

# Blessed Trinity RC College

Ormerod Road, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 3AA

## Inspection dates

12–13 June 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes have declined. This is due to instability in staffing, but also because the curriculum has been unsuitable for some groups of pupils.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not contain clear milestones against which progress can be measured. Consequently, governors do not challenge school leaders as effectively as they should.
- The quality of teaching across the school is not consistently good. Too many teachers set tasks that are too easy for pupils and accept work below the standards needed for success in pupils' GCSEs.
- In some lessons, teachers' questioning of pupils does not challenge their thinking well enough. Opportunities to share best teaching practice across the school are not embedded.
- Disadvantaged pupils and lower-ability boys do not make enough progress over time across a range of subjects.
- Although improving, the progress that pupils make within and across subjects is too variable. In particular, pupils' progress is inconsistent in science and modern foreign languages.
- Leaders' actions to improve teaching have not worked. This is because they did not focus on the impact of teaching on the amount of learning and progress pupils were making.
- Teachers in a range of subjects do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, when this is appropriate.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is still too low.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and staff have successfully created a positive ethos in the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils wear their uniform with pride, are prompt to lessons and conduct themselves well in and around school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and effective. Pupils said that they feel safe and are free from any kind of bullying.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are highly positive.
- Pupils benefit from high-quality and impartial careers advice. As a result, pupils feel well prepared for the next stages of their education, training or employment.
- Pupils are well cared for and understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They embrace the wide range of extra opportunities available to them.

## Full report

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

- Improve outcomes for pupils, particularly lower-ability boys and disadvantaged pupils, by:
  - securing greater consistency in the quality of teaching within and across subjects, especially in science and modern foreign languages
  - ensuring that all staff have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve and that work is pitched at the right level for all pupils in the class
  - ensuring that all teachers' questioning challenges pupils to think more deeply about their learning
  - providing opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across a wide range of subjects
  - improving the attendance, and reducing the persistent absence, of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - refining school improvement planning to ensure that priorities, expectations and lines of accountability are clear and are focused on improving pupils' outcomes
  - robustly evaluating the impact that strategies to improve teaching and learning have on accelerating pupils' progress, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils
  - ensuring that when leaders make judgements about the quality of teaching, they focus more sharply on the progress that pupils make rather than what the teacher is doing
  - continuing to provide opportunities to share the effective practice that exists in teaching within and across subjects.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Between 2014 and 2017, leaders did not respond swiftly enough to address the changing needs of different cohorts of pupils coming to the school. The curriculum and teaching did not meet the needs of these pupils, in particular lower-ability boys and disadvantaged pupils. This meant that these pupils, in particular, made weak progress.
- Leaders' assessment of their own effectiveness and of different aspects of the school's work has been overgenerous. They have not taken a sufficiently objective and rigorous view of their work. This has hindered efforts to improve pupils' achievement.
- Following the 2017 GCSE results, which were the worst results achieved in the past four years, leaders started to take a closer look at procedures and have tightened up the school's quality assurance systems. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and on the rates of progress that pupils are making.
- However, the school's improvement plans are not securing rapid enough improvement. This is because actions are not analysed in depth or in detail by leaders to determine their effect. Improvement planning does not incorporate precise, measurable targets.
- The headteacher, governors and staff all share a very clear vision of what kind of school they want Blessed Trinity to be. They work well together and in partnership with parents and carers. Staff believe that senior leaders work in the best interests of the school and that the school is well led and managed.
- Leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has been strengthened. Over the past 18 months, leaders have begun to successfully communicate a vision for high-quality teaching to the wider staff. This vision is based on pupils understanding and engaging with the process of learning. However, the principles that leaders describe are not yet consistently embedded in day-to-day practice. The monitoring of teaching by senior leaders focuses more on what the teacher is doing rather than what pupils are learning.
- Teachers value the opportunities that they are provided with to improve their practice by taking part in training. Newly qualified teachers say that there is an effective induction programme for them and that they are well supported. However, leaders do not routinely evaluate the effect of the training provided in terms of pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have successfully addressed some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There is now increased stability of staffing in mathematics. Work has been carried out on securing more accurate assessment information. The effectiveness of teaching assistants in supporting individuals and small groups of pupils has improved and the quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance is strong.
- Subject leaders are becoming increasingly accountable for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in their subject area. They are becoming more adept at using assessment information to monitor pupils' progress, particularly specific groups of pupils. For example, in Friday briefings, subject leaders and teachers are encouraged to share examples of good practice. This has included one teacher sharing the ideas she had found while researching how lower-ability boys can develop their skills in being

able to retrieve information and therefore become more independent learners. However, opportunities for teachers to learn from each other to improve their practice are not embedded.

- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has provided strong support for pupils' social, emotional and pastoral needs. However, it has not had enough impact on improving outcomes for this group of pupils.
- The curriculum that has been developed is broad and balanced and is now meeting pupils' needs more closely to promote better progress. For example, more time is being given to pupils' learning in both English and mathematics. Where it is appropriate, some pupils are now studying fewer option courses at key stage 4 so that they can focus their efforts where it is deemed to be more beneficial for them.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities and clear guidance about what to do when they leave school. This ensures that pupils and their parents are able to make informed choices. In 2017, all pupils progressed to education, employment or training at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of clubs and activities beyond their lessons. They appreciate these extra-curricular activities. Pupils take on leadership positions, in their roles as prefects and team captains, and provide support for staff and other pupils in a number of ways.
- Pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well through assemblies and other activities that are woven into the curriculum. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, pupils considered the assassination of J F Kennedy. In so doing, they were required to consider different types of society and to discuss the pros and cons of each.
- Pupils discuss respect, tolerance and democracy and know what these words mean. They are very clear that at Blessed Trinity, everyone is equal.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. Over the past couple of years, the coordinator for special educational needs has redesigned the support provided for this group. Funding for these pupils is used effectively.
- Pupils who join the school in Year 7 with weak numeracy and literacy skills are catching up with other pupils in the school because of the strong support that they receive.
- Pupils' appreciation of fundamental British values is strong because they are embedded in all subjects of the school's curriculum.
- Parents who made their views known during the inspection were extremely positive about the school. Their views are summed up by two parents, who wrote: 'The school has strong values and rules which I strongly appreciate.'

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing board is a motivated group of individuals with a wide set of skills and clearly defined roles. Attendance at full governor and committee meetings is high. Governors are passionate about providing a good education for pupils at Blessed Trinity. However, they recognise that pupils' progress has not been good enough in recent years.

- There are strong links between governors and senior and middle leaders. Governors give freely of their time to visit the school for link governor and committee meetings. They audit their skills and engage in regular training to enhance their understanding of the latest educational developments.
- Governors ensure that all statutory responsibilities, including those relating to safeguarding, are fulfilled.
- Governors do not scrutinise leaders' work systematically enough to analyse the impact of their actions. While governors share leaders' high ambitions for pupils, their challenge is limited by the lack of effective milestones in development plans.
- Governors are not doing enough to make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent well. Leaders' reports lack measures of the impact of funding, so it is difficult for governors to judge the success of work in this area.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created strong systems that keep pupils safe. Leaders are caring and have created a culture of safeguarding where concerns about pupils are acted on fully and promptly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe. They appreciate the care and support provided by staff. Pupils are clear about how they would act if they or someone else was in trouble. They believe that the small number of bullying incidents that do occur are dealt with promptly and effectively by staff.
- All the necessary checks of staff, volunteers and governors are carried out and recorded accurately.
- Leaders are vigilant and work closely with outside agencies in the best interests of pupils.
- Leaders make sure that pupils who are excluded from school for a fixed term are safe during the exclusion period.
- Leaders keep clear, systematic and timely records of any safeguarding concerns. They carefully check that pupils who follow an alternative curriculum off the school site attend regularly and behave well.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent within and across subjects. This results in some pupils making better progress than others. Over the past four years, since the school's previous inspection, there has been a high level of instability in staffing in some subjects, for example in science and in modern foreign languages. Some pupils raised this concern in discussions with inspectors when they talked about the number of supply teachers that they had had in recent years. While staffing is now stable and teaching is improving, some pupils have gaps in their learning as a result of previous weaker teaching. Although there is evidence of good teaching in many subjects, as seen in pupils' books and in lessons, this is still not the

case in all classes. Some strong teaching is evident in English, particularly at key stage 4, and also in mathematics, design technology and history.

