

St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School

Grangeway, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5YH

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- For the last three years students' progress at GCSE has been significantly below average in a range of subjects.
- In 2013, students of middle ability and the most able students significantly underachieved in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4. The provisional GCSE data for 2014 indicates that this degree of underachievement has continued.
- Students with special educational needs and disadvantaged students achieve less well than their peers in the main school. Pupil premium funding has not been used effectively.
- Teachers' performance management has not been rigorous enough in holding them to account for the achievement of their students.
- The quality of teaching over time, both in the main school and the sixth form, has not been good enough across a range of subjects. As a consequence, students do not make sufficient progress from their various starting points.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is inconsistent. There are a number of examples of marking that do not provide sufficient guidance to enable students to improve their work.
- Leaders, managers and governors have been unsuccessful in reversing the decline in students' achievement at Key Stage 4, over the last three years.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of how well the main school is doing lacks rigour and does not effectively inform the school's priorities for improvement in the school development plan.
- Governors have not met their statutory obligations in relation to the information that should be published on the school's website.

The school has the following strengths

- As a result of effective teaching students achieve well in religious studies and modern foreign languages at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Governors have made effective use of the extra finance the school receives from the Year 7 catch-up premium. This has resulted in substantial gains in the reading ages of weaker students.
- Students' behaviour is good. Students' relations with each other, their teachers and visitors are characterised by warmth and mutual respect.
- The school's work to keep students safe and free from harm is outstanding.
- The curriculum provides effectively for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enabling them to understand the rights and responsibilities of being a good citizen in 21st century Britain.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with no prior notice to the school.
- Inspectors observed 29 parts of lessons taught by 29 different teachers across a range subjects and across all key stages. Two of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. One inspector attended an assembly and others visited tutor time and observed students during a morning break and at lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders including the headteacher and deputy headteachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and the teacher who has responsibility for coordinating special educational needs in the school. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of Halton local authority and met with the Director of Education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury. Inspectors also met with groups of teachers and groups of students of different ages.
- The work in students' books was scrutinised, as were school policies. Senior leaders' evaluation of how well the school is doing was analysed as was the school improvement plan. An inspector examined the school's records of attendance, the school's behaviour log and the the record of the checks carried out on behalf of the governors, on the suitability of adults to work with children.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by 100 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the 33 staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Charles Lowry, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Dixon

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Robert Birtwell

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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.

Information about this school

- St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School is a larger-than-average, 11 to 19 comprehensive school situated about two miles south-east of Runcorn town centre.
- The school has maintained its status as a specialist language college.
- There are slightly more girls than boys in each year group.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional finance that the school receives to support those students who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. This is also the case for the numbers of students who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students identified at school action plus has been on a downward trend over the past three years, while the numbers of students with a statement of special educational needs has remained stable.
- A few students are educated off-site at the local authority's pupil referral unit, the Bridge School.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2013. The floor standards are minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that students' achievement across the school accelerates rapidly, particularly in English, mathematics, geography and history, at GCSE and in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that teachers use all the information they have on students' capability to plan activities that will challenge students to think hard, deepen their understanding, awaken their curiosity, and raise their expectations of what can be achieved
 - ensuring that teachers maximise the opportunities in lessons to check their students' understanding, making sure that students have captured the key ideas in order to progress their learning
 - making sure that when teachers mark students' work, they focus on those aspects that will bring about the greatest gains in students' understanding in order to accelerate their progress, and then making sure that students act on this advice.
- Increase the proportion of students, and in particular disadvantaged students, making expected progress and more than expected progress in English and mathematics at GCSE, so that both measures are at least in line with national figures.
- As a matter of urgency improve the impact of leadership and management in improving the quality of teaching, and so raise standards of achievement by:
 - ensuring that the senior leaders' and governors' evaluation of how well the school is doing, including the quality of teaching, is rigorous and robust and used to inform the priorities in the school development plan
 - ensuring governors use a range of sources of evidence on the school's performance to enable them to provide an appropriate level of challenge to senior leaders and hold them to account

- continuing to develop rigorous systems for monitoring students' progress across the school and in all subjects and using this information to target effective extra help for those students who are falling behind
- using performance management to improve teachers' classroom practice and hold them rigorously to account for students' achievement
- ensuring that improving the quality of teaching features as one of the key areas for improvement in the school development plan
- ensuring that the information published on the school website meets statutory requirements.

