

Saint Paul's Catholic High School

Firbank Road, Manchester, M23 2YS

Inspection dates 20–21 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires Improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses

- Students' achievement during the academy's first year was not good enough. In particular, they did not make enough progress in the core subjects of mathematics and science and in other key subjects including the humanities and languages.
- Historically, pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to support disadvantaged students; consequently, they do not make enough progress.
- Teaching is still not consistently strong enough to overcome students' past underachievement.
- Teachers' expectations are too low, especially of the most able students. Their marking and questioning skills are not always good enough to improve students' understanding. Not all teachers make sufficient use of assessment information to plan appropriate work to meet students' needs.
- Where there is weaker teaching, students do not try hard enough to improve their learning and a few cause low-level disruption.
- Not all staff apply the academy's behaviour policy consistently and this sometimes leads to a misunderstanding among students about what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour.
- Recent improvements to the quality of support for students with disabilities and special educational needs are not yet consistent in all subject areas.
- Changes recently made to the curriculum have not yet impacted positively in all subject areas.
- Weaknesses in students' literacy and numeracy skills have not been addressed quickly enough. This is because strategies for improving students' literacy and numeracy are not constantly applied in all subject areas.
- Subject leaders vary in how effectively they work to raise achievement and improve teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and new senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and have taken decisive action to improve teaching through enhanced performance management and more effective training of staff.
- A newly reconstituted governing body is in place and it is monitoring the work of the academy more closely and effectively than before.
- Actions taken by senior leaders, including improved accuracy of assessment, more secure tracking of students' progress and enhanced provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, are leading to better outcomes for students.
- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The academy's work to keep children safe is effective.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons. Inspectors jointly observed two lessons with the headteacher and an assistant headteacher. They reviewed work in students' books in a range of subjects and listened to students read during lessons. Inspectors also visited an assembly and a form registration period.
- Meetings were held with groups of staff, students, five members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to 87 staff inspection questionnaires. The results of 37 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, were also considered alongside a telephone call from a parent.
- At different times in the day, inspectors observed students moving between activities inside and outside the academy.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and considered a number of documents, including the academy's own view of its performance, the academy improvement plan and reviews of the academy undertaken by external consultants.
- The governing body commissioned two detailed reports. These reviewed the academy's use of the pupil premium funding and the effectiveness of governance, to assess how these aspects of leadership and management could be improved. The action plans produced in response to each of these aspects of the academy's work were considered by inspectors alongside meetings that were held to discuss the actions already taken and future plans.

Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Additional Inspector
Claire Hollister	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Saint Paul's Catholic High School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, St Paul's Catholic High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Saint Paul's is an average-sized 11–16 secondary academy.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is just above average as is the proportion who speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is well above average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- In the last 12 months the academy has appointed a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher. The governing body has been reconstituted. Since the appointment of the headteacher, a new senior leadership team has been formed, including several new appointments. There has been a high turnover of staff and a number of new subject leaders and teachers have also been appointed.
- The academy is a member of the Manchester Catholic Education Partnership and the Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust.
- A small number of students in Years 9, 10 and 11 are offered an alternative curriculum and attend off-site provision for a small part of the week. Providers include Works4U and Educ8 Manchester Ltd.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, so it is at least good, in order that students make good or better progress across the academy in all subjects, especially in mathematics, science, the humanities subjects and languages, by ensuring all teachers:
 - use assessment information to plan their teaching to ensure that all students' learning needs are well met
 - raising teachers' expectations and level of questioning so that all students, particularly the most able, explore their learning in greater depth
 - mark work consistently well across and within all subjects so that students have clear advice about how to improve their work and opportunities to respond to the guidance that teachers give them
 - consistently apply the academy's behaviour policy
 - apply whole-academy approaches consistently to improving students' literacy and numeracy skills across subjects
 - share the good practice that exists among teaching assistants and some teachers so that high-quality support is provided for disabled students and those who have special educational needs in all lessons.
- Strengthen further the impact of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by ensuring:
 - the targeting and monitoring of the use of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged students is sufficiently rigorous and impacts positively on students' progress
 - the further development of the consistency in quality of subject leadership, so all these leaders can be equally as effective in improving teaching and in holding teachers to account for students' progress

