

The McAuley Catholic High School

Cantley Lane, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN3 3QF

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, leaders and governors have not provided the direction needed to prevent the decline in pupils' progress in the main school. Plans for improvement are not sharply focused on the actions needed to bring about improvement.
- In 2016, pupils' progress was below average, particularly in mathematics and English. Despite some improvements in 2017, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not make good or better progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as other pupils with similar starting points. The school's programme for improving pupils' reading and writing skills is not well embedded.
- Curriculum leaders are not fully accountable for the quality of teaching and learning and the accuracy of assessment in their subject areas. Not all teachers implement school policies consistently.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough, especially in English, mathematics and science. Teachers' planning, across the curriculum, does not take sufficient account of pupils' starting points, especially for the most able pupils. Poor-quality work is not routinely challenged.
- Pupils' attendance is below average. Leaders' actions to reduce the high absence of disadvantaged pupils have not been effective.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He has been successful in uniting the staff, pupils and governors to re-establish a strong culture of respect within the school. Under his leadership, pupils' behaviour has improved.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress because leaders have taken effective action to improve provision. Sixth-form students also make a strong contribution to the wider school community.
- The school's programme for developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength and prepares pupils well for life beyond school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders implement sharply focused plans for improving pupils' progress in the main school, particularly in English, mathematics and science
 - all subject leaders have the skills to raise standards in their subject areas
 - the most effective teaching is used as a model for other teachers in the school so that teachers have consistently high expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - poor-quality work and presentation are challenged routinely
 - the school's assessment practice continues to improve so that all pupils have challenging targets and teachers' assessments are accurate
 - governors use the information from the external review to carry out their roles effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - use the information they have about pupils to plan appropriately challenging learning activities, particularly for the most able pupils, so that they make good or better progress over time
 - provide more support in lessons for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - continue to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - apply the school's policies consistently, particularly in relation to assessment and feedback
 - further develop pupils' skills in reading and writing.
- Improve pupils' attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, by continuing to strengthen the role of the pastoral team.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, the overall effectiveness of the school has declined because leaders and managers have not made sure that all groups of pupils achieve well. Neither have they taken robust action to check that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the main school.
- Subject leaders' plans for improvement do not focus clearly enough on the actions and timescales needed to bring about the necessary changes. Plans do not identify the ways in which leaders will check progress at key points.
- Some subject leaders do not have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. When evaluating the quality of teaching in their subject, they have not taken account of the full range of information available. As a result, they have not taken swift enough action to improve pupils' progress or to make sure that teaching is good in all subject areas. Currently, teachers do not apply the school's policies consistently, especially when managing behaviour and providing pupils with feedback on their work.
- Leaders have not made sure that the funding for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up is used to good effect. They have funded a range of programmes to support some pupils with reading and mathematics but do not have a clear understanding of which interventions are the most effective. Not all of the eligible pupils are given appropriate support.
- Leaders have used the additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well to provide specialist support for this group of pupils' emotional and social development. Their attendance has also improved. However, the funding has not been used well to improve their progress, especially in English. The communication between the specialist team and subject teams is not effective enough to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are given appropriate support or resources in lessons.
- Until recently, leaders allowed expectations of pupils' behaviour to deteriorate. Since September, the headteacher has been successful in improving behaviour in a short period of time. However, leaders have not established effective systems for improving pupils' attendance and the absence of disadvantaged pupils remains high.
- In the last year, the pupil premium funding has been used well to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders are ambitious to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils in all year groups so that they make similar progress to their peers in school and other pupils nationally.
- The new headteacher has reviewed the school's system for the performance management of teachers so that it is thorough and robust. Teachers spoke highly of the wide range of training opportunities now being provided to support improvements in teaching and to encourage their career aspirations. Newly qualified teachers benefit from effective coaching to develop their practice. However, leaders know that they have further work to do to share the best practice and set consistently high expectations of all teachers so that teaching is consistently good across the school.