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

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 governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations to the appropriate authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Senior leaders, managers and governors have been unsuccessful in addressing the decline in students' progress by the end of Year 11 over the last three years.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of how well the school is doing lacks rigour. They can accurately articulate the school's strengths but are less clear about what needs improving, particularly in relation to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. As a result the school development plan lacks clarity and is not sufficiently focused on those key actions that will bring about rapid improvement in students' achievement.
- When leaders and managers observe teaching, they place too much emphasis on what the teacher is doing and not enough on the impact that teaching is having on students' learning. Consequently, senior leaders have an inflated view of the quality of teaching in the school and have not made the causal link between the quality of teaching and progress. This has acted as a barrier to improving teaching and learning, and therefore raising standards.
- Systems to monitor students' progress against their targets are inconsistent between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 senior leaders hold regular 'raising attainment and progress' (RAP) meetings in order to identify those students who are not on track to reach their targets for attainment at GCSE and put in place appropriate extra help. However, this additional support is not always rigorously evaluated and senior leaders do not have a clear view of its impact.
- An emphasis on students achieving Grade C at GCSE has contributed to the school's improvement in attainment measures in some subjects, but this has been at the expense of accelerating students' progress, particularly the progress of middle-ability students and the most able.
- Senior leaders' monitor students' performance at Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science, but not other subjects. Consequently, they do not have an up-to-date log of the progress students are making in other areas of the curriculum, which is impeding their ability to hold these subject departments to account.
- Teachers' performance management has not been rigorous enough nor used effectively to hold teachers to account for the quality of their work in the classroom or to inform decisions related to pay progression.
- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and of a predominantly academic nature with students able to follow a range of courses to GCSE at the end of Year 11. However, inconsistency in the quality of teaching, resulting in underachievement, is an impediment to students reaching their potential.
- A number of school trips, links with schools in China, Kenya, France and Spain and opportunities for students to learn about other faiths in religious studies contribute effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An appropriately designed assembly programme keeps students abreast of contemporary local and world affairs. All these opportunities prepare students well for living as good citizens in multicultural Britain in the 21st century.
- Although the foundation of the school is based on equal opportunities for all, its work to tackle discrimination and promote equality is being impeded by the inconsistent performance of the different groups in the school.
- The local authority has relied too heavily on the judgement of the previous Ofsted inspection to inform its opinion about the school and, as a result, has adopted a 'light touch' approach. This is in spite of the evident decline in achievement at Key Stage 4 over the last three years.
- The school's support and challenge adviser's report, prepared towards the end of the previous academic year, is consistent with inspection findings. It provides senior leaders with an accurate external evaluation of how well the school is doing and gives pointers for further development.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are passionate about the school and are committed to its Christian mission but they have relied too heavily on senior leaders for information about the school's performance. As a result they have not effectively challenged them in the light of falling standards. Governors are not well-informed about the quality of teaching in the school. Although the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has undergone a review and is now more robust, governors are not cognisant of the impact that this new regime is having on classroom practice. Governors know that students' progress over time has declined, however, they are over-reliant on the headteacher for data on the school's examination performance and this weakens their position in providing an appropriate level of challenge. Governors know how the school uses the extra finance it receives through the pupil premium and catch-up funding and make sure that the information related to the pupil premium is published on the school's website.

They understand that, the impact of pupil premium funding has not been sufficiently effective to close the gap in attainment between those students supported by this funding and their peers. A small sub-committee of the governing body is involved in the strategic overview of performance management; up until very recently performance management was not used to determine teachers' progression on the pay spine and rises were awarded irrespective of the quality of a teacher's work.

