range of opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- A lack of consistency in expectations for the presentation of students work means that some students do not, for example, use rulers for lines or diagrams or are writing in colours that are hard to read. This limits the helpfulness of their own notes when they are revising for tests.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are generally taught very well. They have additional adults in the room to help them where required, and many teachers are making additional resources or provision to meet their needs, or adapting the room to ensure all students have the same opportunities for learning, such as sitting students nearer to the board. However, this is less effective when cover or supply staff are taking lessons.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students' achievement in mathematics has not yet improved enough and still requires improvement. The proportion of students making expected progress has not yet reached national levels.
- The majority of students enter the school with skills that are below the national average in English and mathematics. Students in Year 11 in 2014 joined the school in Year 7 with even lower levels of attainment. Although the progress they made accelerated by the end of their time in school, their final attainment was below that normally reached by students in the school. The proportion of students achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE was below national average.
- Students who are currently in Key Stage 3 are making good progress in the majority of subjects and they are on track to achieve well. Students currently in Key Stage 4 are making progress that is below what is expected in order to reach the final levels of which they are capable in some subjects. Although their rates of progress are improving quickly, they still require further improvement to reach national expectations by the end of Year 11.
- Work in students' books seen during the inspection confirmed that there is good progress in some Key Stage 3 subjects. Work in Key Stage 4 is successfully closing the gaps in attainment for some disadvantaged students compared to their classmates. However, weaker support for students' literacy, particularly in their spelling, punctuation and grammar, and in the presentation of drawings such as graphs and tables still limits their progress in some subjects.
- Achievement in English is now much stronger. Improvements to teaching and learning have ensured students are now making good progress in the majority of subjects and year groups.
- Those subjects where students achieve particularly well, such as English, the humanities and science are being used to help students make links across the curriculum and to build higher expectations of success in other subjects. Students are increasingly able to make links in their learning and this is helping them to retain key knowledge in preparation for examinations. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students used an example from cooking to describe the need to convert grams to kilograms.
- The most able students are being challenged well in most subjects, but teachers are not consistently stretching these students as far as they could in all curriculum areas. The changes to feedback and reflection time are helping to improve the rates of progress for these higher-ability students, as they are getting individualised support and challenge.
- Students are making good progress in their reading skills, and this is having a positive impact on their progress and achievement in English. Their ability to scan, evaluate and respond to texts is particularly strong.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged in the school for 2014 was roughly half a GCSE grade, but this was because of the lower attainment of non-disadvantaged students. In the last Year 11 cohort, in English, disadvantaged students were almost a full grade behind

other students nationally, and in mathematics, were half a grade behind others in the school and almost one and a half grades behind others nationally. Currently within school in some subjects, the gap is almost a full GCSE grade, but these gaps overall are closing across subjects and year groups. Some subjects are successfully closing this gap by targeting support through the pupil premium funding and the use of the learning support unit and additional adults. Overall the use of pupil premium within school does not yet fully support all pupils to close the gaps in their attainment.

- Those students who speak English as an additional language, and disabled students and those with special educational needs are all making good progress, and are receiving good quality additional support to ensure they achieve the levels of which they are capable.
- Those students who attend alternative provision achieve outcomes that are suitable for their particular circumstances.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105576
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	454852

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	712
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Kiely
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Keulemans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 795 0711
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 220 5929
<b>Email address</b>	s.royle@olsc.manchester.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