- The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure that pupils access a broad, balanced and relevant range of subjects. As a result, most pupils are engaged in learning and show positive attitudes. The proportion of pupils following the English Baccalaureate is above average. Some of this group of pupils have been unsuccessful in achieving the necessary grades across all of the subjects. Therefore, leaders have reviewed the quality of the guidance given to pupils when choosing appropriate courses.
- Pupils have access to an extensive range of extra-curricular activities led by staff and sixth-form students, including a wide variety of sports. The performing arts are particularly well attended by pupils, who perform to a high standard. Pupils benefit from a coherent and well-planned programme for developing their understanding of life in modern Britain. Assemblies and tutorials provide time for pupils to reflect on respect and diversity. Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning and their responsibilities as young citizens, taking part in several charitable fundraising events each year.
- A small number of pupils follow an alternative curriculum which includes some learning off-site. The programme offers a range of options to suit pupils' interests. Leaders work closely with the local authority to check the progress and safety of these pupils when they are working with providers off-site.
- The new headteacher sought the views of parents when evaluating the effectiveness of the school and shaping his plans for school improvement. Leaders work effectively with the parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to put together education and healthcare plans.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very supportive of the school and give willingly of their time to attend school activities. However, in the past, they have not held leaders and managers to account well enough to make sure that the school's overall effectiveness remains outstanding.
- Until recently, governors have not been kept well informed about the school's finances, including how well the school's additional funding has been used to support groups of pupils. This includes the funding for pupils in Year 7 who did not meet expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of primary school. Neither have governors been kept well informed about pupils' progress or the quality of teaching.
- With the support of the new headteacher, governors are reviewing their committee structure to ensure that they can carry out their roles effectively. Governors are aware that their training on topics such as pupil performance measures is not up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all staff understand their duty to safeguard pupils. Staff refer any concerns appropriately.
- The designated safeguarding leader is knowledgeable and keeps meticulous records. She communicates well with parents, staff and external agencies as appropriate.
- School records of pre-employment checks are comprehensive and well kept.

- Staff are diligent in teaching pupils the importance of safe working practice, for example in science and technology. Staff also reinforce regularly the importance of road safety awareness, as pupils travel regularly between school sites during the day.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Some pupils benefit from very effective teaching, but there is too much variability between and within subjects. Although teaching in English and mathematics is improving, pupils do not make consistently good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Many teachers do not use information about pupils well enough to plan lessons to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, the most able pupils are often set work that is not challenging enough. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities sometimes cannot access the written materials they are given. When work is not well matched to pupils' starting points, their off-task behaviour slows down the pace of learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are given effective support through specialist teaching. However, teachers and teaching assistants do not intervene effectively when pupils find the work difficult in lessons.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers' expectations are also variable. In some books, pupils show a pride in their work. They are given ample opportunity to develop their thinking and their writing skills. However, in other books, poor presentation and unfinished work are not challenged by the teacher. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write extensively across the curriculum, including in English and modern languages. Teachers do not correct pupils' literacy errors routinely and so pupils do not learn from their mistakes and errors are repeated.
- Leaders have begun to focus more extensively on improving pupils' reading skills. In a range of subjects, pupils are encouraged to read aloud, and the most able pupils read confidently. Pupils are also encouraged to read independently during tutorials. Lower-ability readers in Year 7 benefit from programmes to assist them in reading words which they find difficult. However, some pupils enter Year 8 without the reading skills they need to be successful learners. This weakness has not been addressed fully by leaders and teachers.
- Teachers set homework regularly and it is usually of an appropriate standard. Pupils are positive about the homework activities, which they say help them with their learning. The parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that their children receive regular homework and that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's values are represented by the school motto 'McAuley CARES' – compassion, aspiration, reconciliation, equality and stewardship. These values contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are

well understood by pupils, who usually demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and form constructive relationships with others. A team of pupils work with the school's chaplain to organise a range of school activities which promote pupils' spiritual development.

