

St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School

Grangeway, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 5YH

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 11 in 2016 were below the minimum requirements set by the government.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not improving rapidly enough.
- Attendance is low for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching and learning is improving, but not yet rapidly and consistently enough across subjects and within departments.
- Fixed-term exclusions are higher than national for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Too many students leave the sixth form without having reached their full potential in a range of subjects.
- Attendance and retention rates are low in the sixth form but are beginning to show signs of improvement.
- The structured and positive improvements made by leaders have not yet had sufficient impact on the outcomes of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear vision to improve the school. Leaders and governors are ambitious for every pupil.
- The school's motto, 'Faith in God, Faith in Ability, Faith in Each Other', permeates throughout the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Vulnerable pupils are very well supported. Pupils feel safe and cared for.
- Pupils' conduct around school is orderly and calm. The vast majority of pupils display positive behaviour for learning in lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are taught to respect and celebrate individual differences.
- Careers guidance is effective in preparing pupils well for the next stages in their studies.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the attendance and reduce the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they are in line with national averages.
- Improve teaching so that pupils make good progress over time by:
 - further improving the day-to-day quality of teaching and learning across the school, particularly in science, so that pupils of all abilities are challenged to succeed
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan and teach lessons which are well matched to the needs of pupils, so that progress is maximised and pupils' interest is maintained
 - building on recent improvements in reducing the variation in the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - developing consistency of teachers' assessment and feedback, so that pupils are clear about their successes and know how to improve their work in line with school policy
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations for positive attitudes for learning in lessons, so that pupils are rarely involved in low-level disruption.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - building pupil progress into the success criteria of improvement plans and when evaluating the quality of teaching and learning
 - analysing the impact of all aspects of additional funding, such as pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, to identify the most effective strategies
 - stabilising staffing and building staff spirit, so staff work together to drive ambitious improvements for the benefit of pupils
 - embedding successful initiatives brought in by leaders to improve outcomes, attendance and behaviour
 - evaluating the effectiveness of sixth-form provision more rigorously, so that outcomes improve, attendance rises and retention rates also improve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new headteacher, supported by governors and the senior leadership team, is resolute in his commitment to drive sustained improvements across all areas of the school. However, leaders' actions have had little impact on outcomes for pupils so far.
- Outcomes for pupils in 2016 at key stage 4 were inadequate and required improvement in the sixth form. The differences between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and their peers at key stage 4 were too great. Much has been done to bring about significant improvements in outcomes. The progress of current pupils is more positive.
- Leaders at all levels have high expectations of and for staff and pupils. Increased accountability is clear, with all teachers being held to account. School development plans and the monitoring of teaching and learning do not ensure that pupil progress is a measurable success criterion of each action.
- Leadership of teaching and learning is having a positive impact on increasing the collaborative and supportive work of teachers. Middle leaders are positive about their teams and comment on how working together is improving consistency and accelerating pupils' progress.
- Regular, systematic quality assurance of teaching and learning supports staff development. This gives leaders an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses across the school. Leaders recognise that incorporating pupil progress as a component will further strengthen the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching over time.
- Attendance rates are low for some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support put in place by leaders is showing improvements for individual pupils, as their attendance is beginning to rise. Overall, however, leaders have not been effective in ensuring that all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attend school regularly. Attendance is a barrier to learning for some pupils.
- High staff turnover has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour across the school. It has also had a detrimental effect on staff morale, as staff have weathered many changes to policies and procedures as well as changes in leadership at all levels. Parents also are concerned about the use of temporary teachers in some subject areas. Governors and senior leaders are committed to reducing turbulence. They are working hard to stabilise staffing so that improvements can be consistent and more rapid.
- Performance management is used effectively. Targets are set by governors and leaders. Staff and leaders are eligible for pay progression only if all targets are met. Leaders are aware that bespoke, individualised targets will enable staff to be held even more firmly to account.
- Leaders have refined the subjects that pupils study at key stage 4. The curriculum is now constantly reviewed to make sure that pupils are following pathways that will ensure better outcomes than in previous years. Leaders ensure that effective guidance is put in place early when pupils choose their optional GCSE subjects. As a result,

outcomes for current pupils show marked improvements.

- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are available for pupils and offer a variety of rich and interesting experiences, from gardening and debate club to fitness and strategy games. This high-quality provision is not yet tracked fully, so participation rates of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are not known.
- Leaders identify the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils confidently and accurately. Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils and evaluate how well the pupil premium funding has been used to address their needs. The impact of different strategies is variable and leaders do not routinely evaluate the effectiveness of all spending, such as the impact of reducing class sizes. Attendance is a significant barrier to learning for some disadvantaged pupils, but the pupil premium funding has not been used to provide support in this area.
- Leadership of the Year 7 catch-up funding is monitored inconsistently by leaders. Governors are clear on the uses of this additional funding and the impact it is having on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Middle leaders, however, are less clear on how the money is being spent and the additionality it provides for pupils in receipt of the funding.
- The progress, attendance and behaviour of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are varied. Leaders have created a positive, nurturing environment for pupils which helps them to make progress from their individual starting points. Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively to support pupils' emotional well-being and academic support.
- Newly qualified teachers feel well supported by middle and senior leaders. Induction programmes are well planned and cover a wide range of helpful strategies. Newly qualified teachers enjoy working at the school and are confident to deliver training sessions to student teachers about successful completion of the first year of teaching.
- Leaders support the continued professional development of staff through external courses, such as qualifications to develop middle and senior leaders. Leaders also create time for staff to work collaboratively to improve learning, behaviour and outcomes.
- Careers information, advice and guidance prepare pupils successfully to move on to their next stages in education, employment or training. Independent careers advice, a wide range of activities and strong links with local employers provide pupils with bespoke guidance and clear information about the choices available to them. Consequently, a very high proportion of pupils remain in education, employment or training. Pupils and parents are happy with the guidance available for pupils.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are tracked and monitored carefully. These pupils attend and make varied progress. However, they go on to secure college places on courses appropriate to their needs and interests.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are well led and are a strength of the school. The school's Christian values are tangible throughout the school. Pupils can articulate clearly what these values mean to them and they try to uphold them.
- An overwhelming majority of pupils respect the views and values of others because

they have been taught about tolerance and respect. Form time, curriculum lessons, assemblies and school visits are all used well to support the caring and inclusive ethos of the school.

- Middle leaders are enthusiastic about their subjects and passionate about improving the quality of provision and outcomes in their subject area. Leadership has been strengthened through a range of recent appointments and training. Middle leaders are now building strong teams, monitoring standards and using interventions well to ensure that the progress of current pupils accelerates.
- The local authority, the Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Diocese of Chester have all played a key role in helping the school move to a position where it no longer requires special measures. Their work has developed leadership capacity across the school and secured the appointment of a substantive headteacher. The school is now in a position to drive its own improvements, implementing strategies and initiatives carefully tailored to meet the unique needs of the pupils at St Chad's.
- Leaders are positive about the changes since the last inspection and have an accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness. They are determined to bring about the necessary improvements for the school to continue on its journey to ensure positive outcomes for all pupils.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is committed to improving the life chances for every pupil.
- Governors are aware of the school's strengths. Their key priorities accurately reflect the areas which require improvement, such as outcomes, attendance and minimising staff turnover.
- Governors visit regularly and hold leaders firmly to account in committee meetings. Governors play a key role in the performance management of staff and leaders. They are insistent that high-quality teaching is the key to improving pupils' outcomes and are ambitious in their target-setting.
- Governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent. They are less clear on the impact of the funding in diminishing the considerable differences in progress for disadvantaged pupils. They have not probed the breakdown of this expenditure closely enough.
- Over time, governors have not fully recognised the poorer attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the past, governors have compared attendance rates to local averages instead of national averages for all pupils. This is now a key priority of governors.
- Governors are effective in promoting the safeguarding culture at the school. All governors are trained and know about latest guidance. Many governors have completed safer recruitment training.
- Governors are aware of the demands that lie ahead as they continue to support and challenge leaders on their journey of improvement. They are fully prepared and determined to help the school succeed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are highly effective in ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- All appropriate recruitment and vetting checks are robust. Statutory requirements are met. Clear systems are in place to ensure the safety, health and well-being of both pupils and staff.
- Pupils of all ages are adamant that bullying happens only rarely and that staff are very effective when dealing with it. Pupils are confident that there is an adult in school to talk to if they have any concerns. The overwhelming majority of parents and staff state that children are safe and well looked after in school.
- Staff are fully trained and receive regular safeguarding updates. Staff are vigilant and pass on any concerns swiftly. Leaders follow up concerns in a timely manner and involve external agencies and parents as appropriate.
- Leaders have developed strong working relationships with external agencies, such as the local authority, charities and other teams. Leaders work closely to ensure that pupils are signposted to receive the correct support for them and their families. Case studies show that vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well supported at St Chad's.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding which runs throughout the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are improving due to strong leadership and a clear focus on high-quality teaching. However, teaching over time has not secured good progress for pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching over time is not yet good, as inconsistencies persist both across subjects and within departments. When teaching is not well matched to pupils' needs, pupils lose focus and incidences of low-level disruption occur.
- Where teaching is challenging and expectations are high, pupils make good progress, including the most able pupils. Strong subject knowledge and effective questioning deepen pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge. Assessment information is used to plan appropriate learning activities which engage and motivate pupils. Teachers reshape questions and explanations skilfully to maximise pupils' progress.
- A high turnover of staff and the resulting proportion of lessons covered by temporary staff has had a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour for some classes. Leaders are working to minimise the effects of this turbulence through stabilising staffing and doing further quality assurance checks.
- Leaders identify the development of pupils' literacy skills as a priority. The whole-school focus on improving literacy is beginning to have some impact. However, there are inconsistencies, as not all teachers are following these expectations. This means that for some pupils, errors are not picked up quickly enough and so they repeat mistakes.
- Homework is set in line with school policy and contributes well to learning. Pupils and parents are aware that homework is an integral part of learning.