- students receive consistently good teaching by giving further priority to the training of less experienced and less effective teachers
- that recent changes to the curriculum are monitored and evaluated in terms of the impact they have on raising students' achievement and enjoyment levels
- the school works even more closely with primary schools to make sure pupils' literacy skills development is a priority as they progress from Year 6 to Year 7 and that accurate information is available in respect of their skills when they enter into Year 7 of the academy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are ambitious for the development of the academy. Recent improvements, including new staff appointments, and the implementation of a wide range of new systems and procedures, have not had sufficient time to improve the overall quality of teaching and lead to consistent and sustained improvements in students' achievement across the full range of subjects including in mathematics and science.
- The headteacher and new senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and have taken decisive action to improve teaching through the performance management of staff. There are now more rigorous procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching through lesson visits, checking the standard of work in students' books and undertaking joint lesson observations with external consultants. Professional development has improved but there is more to do to ensure that the training of new and less effective teachers is given priority.
- Some subject leaders are beginning to hold teachers to account for the performance of their students. However, the quality of subject leadership requires further improvement because there remains too much variation in its effectiveness and in leaders' skills in monitoring and improving teaching standards. This is because a number of subject leaders are new in post and have yet to be fully trained.
- Although the academy strives to ensure equality for its students, as a result of inconsistencies in teaching and the lack of focus of additional support for those students who have needed it, not all students have had the same opportunities to achieve as well as others in the academy or nationally. The academy is now using data more effectively to identify where additional support and intervention are required, to improve the quality of teaching and to raise teachers' and students' expectations of what students can achieve.
- Until recently, leaders, including governors, have failed to ensure additional government funding is used to best effect. The pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding (provided to improve the lower than average standards of students' literacy and numeracy skills when starting Year 7) have not been used to benefit the students for whom it is intended. Leaders have identified the need to work even more closely with primary feeder schools so that early identification of students with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills can be made and appropriate early intervention put in place.
- The curriculum, until recently, has failed to meet the needs of students and this has contributed to students' low achievement rates as it presented a lack of challenge, particularly for the most able. A full review of the curriculum has been undertaken and, from September 2014, it has been matched more closely to the needs of students. The changes that have been made include a clear strategy for promoting literacy. Separate nurture groups for very low ability students in Years 7 to 9 have been introduced as well as a programme designed to improve reading. A wider and more appropriate range of options has been made available to Years 10 and 11 and there are opportunities for setting students according to ability in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Opportunities to promote numeracy and literacy across the full range of subjects are not yet in place.
- A programme of careers education and guidance ensures students are well advised for the next phase of their education. The majority progress to local colleges and schools with sixth forms and many of these students return to the academy to talk to younger students about their experiences. The vast majority of students are placed in education, training or employment on leaving the academy.
- The academy's work to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. The importance the school places on fostering good relationships, promoting tolerance and tackling discrimination can be seen in the way students of different social backgrounds and ethnic groups work and socialise well together. Key themes are taught in appropriate subjects and reinforced in assemblies. Students support a wide range of charities through their charity fundraising. The curriculum and extended curriculum provide ample opportunities to prepare students for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority undertakes a quality assurance visit half-termly and provides support for the academy through commissioning the work of the National Leader of Education from St Peter's Roman Catholic High School. This external support has been supplemented by the work of other external consultants and has supported the improvements that have been made in the quality of subject leadership, the quality of teaching and the way in which governors have started to identify, allocate and evaluate the pupil premium funding.
- Parents' views are largely positive. Those who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View were of the unanimous view that they would recommend this academy to others.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet requirements.
- Leaders rigorously monitor the attendance and behaviour of students who attend off-site alternative