- The school provides a comprehensive programme to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. This includes how to stay safe online, and the 'Prevent' duty, which aims to keep pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Pupils demonstrate responsible attitudes towards their own safety and debate ethical issues well.
- Most pupils show resilience when working independently and they collaborate well in groups. They are confident in explaining their learning to others. Staff encourage pupils to take on roles of responsibility and to demonstrate leadership qualities.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They benefit from high-quality and impartial careers guidance. Pupils value the range of opportunities to learn about different types of business, for example through the engineering fair. All pupils leave Year 11 to follow appropriate further education and training. The majority of pupils who begin courses in the sixth form go on to complete them.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying and what to do if they have any concerns. They understand the school's commitment to reconciliation. The school's buddy system and peer-mentoring programme have been recognised for a national award because pupils provide helpful support for those who experience bullying. During the inspection, a small number of vulnerable pupils said that bullying had not been dealt with effectively in the past. However, recently improved systems for reporting and tackling bullying show that incidents are reducing. Most pupils said that bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly by tutors and year heads.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance is below the national average. Leaders are not doing enough to ensure that pupils attend well. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school is too high. Leaders have improved the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities through stronger communication with parents. Recently, form tutors and year leaders have taken on greater responsibility for encouraging and rewarding good attendance. However, it is too early to measure the effectiveness of this relatively new approach.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and engage well in lessons. Pupils are passive when teachers do not provide opportunities for them to contribute. Occasionally, when learning activities are not challenging enough, off-task behaviour is not dealt with effectively by teachers. This leads to pupils making slow progress. During the inspection, some pupils said that teachers do not apply the new 'consequences' policy consistently.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site. They adopt responsible attitudes towards their own and others' safety. They socialise well with each other during breaks and lunchtime. Staff know pupils well and pupils respond positively to the level of support and encouragement they receive. As a result, pupils show respect towards adults and each other. Pupils said that behaviour has improved since the

arrival of the new headteacher. Pupils take pride in their uniform and their school.