- Although leaders have taken action to address weaker teaching in science and in modern foreign languages, there is still too much teaching that results in pupils making poor progress in these subjects.
- Teachers' planning is not consistently well matched to pupils' learning needs, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and lower-ability boys. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of doing are not high enough. Assessment information is not routinely used to pitch work at the right level for pupils. At times, pupils' work lacks challenge, is too easy for them and, as a result, pupils fail to make good progress.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills in different subjects when it is appropriate. This lack of opportunity means that some pupils are not able to demonstrate their learning well in their written work.
- Some pupils lack resilience and positive attitudes to learning in lessons. When teachers do not provide work that challenges pupils to think for themselves, or which fails to capture their imagination, lesson time is not used productively. Some pupils do not concentrate well enough and are easily distracted.
- Teachers regularly set homework for pupils. Often this involves work completed online, which gives pupils the opportunity to practise developing skills that they have not yet fully mastered. Pupils and parents say that the amount of homework set is about right.
- Teaching in some subjects is effective because teachers use their strong subject knowledge and passion for the subject to enthuse and engage pupils in their learning. This is most notable in English, history, design technology and physical education (PE). As a result, pupils make strong progress in these subjects.
- Teachers are developing their use of questions that require pupils to think deeply. Where questioning is used well, for example in English, history, art, religious education and PE, it has a positive impact on pupils' learning. This practice is not yet embedded across the school and as such remains an area for further improvement.
- Some teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of subject-specific keywords. This is also evident in pupils' books and contributes to improving pupils' progress.
- The support provided by teaching assistants for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has become increasingly effective. This is the result of more accurate analysis of pupils' individual learning needs, which helps these pupils to make better progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are welcoming, friendly, polite and respectful. They speak with confidence about their enjoyment of school, keen sense of security and feeling of well-being.
- Pupils confirm that bullying is very rare and that problems are dealt with immediately, once they are reported to adults. They insist that there is absolutely no racism,

homophobia or use of bad language in the school.

- Pupils are extremely tolerant and respectful of others. Leaders provide pupils with a range of opportunities to learn about other faiths. Pupils understand that different people have different lifestyles. The mantra of the school is that difference should be celebrated and pupils speak about this without being prompted.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in many areas of the curriculum, including when using the internet. They understand what is meant by abuse and exploitation. Pupils are aware of the dangers of the use of social media and modern technology.
- Pupils generally have very positive attitudes to learning and are grateful for the support that they receive from teachers. They say that one of the best things about the school is the extent to which adults will 'go the extra mile' to help them.
- Lunchtimes and breaks provide an opportunity for pupils to socialise, and although there are a large number of pupils, the general atmosphere is calm. Pupils appreciate that there is always an adult to turn to if anything goes wrong.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have established a clear set of expectations and pupils say that this promotes good behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved over the past two years.
- Around the school site, in halls and corridors, pupils are calm and respectful of one another. Inspectors' observations and the school's own records show that this is typical.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride and they are punctual and well prepared for lessons. As a result, learning time is rarely wasted. Most pupils respond promptly to instructions from teachers and support staff.
- Permanent exclusions increased as leaders clamped down on poor behaviour. However, permanent exclusions are only used in extreme cases. Pupils told inspectors that this had sent a clear message to others and has therefore contributed to the improvements in behaviour over the last two years.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been above national levels as a result of a clamping down on poor behaviour. As behaviour has improved, the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen.
- Leaders arrange appropriate alternative provision placements, and pupils benefit from this. All pupils who attended alternative provision placements in 2017 progressed to employment, education or training at the end of Year 11. Leaders monitor pupils at their placements to make sure that they are safe and that their personal development and welfare are secure.
- In a small minority of lessons, a few pupils lose concentration when teaching is not pitched appropriately or when they do not know what is expected of them. When this occurs, some pupils, especially boys and those whose prior attainment is low, do not produce work that is well presented and complete.
- Overall, attendance has been broadly average for the past four years. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, although

