

# St Bede's Catholic High School

St Anne's Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4TA

**Inspection dates** 20–21 October 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- School leaders and governors have set a clear vision for the school that promotes pupils' achievement within a calm and supportive community. Leaders have established a highly positive ethos which is helping to drive further improvement.
- Teaching is consistently good. Pupils benefit from their teachers' strong subject knowledge and their effective planning of activities. These enthuse and interest pupils in their learning. This ensures that the large majority of pupils make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' actions are increasingly successful in narrowing the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers nationally, as well as their classmates.
- The governing body monitors the pupil premium funding very effectively. Governors have a good understanding of the school's work and contribute well to the strong leadership of the school.
- The promotion of British values and the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are a strength of the school. This can be seen in the way pupils mix well together and show respect for each other. They enjoy opportunities to serve the community, for example as mentors to younger pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils are polite and take pride in their appearance. The large majority of them are keen to learn, and teachers expect them to work hard. Many pupils stay on at the end of the school day to take part in a rich variety of clubs and activities.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Middle leaders manage their departments with enthusiasm and success. They make a strong contribution to the school's work.
- Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum that includes a wide range of interesting subjects and activities, including enrichment sessions and visits out of school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet leading to outstanding achievement for all pupils. A few pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs do not make as much progress as they could because work is not always closely matched to their learning needs.
- The attendance of a small number of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is too low. This is because systems for recording and reporting pupils' absence, and for supporting their behaviour, lack rigour. This sometimes delays support for these pupils.

## Full report

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

- Build on the improvements made by senior and middle leaders to the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that teachers match tasks and activities more closely to pupils' needs, especially the few who are disabled or who have special educational needs, so that all pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points
  - identifying and providing more quickly the extra support needed by a few pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
  
- Improve further the attendance of the small number of pupils who are regularly absent by tightening systems for recording and reporting absence and for supporting the behaviour of the very few pupils who find it hard to settle in school, so that support is put in place more swiftly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, working closely with senior leaders and governors, promotes a strong moral ethos and sense of community, shared by all staff. This culture is supported by effective management systems, in which good teaching and pupil behaviour are developed and sustained.
- Senior leaders manage the performance of staff well and this improves teaching. Teachers and other staff benefit from a good range of training and development opportunities, relevant to their individual needs.
- The school's evaluation of how well it is doing is honest and useful; it gives senior leaders and governors a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning. Over-generous evaluation in a few other aspects has prevented a quick enough improvement in the progress of a small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The school spends pupil premium funding effectively and carefully. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers nationally is reducing quickly.
- Regular morning sessions taught by English and mathematics specialist teachers provide good chances for pupils to develop their skills in reading, writing and speaking, as well as in mathematics. These opportunities are further enhanced in lessons across most subjects.
- Strong new leadership of the mathematics department has led to significant improvements in outcomes for most pupils. Teachers develop pupils' mathematical reasoning skills effectively, so that from an early stage pupils are able to make confident use of their mathematical understanding to solve challenging problems.
- The school collaborates well with other schools to ensure that its assessments of pupils' progress are accurate. This means that reliable tracking information is provided for leaders and managers.
- The school offers a well-balanced, broad and varied curriculum. Pupils enjoy many interesting and worthwhile experiences, including enrichment sessions, widespread and inclusive sporting and artistic events and visits to other countries. The curriculum enables pupils to understand the diversity of life in modern Britain, and they learn about voting and democracy. It effectively provides for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a group of pupils worked with pupils from other schools to prepare materials for an 'I am Muslim and...' project. This helped them to deepen their understanding of the Muslim faith.
- The school promotes equality and good relations well, tackling any discrimination effectively. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were clear that the school is a place where everyone is welcome and no-one is judged because of their differences.
- The strength of the careers information, advice and guidance, provided by the school to pupils from Years 8 to 11, is evident in the fact that all pupils progress to further education, training or employment after Year 11.
- **The governance of the school is good:**
  - governors know well the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. They have streamlined committees to make them more efficient and have ensured that all governors have the appropriate skills and experience for their roles. Governors are increasingly visible around the school and have good links with subject departments. This keeps them up to date with developments in different subjects. Governors' strong awareness of the pupil premium expenditure has had a significant impact on the improved progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors mount a robust challenge to the school on financial and curricular matters.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and contribute to pupils' and parents' views that the school is a safe place to learn.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The great majority of teachers have high expectations for pupils and make good use of information about pupils' current levels of progress. They ensure that pupils know exactly what to do in order to speed up their progress.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that pupils are guided carefully through individual tasks. Pupils therefore know exactly how the work helps them to progress against their targets for their different courses. In lessons in Years 10 and 11, teachers explain examination requirements in good detail.

