

St Antony's Catholic College

Bradfield Road, Urmston, Manchester, M41 9PD

Inspection dates 26–27 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
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

- Standards are rising and increasing numbers of students are making the progress expected nationally for their age in English and mathematics but too few students exceed expected progress.
- The quality of teaching, while improving, has not been strong enough to support good progress in a number of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- Behaviour requires improvement. The work teachers set in lessons does not always challenge students of all abilities to achieve well. As a result, some students lose focus, present their work carelessly and, on occasions, low-level disruption may occur.
- There are some remaining gaps in achievement between different groups of students such as disadvantaged students, boys and those whose ability level is low on entry, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently help students to improve their work.
- A small number of students do not attend sufficiently regularly to achieve well.
- The targets leaders set for teachers' performance, and those within the whole school improvement plan, are not linked closely enough to good progress for students.
- Although middle leadership is improving, not all subject leaders are as skilled as others in using information about students' progress to check the quality of teaching. Where they are not yet contributing enough to improving teaching or achievement, for example in art, geography and information and communication technology, pupils make slower progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have taken decisive action to tackle underperformance and, as a result, teaching is improving rapidly throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and the rate of students' progress is accelerating.
- Students feel safe in school and display a good understanding of how to keep safe.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers say they are given good support from senior leaders to help them improve their teaching.
- The governing body checks and challenges robustly the rate of improvement in teaching and students' progress, holding the school to account well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 27 parts of lessons, including three joint observations with the senior leader responsible for teaching and learning. Form time and intervention sessions were also seen.
- Meetings were held with the executive and associate headteachers, senior and middle leaders, groups of staff, members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, and representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors met with groups of students, talked to students within lessons and listened to students read.
- Additionally, inspectors scrutinised the data and paperwork relating to student progress, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies and minutes of governing body meetings. Reports of visits of external consultants, along with records of behaviour and attendance and paperwork relating to safeguarding were also considered.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to 53 staff inspection questionnaires. The results of 40 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were also considered alongside feedback from parents to the school's own parental questionnaires and two telephone calls from parents.
- At different times in the day, inspectors observed students moving between activities inside and outside the school and at breaks in the dining hall and outside leisure areas.

Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tim Long

Additional Inspector

Pritiben Patel

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average secondary school.
- The proportion of students with disabilities or special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is very high and constitutes two-fifths of the student population. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language is below average.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Students are not entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Since September 2013, the school has been supported by the headteacher from Loreto Grammar School, a nearby Teaching School. In January 2014, the partnership arrangement between the two schools was formalised and the deputy headteacher of Loreto Grammar School took on the role of associate headteacher at St Antony's. She runs the school on a day-to-day basis.
- Over the past 18 the membership and structure of the governing body has changed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, accelerate students' progress and improve their attitudes to learning by:
 - providing work and learning activities that challenge students of all abilities and enable them to achieve their best so that they remain fully engaged in their learning and low-level disruption does not arise
 - showing students, through marking, exactly what to do to make further progress and checking that they respond to the guidance provided
 - insisting that students always present their work neatly.
- Further strengthen the impact of leadership on students' achievement, particularly in Key Stage 4, and in art, geography and information and communication technology, by:
 - ensuring that the targets leaders set for teachers' performance, and those within the whole school improvement plan, are stated clearly in terms of good progress for students
 - improving the progress of disadvantaged students, boys and those whose ability level is low on entry, so all groups achieve equally well
 - developing and extending the skills of middle leaders and making them fully accountable for their impact on students' performance
 - continuing to work with external agencies and the families of the small number of students who are frequently absent from school so that the attendance of these students is improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders and governors have focused relentlessly on improving provision and standards and raising aspirations for the entire school community. Decisive action has been taken to tackle underperformance. Poor behaviour is not tolerated and expectations have been raised. Although it is too early to see the full impact of some of the recent changes, there is tangible evidence to demonstrate these actions are having a positive impact on outcomes for students in terms of their academic progress and the attendance of the majority. While the work of a small number of subject leaders is not yet fully developed, senior leaders and many middle leaders have demonstrated that they have the capacity to make further improvements.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have taken effective action to improve teaching through the performance management of staff. Teaching in a wide range of subjects is improving swiftly. Rigorous procedures are in place to monitor the quality of teaching through lesson visits, checking the standard of work in students' books and undertaking joint lesson observations with external consultants.
- Leaders have reduced staff numbers, in line with falling student numbers, at the same time as taking swift action to tackle underperformance. This has been well managed and staff morale is high. Staff are extremely positive about the journey upon which the school has embarked under the leadership of the associate headteacher. They appreciate the increased levels of accountability as well as the support with which they are provided. Staff value the associate headteacher's openness, her commitment to the school and the fact that she leads by example.
- Leadership of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and there are now increased opportunities for teachers to share good practice and to learn from each other. A more rigorous approach towards the performance management of teachers has been introduced and teacher's pay is clearly linked to the quality of teaching.
- Middle leadership is becoming more effective. This is because the majority of subject leaders are increasingly holding teachers to account for the performance of their students and for the quality of teaching. However, there are still some subjects, for example art, geography and information and communication technology, where further training is required in order to ensure that these leaders have the skills they need in order to support further improvement to the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Leaders strive to ensure equality of opportunity and, increasingly, all groups of students are being given the same opportunities to achieve as well as their better-performing peers in the school and nationally. Inconsistencies in teaching still prevent this from happening throughout the whole school.
- Data are now being used more effectively to pinpoint underachievement. Leaders are therefore able to identify where additional support and intervention are required to improve the quality of teaching and to raise teachers' and students' expectations of what can be achieved. This is evident in the rapidly increasing reading ages of students who are supported through an accelerated reading programme.
- While there is now more effective use of data and expectations have been raised, leaders are aware that they need to set even more challenging targets, with the expectation that all students make at least good progress, particularly those whose attainment is low on entry to the school. They have agreed that these targets should be specifically stated within the school improvement plan and teachers' performance management objectives.
- Leaders, including governors, have identified the need to ensure that additional government funding is used to best effect for the students for whom it is intended. The pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding (provided to improve the performance of students who start Year 7 with weak literacy and numeracy skills) are being more carefully directed. This is accelerating the progress made by students, the impact of which can mostly be seen in Key Stage 3.
- The curriculum is well led and managed. The curriculum leader and the leader of teaching and learning work closely together to plan systems and courses in support of raising standards for all students. The broad and balanced curriculum offers a range of opportunities clearly matched to the needs of students. Opportunities to promote literacy across the full range of subjects are becoming well embedded but opportunities to promote numeracy are not evident in all subjects.
- A programme of careers education and guidance ensures students are well advised about the next phase of their education. Leaders place a high importance on ensuring that students progress onto the most suitable education or employment routes when they leave the school.
- The school's work to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. A