Governors take their statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding very seriously and have named governors responsible for health and safety and child protection. All governors have attended safer-recruitment training and the headteacher is a member of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The school's systems for protecting children from harm meet statutory requirements and are effective. No safeguarding issues have been reported to the local authority since the previous inspection. Governors do not fulfil their responsibility for ensuring that the school's website meets requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Members of the school community are bound by the common thread of shared Christian values encapsulated in the school's motto: 'faith in ability, faith in each other'. The students are shining lights for this philosophy in their interactions with each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. Consequently, behaviour at St Chad's is good. As one student said to an inspector, 'We all get on well together.' Inspection evidence supports this view.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and are well-motivated, even when teaching is less than inspiring and fails to challenge them sufficiently.
- The work in students' books scrutinised by inspectors illustrates the pride that the students have in their work, which is neat, tidy, well-presented and complete. Some students do not always act on their teachers' advice when asked to improve their work.
- Students behave well at all times of the day and have pride in their school. They show this by their high standards of dress and the way they keep the school site free of litter and graffiti.
- Behaviour is well managed. The school's most recent exclusion figures show that, although the school uses this sanction, it is always as a last resort and the rate of exclusion for disadvantaged students is well below the national average.
- Senior leaders have put in place robust systems to manage attendance. As a result, attendance figures for last year were maintained at the 2013 national average. The attendance of those students who attend off-site provision is rigorously monitored to ensure students' safety. An analysis of parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire shows that the very large majority believe that St Chad's students are well behaved. Inspectors agree.
- The school's work to keep students safe is outstanding.
- Those students spoken to by inspectors said that they felt safe and well cared for in school.
- The Emmaus Centre, at the heart of the school, provides students with an oasis of calm away from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the school to meet with a learning mentor should they be having difficulties and be in need of help and support.
- Students told inspectors that bullying was rare at St Chad's, but that should it occur they were confident it would be dealt with effectively. Students have a comprehensive knowledge of the different forms that bullying can take and recognised that it can manifest itself in negative attitudes towards others because of their race, disability or sexual orientation. Students provided impressive examples of how all students are accepted by their peers and fully included in the life and work of the school.
- The school's checks on the suitability of adults to work in the school are rigorous. All staff are trained in recognising young people who may be vulnerable and are conversant with the action they need to take should concerns arise.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching over time has been of insufficient quality to ensure students make at least expected progress from their various starting points. This has particularly been the case in English, mathematics, geography and history.
- Although inspectors observed some effective classroom practice in the school, teaching too frequently fails to challenge students sufficiently, particularly those of middle ability and the most able. As a result they make slow progress and weak gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers do not communicate consistently high expectations. In the most effective practice teachers demonstrate confidence in what students can achieve, however, too frequently, teachers' expectations are

not high enough and this acts as a barrier to raising standards of academic performance.