- The high-quality teaching developed by senior leaders helps all but a very few pupils to achieve well in reading, writing and in mathematics. Nearly all pupils often use their skills in these areas to good effect in other subjects.
- The best teaching is creative and challenging, leading to pupils' good and better progress. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson pupils used their personal research to prepare arguments to defend or prosecute Mary Queen of Scots. Pupils of all abilities were deeply engrossed and truly excited to know the verdict of the class 'jury' and Mary's real fate.
- In a mathematics lesson, the teacher's expertise in demonstrating very carefully how tasks should be approached enabled excellent progress to be made by her pupils.
- Not all of the teaching is as effective. A small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs do not make as much progress as they could because the work set is too easy or too difficult for them. In some lessons, when work is not well matched to pupils' needs, their behaviour occasionally deteriorates.
- While teachers can all identify pupils' particular needs, a few teachers are less skilled than others in adapting their teaching to give practical help to these pupils. Teachers' marking is generally conscientious and complies with the school policy, contributing to a broad consistency of approach across all subjects.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Most pupils come to school with very positive attitudes and attributes which help the great majority of them to make at least good progress during their time in school.
- The school provides a calm and safe environment for learning in which pupils thrive. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in all subjects, so that they become rounded young adults who are kind towards each other and show respect to their teachers. They are helpful and courteous towards other adults.
- Pupils are keen to participate in the many activities and responsibilities provided by the school. They take part eagerly in a wide range of sports, dramatic and musical performances. Pupils serve the wider community with enthusiasm, for example through charitable fund-raising.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors during the inspection said that they felt safe in and around the school. This is confirmed in the school's own surveys of pupils' views about the school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from the potential risks of life in modern Britain, through assemblies, tutor periods and a range of subjects, including a very strong personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme.
- Governors and senior leaders have worked hard since the previous inspection to ensure that the school's procedures for risk assessment are now very robust.
- A minority of the 97 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed concerns about bullying. The schools' own surveys of parents' satisfaction with the school were much more positive. Most pupils who met with inspectors felt that bullying was very rare and this was the view expressed in the school's own surveys.
- The school has effective systems to support pupils' behaviour and their attendance. Leaders recognise that procedures for recording and reporting the school's actions on the attendance and behaviour of a few pupils are not rigorous enough. As a result, the organisation of support for these pupils is sometimes too slow.
- The personal development, well-being and care of the few pupils who have part of their education away from the school are regularly checked by the school. These pupils generally attend and behave well and move on to further courses to extend their skills after Year 11.

### **Behaviour**

- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively, so that it is generally good. Relationships in most classrooms are very positive. Pupils' overall attendance is also good. However, the school knows that it must quickly widen its range of strategies and procedures for recording and reporting actions to improve the attendance and behaviour of the few pupils who struggle to conform to the school's high expectations.
- Pupils wear their uniforms smartly and arrive at school equipped and ready to work. They are polite, courteous, considerate and helpful towards each other, their teachers and visiting adults.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes are good, and sometimes better, for most pupils. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils achieved well in GCSE outcomes, making and exceeding the progress expected of them in both English and mathematics, in line with other pupils nationally. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs also made good progress, especially in mathematics. Outcomes for all pupils in the English Baccalaureate in 2014 were average, or above average and improving, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Provisional information indicates that while the majority of pupils surpassed these good outcomes in 2015, a small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs did not do as well as other pupils in mathematics or make the higher levels of progress in English.
- The school's determined focus on improving boys' achievement has borne fruit. Boys are now making better progress than girls in English and mathematics and are frequent visitors in the Learning Resource Centre, where they read with pleasure.
- The most-able pupils make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points. They are set appropriately demanding targets, and work in their books shows their great interest in their tasks and activities. They present their written work carefully.
- The most able are also encouraged to challenge themselves. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson on writing effective opening paragraphs, the constant focus on taking risks and going beyond their perceived limits led to mature and sophisticated dialogues between pupils as they shared their paragraphs.
- Other strong subjects are drama, sciences, languages and humanities. In a Year 9 Religious Education lesson, pupils made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of Islam. This was because the teacher built on what pupils had previously learned in order to engage them in deep reflection about contrasting stereotypes, in response to a thought-provoking video clip.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress in all subjects and analyse the information to identify those not making enough progress. Effective steps are generally taken to address pupils' learning needs, including additional classes. Occasionally, when work is not set at the right level, progress slows for a few pupils.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119792
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10005577

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<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>	698
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Steve Marston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Christopher Horrocks
<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 570335
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sbchs.co.uk">http://www.sbchs.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:c.horrocks@sbchs.co.uk">c.horrocks@sbchs.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1–2 March 2012

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average comprehensive school and is under the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There are fewer girls than nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is broadly in line with that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding to help pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A very small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend one of four local providers of education away from the school site for a whole or half day per week. They are: West Lancs. College, West Lancs. Training and Learning Centre, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College and BDS Training.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken with senior leaders.
- Inspectors also visited an assembly and tutor periods.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority, as well as a small group of parents. Inspectors also spoke with pupils in formal interviews and lessons and informally at lunch- and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered a large variety of documentation related to the school's work: improvement plans; the school's view of its performance; information concerning pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors also scrutinised records concerning safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work during lessons.
- Inspectors analysed 97 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and looked at the results of the school's own surveys of the views of parents and pupils about the school.

## Inspection team

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Neil MacKenzie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Peckett	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted Inspector

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