high priority is placed on the importance of fostering good relationships, promoting tolerance and tackling discrimination and this is apparent in the way students of different social backgrounds and ethnic groups work and socialise together. Key themes are taught in appropriate subjects and reinforced in assemblies. The curriculum and other activities provide ample opportunities to prepare students for life in modern Britain.

- The vast majority of parents support the school and would recommend it to others.
- There has been good support from the diocese and from the local authority. This has included the facilitation of links with Loreto Grammar School. There has been intensive support from Loreto Grammar School, for example in terms of leadership development, improving the quality of teaching and moderating teachers' assessment of students' work.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Governors ensure that all visitors to the school are subject to the appropriate security checks on entry and the school grounds are safe and secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection and is increasingly effective. Governors undertake appropriate training and pay frequent visits to the school. They understand the regular and comprehensive information and reports, including reports about data that are presented by the associate headteacher and ask searching questions to confirm the accuracy of information.
 - Governors are informed about the quality of teaching and how action taken by the associate headteacher is tackling weaknesses. They have implemented systems to ensure that pay increases for teachers are related to student progress.
 - Governors know how the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are spent, but until recently, they have not ensured that pupil premium funding has been used effectively enough to narrow the attainment gaps between the school's disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
 - Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The behaviour and attitudes to learning of some students vary. When work interests and involves them, they are attentive and learn well. Although learning is not generally interrupted by poor behaviour, students are sometimes compliant rather than enthusiastic learners and, occasionally, there are incidences of off-task chatter.
- Students' conduct around the school is calm and orderly. They are polite and respectful to teachers and visitors. Incidences of graffiti and litter around the school are rare. Students told inspectors that behaviour and standards of uniform are better now than in the past because expectations have risen under the leadership of the associate headteacher.
- Students respond promptly to teachers' instructions. Adults supervise students well, and act as good role models for how students should behave.
- Students' attendance has risen since the last inspection and is now average. The school works appropriately with external agencies and the families of the small number of students who are frequently absent from school. As a result, the proportion of students who are persistently absent from school has reduced but is still above average.
- Students' understanding of modern British values and democracy are well promoted through the school's effective student council. Students are encouraged to develop their leadership skills through a wide range of activities including sports and charity fund-raising about which they are very positive.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in school. They are taught to stay safe and understand, for example, the potential dangers of using the internet.
- The school site and buildings are safe and secure. There are effective procedures for checking on visitors to the school. All the necessary checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed.
- Students have a good understanding of the many different forms of bullying which they learn about in form time, assemblies and the school's effective social development programme. They say that bullying is rare in this school and, if it did happen, students are confident it would be dealt with quickly and effectively. They have confidence in school staff.
- Exclusion rates are falling, and incidences of racism are extremely rare.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is rapidly improving in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, but it has not been good enough over a sustained period of time to ensure consistently good learning and achievement. Sometimes teachers do not expect enough from their students in terms of their achievement.
- The work teachers set in lessons does not always challenge students of all abilities to achieve well. Consequently, some students lose concentration, the presentation of their work suffers and, on occasions, low-level disruption occurs.
- Teachers' marking is improving and examples of detailed and frequent marking can be seen across a range of subject areas. In some cases, marking contains good advice on how students can improve their work. However, there are inconsistencies within and across subjects. Some teachers' advice does not make it clear to students how they can reach the next level or grade, nor do some teachers check whether students have acted upon any advice given.
- Teachers know their students well as individuals. Since the last inspection, leaders have worked hard to ensure that teachers' assessment of students' attainment and progress is accurate. Teachers are increasingly using this information to plan work that challenges learners to do their best and to identify which students may be vulnerable to underachievement. In lessons where the progress of some students is weaker than others, teachers have not used the information well enough to plan learning activities that match students' interests or learning needs.
- The presentation of work in students' books is too variable. Some teachers do not encourage students to set out their work neatly and clearly.
- When learning is more effective, students make good progress. In a Year 11 English lesson students were clear about what they were learning because the teacher ensured they understood their personal learning targets. They reflected well on previous learning. Students were focused and responded well to the teacher's questions. There were opportunities for students to discuss their ideas and to share their thinking and they responded by showing a strong sense of responsibility and maturity.