- The proportion of pupils being temporarily excluded from school has reduced markedly since September. This is because teachers' expectations have been raised and pupils welcome the increased use of rewards which recognise their effort and achievements. The school's Emmaus Centre is designed to help pupils with challenging behaviour to reflect on their behaviour and learning. Sixth-form students make a very positive contribution to supporting younger pupils in this environment.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision off-site receive effective support to improve their behaviour and learning. The attendance of most of these pupils has improved since their curriculum was modified to suit their learning needs more effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Overall, the progress made by those leaving the school in the past two years has been broadly average, although this has not been the case for all groups of pupils and for all subjects. In 2017, the school's performance information shows that pupils' progress was average in English and below average in science. Despite some improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' progress in mathematics also remains below average.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities have made insufficient progress. In 2017, the school's performance information shows that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made better progress in mathematics than in English. Provisional examination results indicate that disadvantaged pupils in last year's Year 11 made better progress in both English and mathematics than the Year 11 pupils in 2016. Increasingly, teachers are aware of the needs of individual pupils. However, the school's performance information shows variations across year groups and subjects for both groups of pupils.
- In 2016, the most able pupils made average progress overall but the provisional examination results for 2017 show that progress for this group declined. This is due to some teachers' low expectations and the lack of opportunity to produce work at a suitably high standard to achieve the top grades.
- Leaders are predicting a modest improvement in outcomes for the current Year 11 and stronger outcomes for the current Year 10. However, the picture of improvement is not consistently strong across year groups, especially for the most able pupils. In the past, teachers' predictions in several subjects were overly optimistic. Recently, systems for checking the accuracy of assessments have become more robust.
- The school's performance information for current pupils and the work in pupils' books show that they are now making progress at a faster rate in mathematics, history and French. Pupils make stronger progress in practical subjects such as music, art and design and technology because they understand what they have to do to achieve the highest grades. These pupils are motivated by their teachers' high expectations.
- The proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training is above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership in the sixth form is strong. Over time, students' progress on applied general courses has been above average and stronger than outcomes on academic courses. Leaders have addressed areas of weakness systematically, for example in science. They check the quality of teaching rigorously and track students' progress robustly. They provide effective intervention when students are not meeting their targets. Consequently, the school's progress information for 2017, and for current students, indicates that they make good progress across most subjects.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is also good. Most teachers set challenging work which engages students and leads them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Students eagerly take on responsibility for researching topics independently and sharing their expertise with others. Teachers' skilful questioning encourages students to debate complex theories. Students' learning files demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning and their well-developed study skills.
- Students who have not attained a grade C in GCSE English or mathematics receive specialist teaching and appropriate support. As a result, they also make good progress.
- Attendance in the sixth form is good because students enjoy coming to the sixth form and they take their studies seriously. Students use the school's independent study facilities very effectively. There are clear systems in place to support individual students when their attendance drops. Students' behaviour in the sixth form is exemplary, and they are safe in school. They benefit from a well-planned programme of personal and social development, during which they consider potential risks and healthy lifestyles.
- Many sixth formers are involved in mentoring pupils in the main school, supporting their learning and behaviour. They also contribute to a range of activities within the local community. Students benefit from a varied and effective academic mentoring programme. They spoke highly of the support given to them by tutors to develop their independent learning skills. The 'LAMA' programme – life after McAuley – prepares sixth-form students well for life as British citizens now and in the future.
- Students in the sixth form are given high-quality personalised careers advice and guidance. When they are in Year 11, they are guided well onto courses in the sixth form, as evidenced by the very low drop-out rate between Year 12 and Year 13. When in the sixth form, they are well informed about the choices and careers decisions open to them beyond school. Opportunities for work experience are tailored to their career pathways. Disadvantaged pupils receive additional careers guidance and those wishing to pursue a career in medicine benefit from the Holbeck Scholarship scheme, which provides them with financial support. All sixth-form students progress onto higher education, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	140865
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10037203

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,618
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	243
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Dr Patrick Hurley
Headteacher	John Rooney
Telephone number	01302 537 396
Website	www.mcauley.org.uk/
Email address	head@mcauley.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 April 2009

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in May 2014. The local governing body became the trustees.
- The new headteacher took up post full-time in September 2017, having supported the school part-time since May 2017.
- The school occupies two sites, separated by a busy road. The school's sixth form is on the same site as the upper school. Pupils travel between the sites to access subjects which are grouped together. Both the main school of key stage 3 and 4 pupils and the sixth form are much larger than average.

- Three quarters of the pupils are of White British heritage. A quarter are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average.
- The school has set up a provision on the school site which they call the 'Emmaus Centre' to work with pupils who are at risk of exclusion.
- A small number of pupils are educated off-site in alternative provision commissioned by Doncaster local authority. Providers include Keepmoat, YMCA, Opencast, Oracle Training Centre and JASP Medical Centre.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. In 2016, the school also met the minimum interim standards for sixth forms.
- Prior to the inspection, leaders and governors had already arranged for an external review of the pupil premium to be carried out. Therefore, such a recommendation is not included in this report.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons across all key stages and subjects and in seven tutorial sessions. Some of these were observed by inspectors accompanied by the headteacher. In addition to looking at pupils' books in lesson observations, inspectors undertook a separate scrutiny of books. Inspectors also undertook a tour of classrooms and other learning areas with leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and governors. Inspectors also met with a group of teachers and with some pupils from key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, the school's quality assurance, monitoring and assessment records, minutes of governing body meetings and case studies of vulnerable pupils who receive additional support. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding procedures and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 35 responses received from parents to Ofsted's survey. They considered the views expressed by several pupils during lessons and social times. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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