

# Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College

Glenburn Road, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6JW

## Inspection dates

30 June 2015–1 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The achievement of students is good. They enter the school with attainment that is average and leave school with five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, more than is seen nationally.
- There are no gaps in attainment between students supported by the pupil premium and both their classmates and peers nationally.
- Attainment across subjects, particularly English, is improving as a result of a drive by senior leaders and governors to improve teaching.
- Attendance is rising and is now near to the average because leaders have focused on ensuring students attend school regularly.
- Students are happy and there is a calm atmosphere across the school. Students are smart, polite and mostly eager to learn.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported well so that they make good progress in their studies.
- The pastoral care within the school is strong and the support given to vulnerable students is excellent, ensuring their good progress.
- The headteacher has built a strong team of senior and middle leaders who continue to grow and flourish due to a constant drive for improvement.
- Support for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of students is extremely strong. Additionally, the school's efforts to promote British values are established well and help to tackle discrimination and intolerance effectively.
- Staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They say it is well led and managed and that the behaviour of students is good.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is highly detailed. It is both clear and accurate in its identification of continuing needs.
- Students feel safe and are safe. They understand how to keep themselves safe in school and when using online technologies.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in a few subjects, including history, geography and Spanish, are not as high as they might be.
- A few teachers are too ready to accept poor work by some students or do not challenge students to respond to advice given.
- Some teachers do not consistently apply the school's policies for marking or behaviour. This results in some students' progress and behaviour that is not as good as it could be.
- A few students lack the positive attitudes required to ensure their work is always of the highest quality.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and parts of lessons, seven of which were a joint observation with a senior leader.
- Formal discussions were held with three groups of students, the local authority, the governing body, senior and middle leaders.
- Additionally, informal discussions were held with students at break time and around the school to gather their views about behaviour and their learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in students’ books. This was done as a separate formal exercise in mathematics and science as well as part of the lessons observed during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of supporting documentation with regard to safeguarding and child protection, the school’s view of its own performance, minutes of governors’ meetings, performance management, progress data and external reports.
- Inspectors took into account the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the 61 responses to the staff questionnaire, two emails and four telephone calls from parents.

## Inspection team

Colin Scott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jonathon Jones	Additional Inspector
Gabrielle Reddington	Additional Inspector
Christine Veitch	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College is a slightly smaller-than-average secondary school and is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for extra support from the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium supports those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- A large proportion of students use contracted bus transport to get to school.
- The majority of students in the school are of White British heritage, with a low proportion of students who come from a minority ethnic background.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school makes some use of alternative provision for a very small number of students in Years 10 and 11 on a part-time basis. These providers include West Lancashire College, West Lancashire Construction and Be Distressed in Skelmersdale.
- The school has a small nurture group of younger students who joined the school in Year 7 with very low literacy and numeracy skills. They receive support from a primary school teacher employed by the school.
- The school introduced a new behaviour management system in February 2015.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- The school holds numerous awards including the Gold Award for Investors in People, the International School Award, the Leading Parent Partnership Award and the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for Year 11 students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that students make more rapid progress in their studies by:
  - ensuring all teachers adhere to the school's marking policies so that students know how well they have done, exactly what they need to do to improve, deepen their understanding and respond to further challenge
  - ensuring students always have work that is pitched correctly to their ability levels, challenges them appropriately and that students always complete any work given
  - ensuring students always receive work that builds on their earlier learning and does not repeat what they already know and understand
  - ensuring teachers consistently apply the school's new behaviour policy so that students are reminded of good behaviours at all times and the few students who occasionally become disengaged are quickly refocused onto their learning
  - challenging the few students who lack the fully positive attitude to their learning needed so that their work is always of the highest quality.
- Increase the standards students reach in their GCSE examinations, particularly in Spanish, geography and history so that they are at least at the levels seen nationally, by continuing to work with established partners from other successful schools to help further increase staff expertise in these areas.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- School leaders, driven by a passionate headteacher, are securing further strength in the progress students make across all areas of the school. The school does not stand still and is constantly looking for ways to enhance provision and increase standards.
- There is a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching. This is being led well and is already resulting in the progress learners make across all subjects improving. Improvements in subjects where standards have not always been as high as they might be, notably history, Spanish and geography, have risen in this academic year.
- Leaders have a wealth of information about the progress of groups of students and can clearly identify where they need to intervene or provide additional support. They use this information well.
- Opportunities for teachers and middle leaders to develop their expertise have developed well and they access support from a wide network of schools in the diocese and the local authority. They ensure that their understanding of students' progress is sharp and based on external moderation.
- Middle leaders are effective in their work. Some instability in staffing last year as a result of strong challenge to the quality of teaching has been resolved. Middle leaders are now starting to tackle any underperformance, particularly in the standards reached in history, geography and Spanish.
- The headteacher has ensured that leaders' understanding of the continuing needs of the school is shared well through rigorous evaluation of the school's performance. There is a wealth of information available to middle leaders and governors which inform their own plans well. However, at times it is not always clear what the actual intended impact of school actions on students' progress are or will be.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students well. Students say that they enjoy the choices they have. They are attending school more regularly, partly as a result of the opportunities available to them.
- Leaders monitor attendance and behaviour extremely accurately. Systems used to track behaviour patterns are effective and used well. Attendance at alternative provision, students' behaviour and the progress students make while on placement is tracked regularly. As a result, these students attend as regularly and make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Leaders work hard to develop the individual student through an excellent provision of additional opportunities, international links and visits, as well as their support for all areas of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning. British values are upheld diligently in the school because of the actions of leaders to promote tolerance and respect for all people, regardless of background, faith, culture or lifestyle. For example, students have been involved in a mobile technology project with Age Concern to help bridge the generational gap and promote respect for elders. This has proven highly successful.
- Leaders previously entered students early for GCSE examinations; this practice has now stopped. As a result of this early entry, published information in 2014 does not accurately reflect the standards being reached at GCSE and the progress made by students. Governors and senior leaders realised that historical early entry would impact negatively on school performance tables yet decided to continue to allow those students who had been promised early entry to continue with it. This reflects the care leaders have for the emotional well-being of students.
- Attendance has risen this year so that it is now close to the national levels. This is due in part to successful use of pupil premium funding to ensure disadvantaged students can access local transport so that they attend as well as their classmates. In addition, leaders pursue with vigour those few parents who do not support good school attendance.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to support readers to make rapid progress in their literacy by ensuring that they read appropriately in lessons. Students read widely and often.
- School leaders work hard to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination for all. The curriculum is wide and varied, allowing for students' interests. The progress gaps have disappeared over time, allowing disadvantaged students to reach the same standards as their classmates.
- The parents and carers of some students who had particular needs were resolute in insisting that the inspection took into account their extremely positive views. This was with particular regard to leaders who have ensured that their children made so much more progress, grow further in confidence and become more successful than they had been able to previously.
- Support for students who speak English as an additional language is good, ensuring that they are able to take part in other subjects successfully. Their literacy skills are developed well.
- The leadership of the provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs and the leadership of the school's nurture group are excellent. This is resulting in the progress of those students at least matching, and in some cases exceeding, their classmates. The progress of students in