- The staff promote reading well across the school. Pupils read in a range of lessons. All students are encouraged to read through vibrant displays, special events and books that suit the interests of them all.
- Writing is promoted well across a wide range of subjects and many teachers place a strong emphasis on the correct use of grammar in students' writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving under the direction of a new subject leader and more students, especially in Key Stage 3, are making good progress. Intensive support for students in Year 11, with a particular focus on the specific gaps in their knowledge and understanding, is helping them to make better progress and ensure that more of them are on course to attain at least a grade C.
- Teachers work hard, have a very good knowledge of their subjects and are very committed to doing the best for their students. Relationships between adults and students are warm, positive and respectful.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported, both in class and in extra sessions by learning support assistants. This provision has been improved to make it even more effective.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Not enough students exceed nationally expected progress, especially in English and mathematics. The progress of some groups of students has been too variable and gaps have not narrowed sufficiently quickly, especially in Key Stage 4.
- In 2014, not enough students made the progress expected of them in some subjects, including in English and mathematics, mainly because the quality of teaching was not consistently good enough.
- Standards and the rate of students' progress are improving throughout the school owing to better teaching, higher expectations of senior leaders and more rigorous systems to check how well students are learning. Effective systems for tracking students' progress are leading to quicker help and guidance being provided for students who find aspects of learning difficult.
- Students enter the school with well-below average standards. Predictions for Year 11 students this year show improvement in the proportion on track to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including in English and mathematics. The large majority are on track to make expected progress in English and mathematics. The work of Year 10 students and the pace of their progress in English and mathematics back up the school's predictions of higher attainment.
- Students achieve well in subjects such as food technology, textiles, English literature, physical education, business studies, media, music and drama. They enjoy the practical activities associated with their learning in

these subjects. Students do less well in art, geography and information and communication technology.

- In 2014, by the end of Year 11, disadvantaged students had made less progress than other students nationally. They attained about a third of a grade less than others in the school in English and over half a grade behind others in the school in mathematics. However, they were over a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally in English and mathematics.
- Additional government funding is being used to purchase additional resources, to reduce class sizes and to provide one-to-one support. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are better supported in reading, literacy and mathematics and are now making better progress, albeit more slowly in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Their progress still requires improvement.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement but is improving as a result of prompt identification of their needs, which is enabling the staff to help them to make quicker progress.
- Boys perform less well than girls, particularly in Key Stage 4. However, as with other groups, the gap is narrowing quickly lower down the school, with only a small gap in Year 7.
- Minority ethnic students and those who speak English as an additional language make progress which is in line with that of other students.
- Some students in Key Stage 4, whose ability was low on entry to the school, have not yet made the progress they need to make up for lost ground resulting from previously weak teaching.
- An 'Aspire to Achieve' leader has been appointed to help teachers focus on increasing the challenge for the most able students and to coordinate activities, such as university visits, that are intended to raise students' aspirations. In many lessons teachers are really stretching the most able in order to develop higher-level skills. For example, in food technology the teacher is encouraging students to attend weekend Chef School at Trafford College. The results of this were seen in a Year 9 lesson where one student was observed to be working at GCSE grade A standard. However, not all teachers provide interesting and challenging opportunities for the most able students and, as a result, their achievement still requires improvement.
- School leaders make appropriate use of the extra 'catch-up' funding for students in Year 7 who join the school with the lowest starting points. The additional, intensive support provided to these students is effective in helping them to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills and, lower ability students are starting to make good progress in Key Stage 3.
- Students are encouraged to read in all lessons and to read books of their own choice. Year 6 pupils transferring from primary schools are encouraged to read a book during the summer holidays prior to starting at St Antony's. They then evaluate their book in the autumn term. There is a strong focus on literacy development, in terms of writing and key words, in the majority of subjects.

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	106372
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	449258

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	552
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Clark
Headteacher	Jane Beever
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2013
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