improving slightly, is still lower than the attendance of other pupils in the school. Leaders have highlighted that this as an area for further improvement.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Although improving, the progress of current pupils is not consistently strong. There is too much variability because teaching is not yet consistently good within and across all subjects.
- Year 11 pupils who left the school in 2017 made much less progress than they should have. Taking into account their relative starting points, their attainment was below their capabilities across a broad range of subjects.
- The school's own tracking information shows that pupils in the current Year 11 have made better progress than their peers who left in 2017. However, current disadvantaged pupils and lower-ability boys do not achieve as well as they could.
- Up to 2017, in both science and modern foreign languages, pupils had underachieved for a number of years. This was due, in part, to the lack of permanent science and language teachers at the school and weaknesses in subject leadership. Staffing is now stable and leadership has been strengthened in these subjects. However, outcomes for pupils currently in the school are not consistently good. Inspectors saw too many examples, in pupils' books and in lessons, where teachers' expectations of pupils were not high enough to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils' progress in English was below average in 2017 and the progress of boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities was weak. The results were not typical and followed a trend of strong outcomes in English. Actions taken by leaders and English teachers are leading to much improved progress for pupils currently in the school. Teaching is routinely strong in English, particularly in key stage 4, leading to pupils making better progress than in other subjects.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. However, in 2017, boys, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those with low levels of prior attainment made weak progress. The quality of teaching in mathematics and the progress in pupils' books show that outcomes are improving for most current pupils. However, inconsistency remains and progress is good for some classes and groups but weak for others.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils and lower-ability boys made weak progress and did not get high enough grades in a wide range of subjects. The school's tracking information for the current Years 10 and 11 indicates that they are now making better progress, although their progress is still below what it needs to be. Leaders and teachers have put in place a range of additional support for these groups of pupils, including pastoral support and rewards. However, leaders do not evaluate which strategies are having the most positive effect.
- The evidence from inspectors' analysis of work in pupils' books and from their observations of learning showed that there is too much variation in pupils' learning and progress across key stage 3. Leaders told inspectors that there had been more focus on improving teaching and outcomes in key stage 4 than there had been in key stage 3, but that is now changing.



- In most year groups, progress for the most able pupils is improving. There is still work to be done to ensure that all of the most able pupils reach their full academic potential. This is linked to the need to ensure that teaching is fully effective for pupils in all subjects.
- The current progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is better than it was in 2017 and is broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points. These pupils receive effective support from teaching assistants.
- Pupils read widely and most of them with fluency. Leaders have used reading intervention programmes effectively. Records show that many pupils who were struggling with their reading have now caught up with other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision are well supported and progress to meaningful destinations. They do not always achieve results that are comparable to other pupils in the school. This is because they are following a curriculum that is better suited to their individual needs rather than an academic curriculum. Inspectors scrutinised records of alternative provision and found that these pupils' progress is monitored and they are doing well. The school retains close links with these pupils to ensure that they are ready for the next stage in their learning.
- While pupils' progress across the school is still not as it should be, the vast majority of pupils move on to meaningful employment, education or training.

## School details

Unique reference number	134997
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10045179

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Tyson
Headteacher	Mr Richard Varey
Telephone number	01282 506200
Website	<a href="http://www.btrcc.lancs.sch.uk/">www.btrcc.lancs.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:hmckavett@btrcc.lancs.sch.uk">hmckavett@btrcc.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2014

## Information about this school

- Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic high school is a larger than average 11 to 16 secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible to receive support from the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students who receive special educational needs support or who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 4.
- A small cohort of pupils attend alternative provision at Coalclough Academy, The Heights and The Alternative School.

- The local authority adviser visits the school regularly and produces a written report for governors.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects in Years 7 to 10. They examined the work in pupils' books in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics and across Years 7 to 11. Inspectors also attended an assembly, visited registration and form time, listened to pupils reading and observed pupils at lunchtimes and between lessons. They spoke with many pupils informally.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, five governors, a representative from the local authority and groups of pupils in each of Years 7 to 10.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents, including the school improvement plan and self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings and a range of policies. They looked at the information on the school's website. They reviewed documentation relating to child protection and safeguarding, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance records and the curriculum.
- The views of staff were gained from 53 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and from discussions with teachers.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from the 129 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The views of pupils were collated from a range of evidence, including 60 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and formal and informal meetings over the two days of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kieran Larkin	Ofsted Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector

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