the nurture group is particularly rapid.

- External support and challenge is provided by a wide range of external partners across the diocese, other schools within the local authority and the local authority itself. School leaders value all of this support to keep them challenged and in supporting further developments. Local authority support is effective.
- The school provides good information and guidance to students so that the choices they make to prepare them for life after school are appropriate. The proportion of students who leave school and are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is now below the national average.
- The school ensures that safeguarding procedures are in place, meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective. Governors know the school well and, as a result of good training, they understand what published data is telling them. They use this knowledge well to challenge school leaders to account for the progress of students and the standards across the school.
  - Governors monitor the quality of teaching well. They challenge teachers to account for the progress students are making and do not automatically allow them to progress through the pay scales.
  - The governing body monitors the spending of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding well. They know where it is being spent and the impact it is having on those students for which it is intended. They can describe how this money has been effective in improving the attendance of some disadvantaged students, how the gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged students with their classmates has closed, and how the nurture group is supporting the reading of young students.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Their understanding and awareness of those of different faiths, cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles is extremely strong as a result of the full and varied programme of additional activities, assemblies and international links. Students demonstrate a good empathy for those who may be different to themselves.
- Students display a care for their classmates and mix well together in social spaces. There is a feeling of calm across the whole school and students are polite and courteous to staff. This is mutual.
- Students are smart, well-equipped and punctual to lessons. They are mostly engaged in their learning and keen to do well.
- A few students do not show the same levels of engagement or respect for themselves through their work compared with the vast majority of students. They sometimes produce work that is messy and teachers do not always challenge them to complete work. This allows a few students to become disengaged from learning in their lessons, resulting in their slower progress.
- The overwhelming majority of students, parents and staff believe that behaviour is not a problem. Disruption to lessons due to poor behaviour is rare. When it does happen, students say that it is normally chatter and that teachers deal with this quickly when they spot it.
- New behaviour management systems put in place by school leaders in February this year are already resulting in a clearer understanding by students of the school's high expectations. However, these are not being consistently applied by some teachers so that students do not always meet the higher expectations.
- As a result of the new behaviour systems, fixed-term exclusions, normally low in the school, rose. This was anticipated by leaders because of the higher standards of behaviour expected. These higher rates of exclusion are reducing again as students become accustomed to the new expectations.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. They say that they feel safe and are safe in school. The overwhelming majority of staff and parents believe that students are safe in school.
- Procedures in place to check the credentials of staff, the security of the school site and the tracking of students within school are robust and effective.
- Students have a good awareness of all forms of bullying. They are confident and happy to report any concerns that they have.
- Students are supported well in their practical lessons by the provision of safety equipment. Occasionally, students forget to use the equipment but this is quickly challenged by teachers when they spot it. However, a few students require further support to ensure that such occasions are rarer. Students understand how to stay safe when using online technologies well.