provision.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors had not been holding the academy to account well enough. They recognised this deficiency, reconstituted and appointed new governors. They have commissioned external reviews and have acted upon the advice and outcomes within the reviews. As a result, there are increasingly better systems in place, for example, for monitoring pupil premium expenditure but these have not yet fully impacted on students' progress.
- The governing body is now monitoring the work of the academy more effectively in a range of areas including the use of data and the quality of teaching. There are link governors, for example, for safeguarding and monitoring pupil premium expenditure. Governors are familiar to staff and students as they are frequent visitors. They involve themselves in discussions with leaders and take part in lesson visits and scrutiny of students' workbooks.
- Governors have supported the new headteacher in tackling the underperformance of teachers. They have a good knowledge of performance management targets for teachers and how they are related to achievement and have ensured that an individual teacher's pay is linked to their performance.
- The governing body has played a central role in keeping the academy at the heart of its ethnically diverse community.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is because students' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive in all subjects and with all staff. In lessons where the teaching does not engage students, they easily get bored and will start to chatter to their friends rather than listen or get on with a task they sometimes find too easy. Such attitudes contribute to the slow progress they make in their learning.
- However, in most lessons students arrive promptly, show respect and work well with their teachers and with each other. They want to succeed and they have ambition to achieve well.
- The majority of students behave well outside of lessons. In corridors, outside and in the dining hall, at breaks and lunchtimes, students of all ages and backgrounds enjoy chatting to one another and getting some fresh air, playing football or walking around. They enjoy speaking to the adults who are on duty.
- Since the new behaviour policy has been introduced, there has been a drop in incidences of low-level disruption in lessons and the number of recorded instances of bullying has reduced by a third. Students say that bullying is rare and if it does occur they have confidence in adults to ensure that it is dealt with.
- On occasions, students say that not all adults consistently apply the academy's behaviour policy and responses from staff, via the staff questionnaires, support this view. This can lead to confusion among students about what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour and some students feeling that they have not been treated equitably.
- Leaders have done much to ensure that the number of fixed-term exclusions remains low. There has only been one permanent exclusion since September 2013.
- Those students attending alternative provision behave appropriately in their different learning environment.
- During the inspection, inspectors noted no incidences of graffiti, very little litter and no inappropriate language, of any kind, being used by any students. Students wear their uniform well and with pride.
- Students take on positions of responsibility, for example as prefects, and they are active in raising money for a large number of charities.
- Attendance was average for the academic year from September 2013 to July 2014. The academy encourages parents to ensure that their children attend regularly.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All necessary arrangements for the safeguarding of students are in place and monitored by senior leaders. Governors have clear procedures in place for reviewing safety procedures and policies; they are clear such reviews should be undertaken regularly and have put in place measures to ensure that this happens.
- Students feel safe at the academy and the views of parents and staff agree with this. The safety of those students who attend alternative provision is monitored well by the academy.

- Students show a good understanding of why different forms of bullying, racism and other forms of anti-social behaviour are unacceptable. The academy ensures that there is time within the curriculum to promote understanding of diversity and tolerance. During the inspection, Year 7 students in an information and communication technology lesson were using Moviemaker to produce video presentations about safe use of the internet.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The impact of teaching over time is inadequate and this has resulted in too many students making inadequate progress. Although teaching is now improving, as a result of more effective leadership, recent staff changes and improvements in the quality of professional development for teaching staff, the quality of teaching is still too variable. Academy data and work in students' books from a range of subjects show too many students are currently not making the progress expected.
- There is still too much teaching that does not promote good learning. Currently, not all teachers use their knowledge of students' previous learning to make sure work is set at the right level, nor do they ask students challenging questions. While the academy is now able to provide teachers with accurate data about students' attainment, this is not always used to plan work that engages and stretches students of all abilities, particularly the most able. As a result, too many lessons are based on the majority of students completing the same task rather than in making sure students all make sufficient progress in their learning. When this is the case, students' concentration lapses and low-level disruption can occur.
- Prior to September 2014, assessment information was not always accurate. In a range of subjects it was overgenerous and this meant that students, their parents, senior leaders and governors received an unrealistic impression of the students' achievement against national standards. Academy leaders have taken a number of steps to ensure that such data are now more reliable. Regular and formal assessments are now scheduled and they are internally and externally validated. This information is helping leaders identify areas of weakness in teaching and focus additional support where it is most needed.
- A large proportion of students enter the academy with low basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Until recently, there has been insufficient focus on ensuring that this is addressed early on and this has prevented students doing as well as they might across a range of subjects. Recent initiatives, for example, intensive reading support in Key Stage 3, are starting to have a positive impact on helping students make up lost ground. However, there are still not enough opportunities for students to develop their numeracy and literacy skills across the full range of subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Gaps in older students' knowledge and skills are starting to be identified and addressed but students are unlikely to reach their targets.
- Students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs have made insufficient progress in the past because leaders have not ensured that they have received adequate support. A new senior leader, with overall responsibility for the welfare and progress of this group of students, along with a newly formed group of very skilled teaching assistants and learning mentors, have put in place an improved range of systems and procedures. These students are now well supported in small group and one-to-one sessions. Data for the current cohort of students show that they are already starting to make better progress.
- Sometimes support for students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs is less effective in whole-class sessions because some teachers are not confident about how to best address the needs of these students and are not working effectively enough with teaching assistants.
- The introduction of an academy-wide marking policy by the new headteacher has led to improvements in the quality of marking in many subjects. As a result, some students receive better guidance on what they have done well and what they need to improve. However, not all teachers are consistently following this policy. The guidance given to students about how they can improve their learning is not always clear and students are not always given time to respond to the teacher's advice. This adversely affects the rate of progress of students.
- Inspectors observed some good learning in English, physical education and history and some outstanding learning in drama and a Year 7 Nurture Group science lesson. In this science lesson, the teacher and the teaching assistant had used their detailed knowledge of the students to plan activities and resources which enabled all students to make outstanding progress. Students were completely absorbed and were encouraged to ask questions and voice their own ideas. The teacher checked on students' understanding of key vocabulary. Students' books were well presented and thoroughly marked with attention to literacy development as well as scientific understanding and knowledge. The teaching assistant who is attached to this particular group of students keeps a journal. She records anything of note from any lesson, so that she can be attentive to the needs of individual students across the full range of subjects. Students'