- Changes in policy and procedure have increased the rigour and robustness of assessments. Leaders have more confidence in the grades and assessments made by teachers and a more accurate picture of progress over time. As a result, middle leaders are confident that the 'green shoots' of improvements seen in assessment information are true and reliable.
- The school's policy on marking and feedback is having a positive impact in many subject areas, such as Spanish, where clear feedback moves learning on. Too often, variability in staff following the school policy and limited pupils' responses do not lead to improvements or progress being made rapidly enough. When books are not checked in line with school policy, deterioration in presentation occurs, particularly for boys.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Teaching assistants provide additional guidance, explanations and support to improve pupils' understanding.
- Regular reports and well-attended consultation days provide pupils and parents with useful progress information and clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve. Parents value this information.
- Teachers are committed to delivering high-quality lessons for pupils. There are pockets of extremely effective practice across the school. Middle leaders drive successful initiatives implemented by senior leaders. Consequently, there have been significant improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection, particularly in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and based on mutual respect. Teachers and leaders know pupils well and this contributes to pupils feeling safe and well looked after. Pupils told inspectors that staff 'care about us'.
- Pupils mix well together during social times and respect others' views and opinions. Pupils are adamant that all pupils are treated the same, regardless of their differences. Pupils are confident that on the rare occasions when bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Parents and staff support this view. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and personally. External agencies, such as the police, are used to keep pupils informed of local issues and general safeguarding concerns. For example, a recent assembly on child sexual exploitation was delivered by the police to raise pupils' awareness of this issue. Leaders are aware that pupils need more information on keeping themselves safe from extremism and radicalisation. Plans are in place to address this.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils are provided with a plethora of opportunities across the curriculum, through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, assemblies, form times

and visits. Displays around the school are high-quality, informative and reflect pupils' awareness and values.

- Pupils learn about British values and have opportunities to discuss issues such as voting, democracy, rule of law and respect in form times and in PSHE. Pupils are encouraged to strengthen their beliefs and attitudes, which contribute to them playing an active role in the school and community.
- Independent careers information, advice and guidance is well suited to the needs of pupils. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the range of opportunities available to them. A wide range of activities, from 'drop down' days to individual guidance meetings, ensure that pupils are well prepared for transition to the next stage of their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, the rate of fixed-term exclusions has remained just above the national average. However, fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to rise and are significantly above the national average for all pupils. There has been a rise in permanent exclusions for this academic year.
- Attendance for current pupils has fallen from 2016, where attendance was in line with the national average. Attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities require improvement so that attendance is not a barrier to their progress. Strategies to improve attendance have had limited impact so far. Some individual pupils, however, have improved their attendance considerably as a result of effective support.
- The behaviour and attendance of pupils placed in alternative provision is closely monitored by leaders, who work closely with the provider to ensure that pupils are safe and make progress.
- Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning in the vast majority of lessons. When incidences of low-level disruption occur, it is usually when activities are not well matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils report that, on occasion, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils slows learning. A new approach to managing behaviour for learning has recently been launched. Both pupils and staff are optimistic that, when applied consistently, the positive effects on behaviour will be evident.
- Pupils move calmly around the school. Pupils respect their environment, as evidenced by the immaculate displays of pupils' work, sculptures set openly in the corridors and an absence of graffiti and litter. Pupils take pride in their appearance and conduct themselves well during social times.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes in 2016 did not meet the minimum national requirements set by the government. These results were due in part to a curriculum which did not meet the

academic needs of some learners. Leaders addressed this issue swiftly so that current learners are following academic pathways more suited to their individual needs.