- School leaders are supporting students' understanding of how to be safe from sexual exploitation extremely well. Some students have been trained through local partnerships to be aware of the signs of exploitation and they are delivering this to their classmates and staff back in school. Additionally, students understand what is meant by extremism and that such views do not belong to a particular faith or culture.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is good and results in progress that is good for the majority of learners. Teachers know their subjects well and plan lessons that usually excite and engage students in learning.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' skills are continuously developed. Teachers are monitored closely for the performance of their students and leaders know what the quality of teaching is like across all subject areas.
- Teaching in some subjects, particularly English and in the school's nurture group, is strong. This results in some excellent gains in both the progress students make and the standards they reach.
- The teaching of literacy across the school is good overall. Most students in all year groups have a good level of English skills that equip them well for learning in all subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is gathering pace. Students are now making more rapid progress in the subject and it is nearing the levels seen in English. Numeracy across the school is not as developed as it might be to support students' application of mathematics to solve problems. However, in some areas, such as science, this is working well.
- A few teachers do not always plan learning that is appropriately pitched to the ability of the students or builds on students' prior learning. For instance, in a mathematics lesson observed, students were repeating work that they had previously done and were already secure in. When this happens, the progress students make is not as strong as it might be.
- In some subjects, notably modern foreign languages and history, lower ability students are not challenged as equally as the more-able students are, or given the advice they need to succeed. As a result, on these occasions their progress is slower than it might be.
- The vast majority of teachers have high expectations of their students and this helps to develop a commitment and engagement from them. Students usually have high expectations of themselves and want to do well as a result of the challenge by their teachers.
- The majority of marking and assessment procedures across the school support good student progress. Occasionally some teachers, such as in Spanish and geography, do not always clearly inform students about what they need to do to improve or ensure that students complete work. As a result, on these occasions students' attitudes to their own work is not as good as it could be. A few students' books are messy. In English, however, very strong marking and assessment procedures used by all teachers across the department ensure that students are keenly aware of where they are and what they need to do to improve. The pride they have in their work is high.
- Students say that they receive good feedback in most lessons. Although this is not always clear in the marking of some books in some subjects, students say that teachers give them lots of verbal feedback about how they are doing. They say they value this.
- Other adults and teaching assistants deployed in classrooms are used well to ensure that all students are continually monitored and supported to keep them interested and engaged. Teachers use questions skilfully during lessons to check on the progress of students and to adapt learning to maintain pace and interest.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Students enter the school with attainment that is average and over time they reach standards well above average by the end of Year 11. In 2014, results of examinations show that the proportion of students who gained five or more good passes at GCSE was well above the national average. This demonstrates their good progress overall when compared to the national average.
- In 2014, the proportion of students who made at least the expected levels of progress in English was well above that found nationally and above average in mathematics.
- School leaders have been extremely successful at removing the gaps in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students in both English and mathematics compared to both their classmates and their peers nationally. In 2014, the rates of progress made by disadvantaged students were equal to those of other students in the school and others nationally, In English, compared to others nationally,

disadvantaged students attained a quarter of a grade more at GCSE and in mathematics they attained an equal grade. Current school information about the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students shows a similarly positive picture.

- The rate of progress made by students in the school's nurture group is impressive. They are supported extremely well and make rapid gains in their grasp of literacy and numeracy so that they are able to enter the main school quickly and access other subjects successfully.
- The standards being reached in GCSE examinations in Spanish, history and geography were not as high as they might have been in 2014. This was as a result of the school insisting that all students followed a humanities and language subject whereas it had traditionally been a choice for them. In the last year, staffing in these subjects has stabilised. These subjects are further helped by external support from other schools that are normally successful in these subjects, as well as in the developing strengths of middle leaders to support good progress. Inspection evidence supports the school's evaluation that progress in these subjects has improved this year and that this improvement is more rapid in history.
- Current progress measures across all year groups and across a range of subjects shows that students make good progress overall. The most-able students are challenged well across most subject areas. While in 2014, the proportion of students achieving the highest grades in English and mathematics were lower than seen nationally, inspection evidence supports that they are now making better progress. The most-able students in physics, biology and chemistry gained a similar number of higher grades to those seen by their peers nationally in 2014.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported extremely well in their learning. As a result, the progress they make is at least equal to their classmates and is sometimes better.
- The very small proportion of students who access alternative provision on a part-time basis are monitored regularly by school leaders. The progress they make in their studies while on placement is as good as that made when they are in school.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.



## 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>	119782
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	461773

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>	822
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kath Gresty
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Smart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 725635
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