attitudes to their learning were outstanding in this lesson.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- In 2014, Year 11 students made inadequate progress from their different starting points to reach standards that were significantly below average. The proportion achieving five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics in GCSE examinations fell sharply in 2014. In mathematics, science and in some humanities and languages subjects, the progress of students was too slow and the attainment of students was significantly below average.
- The academy's own data, along with the inspectors' observations of students' learning including a scrutiny of students' work in a range of subjects, confirm that their current attainment, relative to their starting points, is still too low. The overall progress of students in Years 7 and 11 is improving and it is also starting to improve in Years 8 to 10, due to better teaching. However, progress is not improving fast enough for many students to achieve their targets, for example, in science, geography and French.
- Insufficient attention has been given to the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills across the academy. Students whose basic literacy skills are weak when they join the academy have found it difficult to express their ideas with clarity, either orally or in writing. This makes it hard for them to respond to more demanding subject matter in Years 10 and 11. Senior leaders have recognised this as a serious issue and recent senior appointments and intensive support for the weakest students in Years 7 and 11, are beginning to have a positive impact upon these students' literacy skills. Less progress has been made in respect of addressing students' weak numeracy skills.
- The progress of the most able students is generally better than that of students of middle- and lower-ability but their progress still requires improvement because they are not challenged at sufficient depth in all subjects.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged students in their GCSE examinations in English was about two-thirds of a GCSE grade behind other students in the academy and one grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. The attainment of disadvantaged students in their GCSE mathematics examinations compared to other students in the academy and non-disadvantaged students nationally was more than a grade behind. This gap remained constant in English compared to 2013. It widened in mathematics because disadvantaged students made considerably less progress than other students in this subject. This is because until recently pupil premium funds have not been used as well as they might to support the progress of disadvantaged students.
- Disabled students and those who receive support for their special educational needs did not make the progress expected of them in 2014 because their learning needs were not fully identified or addressed. A new leader and some very effective and enthusiastic teaching assistants were appointed in September 2014 and they have worked hard to develop specialist provision for this group of students. The support for these students is now much more closely matched to their particular needs and they are beginning to make much better progress.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to others in the school because they are exposed to the same inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Students generally make the progress expected of them in English, though they do not always transfer the skills they have learned in English lessons into the work they produce in other subjects. They also do well in history and physical education. This is because there has been more stability in staffing, better leadership, more good teaching and because teachers have higher expectations of what students can achieve in these subjects.

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	139456
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	449961

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	865
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gretton
Headteacher	Fiona Minshall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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