

# Inspection of St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School

Grangeway, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 5YH

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Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Sixth-form provision

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

For too long pupils have been let down by the poor quality of education provided at this school. Leaders, including governors, do not fully recognise how poor the quality of education is for pupils. They have been too slow to act and failed to improve deep-rooted weaknesses in key stages 3, 4 and 5.

Pupils do not learn well enough in almost all subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Pupils' examination results are consistently far lower than those of others nationally at the end of Year 11 and Year 13.

Far too many pupils do not attend school regularly. This hampers their achievement.

Many pupils behave well at break and lunchtimes. However, some are boisterous. Staff are usually at hand to calm things down and keep order. Pupils' behaviour varies from class to class. Pupils' attention is taken away from learning where there is low-level disruption.

Pupils say that they are well cared for, from Year 7 to Year 13. They feel safe. Pupils know who to turn to with any concerns. Bullying is rare, and leaders deal with it well.

Pupils are friendly and kind. They say that this is a school where everybody fits in and is welcome. Many pupils take part in and enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders, including governors, have not secured an acceptable quality of education for pupils. The school has ongoing financial issues that absorb leaders' and governors' time and energy. Consequently, leaders have not recognised the severity of the problems that pupils face in their education. Leaders' recent actions to improve the quality of education have failed.

The curriculum that pupils receive is not fit for purpose. This leads to weak examination results at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form. Pupils achieve poorly year on year. This is the case in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and most other subjects. It is especially true for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders at all levels have tried to strengthen curriculum plans recently. This has made little difference. The curriculum continues to fail pupils.

Leaders, including governors, have not done what they should to provide pupils with their key stage 3 curriculum entitlement. The coverage of topics is too superficial and lacks ambition across subjects. Pupils fail to know and remember enough by the end of key stage 3.

Pupils spend too much time in key stage 4 catching up on missed learning from key stage 3. They are not prepared for the demands of key stage 4. Pupils struggle to take on and tackle challenging ideas. Around two thirds of pupils follow an academic English Baccalaureate GCSE pathway. However, because of the inadequate curriculum, pupils' results in these academic subjects fall far short of what they are capable of. These pupils are not well prepared for academic study at key stage 5.

Students in key stage 5 have an especially poor deal. Their academic curriculum has been taught out of sequence in most subjects. Therefore, students in Year 13 spend their time catching up on the work which they should have covered in Year 12. Work experience is poorly planned. In addition, they do not receive the good-quality wider curriculum that they are entitled to.

Pupils benefit from a stronger curriculum on occasion, for example in modern foreign languages. Some teachers take it upon themselves to plan and sequence learning effectively. In these cases, pupils learn better than elsewhere. However, pupils across key stages 3 to 5 are far more likely to suffer from a poorly designed and implemented curriculum.

Pupils with SEND are not supported well. Leaders do not have high enough academic expectations for this group of pupils. Education, health and care plans (EHCPs) fail to provide enough attention on these pupils' academic education. Therefore, these pupils' needs and aspirations are not fully met.

Pupils' attendance is poor, including in the sixth form. Leaders do not keep a close enough eye on pupils' attendance. Inspectors could not get a fully accurate view of attendance due to issues with how some pupils' absence is recorded by leaders. Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The attendance rates for these groups of pupils has worsened.

Leaders do not manage classroom behaviour well. There is too much low-level disruption to learning in classrooms. In these cases, pupils' work is careless and of too low a standard. Pupils' behaviour around school, at break and lunchtime, is generally positive. However, some pupils are too boisterous at these times.

By contrast, pupils' personal development is strong. The pastoral care of pupils is also a significant strength. This is because this aspect is at the forefront of leaders' minds. Pupils benefit from, and participate in, assemblies and a wide range of other activities that support their preparation for life in modern Britain.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to keep pupils safe. Regular training means that staff know what to look out for if pupils are at risk. Staff know pupils well, are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern. Pupils say that they are confident to talk to staff if they

are worried or unhappy. Leaders consult parents and carers and refer cases to social care or the police when necessary. Pupils know about risks or threats when online.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is poorly planned and implemented, across all key stages. The curriculum lacks ambition. It fails to provide pupils with a secure and well thought through body of knowledge. In key stage 3, the curriculum does not fully match the requirements of the national curriculum. As a result, pupils do not know and remember enough. Leaders must urgently tackle the endemic weaknesses of the curriculum, so that it is fully fit for purpose and meets pupils' needs.
- Pupils' and students' outcomes across almost all subjects are far lower than others nationally, year on year. This is the case for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with SEND. Leaders must take effective action to remove these inequalities and secure improvements to pupils' achievement across the board.
- Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND have especially weak attendance. Leaders should take action urgently to rectify this and ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.
- Pupils' behaviour is not effectively managed. As a result, pupils' conduct varies markedly from class to class. In too many lessons, there is low-level disruption which takes the attention away from learning. The quality of pupils' work also suffers in these cases. Leaders should take action to reinforce and support teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Governors have failed in their duty to address and stem the decline in the quality of education provided at the school. They have not acted with the insight and urgency required to play their part in ensuring that the curriculum is fit for purpose. Governance requires strengthening, so that governors know and understand how to fulfil their duties.
- Leaders at all levels have an inaccurate view of the schools' weaknesses, including the very poor quality of education provided for pupils. Leaders' and governors' view of the school's effectiveness is over-generous. This has hampered the much-needed improvements to pupils' education, which has been too weak for too long and remains inadequate. As a result, pupils underachieve significantly. Leaders should take immediate action to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135731
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110906
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	638
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Canon Rev. David Felix
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Paziuk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-chads.co.uk">www.st-chads.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–15 June 2017

## Information about this school

- The school has a religious character. It is a Church of England and Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in 2016.
- The school suspended entry to its sixth form in September 2018. There are 17 pupils in Year 13.
- The school has been managing a financial deficit since the last inspection.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at The Bridge School.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, governors, and representatives of the Church of England Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Chester.
- A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority were reviewed. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked the pupils about how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- We considered the views of the 42 pupils who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- We considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the responses of 44 staff to the confidential questionnaire.
- The views of the 38 parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the 26 free-text responses, and others who spoke to us, were considered.
- In considering the quality of education, we looked closely at English, history, languages, mathematics and science. We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. We visited lessons and then talked with pupils about what they had been learning. We looked at pupils' exercise books and folders in these subjects.

### **Inspection team**

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Smart	Her Majesty's Inspector

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