- Teachers' planning is not always adjusted to meet the needs of students of different abilities, consequently students' progress in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics, has been too slow.
- Evidence from lesson observations and the work in students' books shows that opportunities to assess students' understanding during lessons are not always maximised. As a result students' misconceptions are sometimes not picked up quickly enough to ensure that they maintain a firm grasp of the key ideas.
- The school's work to improve marking has been embraced by the staff. Marking is regular and often detailed but some teachers' comments are not sufficiently incisive and fail to get to the heart of what a student has done well and what needs to be done to make the work even better. There are also examples where students have not followed up their teachers' comments to improve the work and so their achievement has not been maximised.
- Senior leaders have taken effective steps to implement a policy of developing students' literacy across the curriculum. Improvements have been made in students' writing and spelling ability, notably in science.
- In addition to mathematics, inspectors saw evidence of the positive contribution that science makes to students' developing numeracy skills.
- Most parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire feel that their child is well taught. Inspectors agree that this is the case in modern languages and religious studies but not consistently so in other subjects.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students' progress at GCSE, across a range of subjects, has been significantly below average for the last three years. This was particularly the case in 2013 in English, mathematics, science, history and geography, given students' starting points, these outcomes are inadequate.
- Almost all groups of students, including the most able girls and boys and students with special educational needs, made significantly below-average progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 in 2013. The school's unvalidated data for 2014 show that the proportion of students who left St Chad's with five high grade GCSE grades including English and mathematics declined by 12 percentage points when compared to the previous year. The proportion of students who made expected progress in English and mathematics also declined so that both figures were below the government's minimum expectations for 2013.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and their peers grew between 2012 and 2013, consequently, disadvantaged students left St Chad's one GCSE grade lower than their peers in English and mathematics. The school's provisional GCSE data for 2014 indicate that this gap persists.
- The school's policy of entering students early for GCSE mathematics, before they are ready, has impacted negatively on their progress in this subject, consequently, senior leaders have abandoned this policy.
- The school's data for Year 9 students in 2014 indicate that across all ability groups about half the cohort made the progress expected of them in English. Although these data need to be treated with a degree of caution, as they have not been externally verified, they represent underachievement.
- The unvalidated progress data in mathematics for the most able Year 9 students, at the end of the last academic year, are more encouraging, with most making expected progress. However, the data for middle- and lower-ability students show only a minority of these students achieving at this level.
- Consistently good quality teaching in religious studies led to significantly above average attainment in this subject in the 2013 GCSE examination.
- As a result of its specialist modern foreign languages status, the school has a policy of entering the large majority of students for a GCSE modern foreign language at the end of Year 11. As a result of effective teaching, all groups of students who took the examination demonstrated that they had made progress in line with that of their peers nationally.
- During the last academic year the school directed the extra funding it received through the government's 'catch-up' programme effectively to improve the literacy skills of a targeted group of Year 7 students. As a result this group made rapid gains in their ability to read fluently and with understanding.
- The students who are currently educated off-site are making progress in line with expectations.
- Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their child is making good progress. Inspection evidence does not support this view for subjects other than religious studies.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Over time attainment at both Advanced (A) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level show marked differences. In 2014, just under two-thirds of the A level cohort achieved at the higher A* to C grades, which was an improvement of 17 percentage points on the previous year. However, at AS level the proportion of students attaining at the higher grades was much lower, at around one third of the cohort. These attainment and progress measures indicate that achievement requires improvement.
- Arrangements are in place, in the sixth form, for students to retake GCSE English and mathematics if they have not achieved at least a grade C in the Year 11 examination. In 2013 none of the students who re-sat the examinations improved their grade.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form, as in the rest of the school, is inconsistent. In the best practice students are given work that is challenging and makes them think. However, inspectors saw evidence of work that was not challenging enough, so students' progress slowed.
- Students on the A level programmes are often taught in very small groups. This limits opportunities for them to develop their team-working and collaborative skills and is an expensive use of resources.
- The proportions of disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs who are members of the sixth form are much lower than in the main school. The school data show that the attainment and progress of both these groups of students is broadly in line with that of their peers.
- Retention rates for students entering the sixth form at the start of Year 12 and completing their studies in Year 13 have improved from a low base last year. This is because governors have increased the number of options available and are now offering more vocational and work-related courses than was the case in the past.
- To increase rates of attainment at both A and AS level, attainment on entry requirements have been raised by senior leaders. The intention is that students opting for the more academic sixth-form courses will be better-suited to meet the challenge these courses present. However, it is too early to assess the impact this change will have on outcomes.
- Those sixth-form students who spoke with inspectors expressed the view that they were happy with the courses on offer, the quality of teaching and the guidance they had received in Year 11 prior to choosing their study programmes.
- Sixth-form students have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They act as good role models for their younger peers and make a positive contribution to the life and work of the school, including by working with younger students to improve their reading and mentoring students during the transition from Year 11 to Year 12. Some sixth-form students assist teachers in local primary schools. These activities, coupled with the students' studies in religious education, help prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Improvements in the monitoring of sixth-form students' attendance contributes well to their sense of well-being and keeps them safe.
- The new head of sixth form has an accurate view of how the sixth form could be developed and is already taking effective steps to improve provision.

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

Unique reference number	135731
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	449248

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,090
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie Tierney
Headteacher	Andrew Keeley
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2011
Telephone number	01928 564106
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