- New leadership and improvement initiatives did not have time to make an impact on pupils' outcomes last year. Information provided by the school shows that outcomes for Year 11 pupils are predicted to rise this year, but they still require improvement. Pupils' progress has not accelerated quickly enough.
- Progress for other pupils in the school is improving. Assessment information and work seen in pupils' books show that, across a range of subjects and year groups, progress for current pupils is more rapid. Challenging targets, committed leadership at all levels and improved teaching are beginning to secure better results.
- The attainment and progress made by disadvantaged pupils fell well below the national average in 2016. While progress of current disadvantaged pupils is improving, it is too variable. Differences in disadvantaged pupils' progress are, however, showing an improving picture over time. The most able disadvantaged pupils are now making more rapid progress than in previous years.
- Leaders' work to improve the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective for current pupils. The good support received by pupils is improving their progress. The progress of some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is hampered by poor attendance.
- The leadership of mathematics and English are bringing about demonstrable progress in provision which is no longer inadequate. Strong progress is less evident in science, where outcomes, work and teaching over time are still too variable.
- Progress tracking for current Year 7 pupils shows that pupils have made a strong start to secondary school. The vast majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are on track to meet age-related expectations across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils attending alternative provision generally make lower-than-average progress in their academic courses, but go on to gain places on college courses. This ensures that they continue with their education and/or training.
- Reading is promoted strongly by leaders. Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to read. Programmes to assist readers in improving their skills are effective. There is a growing culture of reading across the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance. Pupils experience a wide range of activities which prepares them very well for the next stages in their education, employment or training. The number of pupils leaving school without destinations is below national and local authority averages.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Too many students leave without achieving their potential. Entry requirements to courses have not been rigorous and targets not challenging enough. The new headteacher has set about improving policies and procedures with alacrity. As a result, students are now studying courses more suited to their needs. New assessment and target-setting procedures are having a positive effect on the progress of current

students.

- For students who begin their studies not having attained good GCSE grades in English or mathematics, the proportion who improve their grades is low.
- Due to ineffective guidance in the past, the proportion of students completing courses has been low, but is now improving. Outcomes for current Year 13 students are likely to still be variable, because some did not receive the appropriate guidance at the beginning of their studies.
- Leaders have ensured that the programmes of study for sixth form meet expectations. The curriculum is supplemented with a range of rich opportunities such as completion of the extended project qualification and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Students value these opportunities highly. Attitudes to learning in the sixth form are exceedingly positive.
- Work experience meets the minimum expected requirement. Leaders acknowledge the value of high-quality work experience and plan to extend this provision.
- Teaching, learning and assessment is too variable over time. Students make stronger progress over time when teachers' expectations are high and work is well planned to meet students' individual needs. As a result, students make relevant contributions to discussions, debates and written tasks and develop a deep understanding of the topic being studied.
- When teaching is weaker, assessment and feedback are not used as effectively to move learning on. As a result, progress slows for some students and they are not actively involved or engaged in their learning.
- Attendance is low. Leaders, historically, have not addressed this issue with enough urgency. The new headteacher is determined to improve provision and progress. Under his direction, new interventions have been introduced, which are having a positive impact on both outcomes and attendance.
- Leaders are ambitious and determined to arrest the downward slide in outcomes. They have improved information, advice and guidance, tightened up assessment procedures and are working effectively to improve the quality of teaching further. As a result, progress is rising for current students. Differences between the progress of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students are minimal.
- Preparation for further education, employment and training is a clear strength of the sixth form. Students are well prepared for their next steps through university visits, apprenticeship talks and developing links with local employers. Mentoring is targeted and effective. Staff know students well and work closely with them to guide them and support them when making important choices about their futures. Students are overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive.

School details

Unique reference number	135731
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10035644

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 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,059
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Lawrence
Headteacher	Mr M Paziuk
Telephone number	01928 564106
Website	www.st-chads.co.uk
Email address	admin@st-chads.halton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a slightly larger than average-sized secondary school for pupils from 11 to 18 years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average. A number of pupils are supported through the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in

line with the national average, but the proportion who have a statement and/or education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school currently uses the alternative provider 'The Bridge School' pupil referral unit to contribute to the education of a small number of pupils.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher from February 2016.
- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards for key stage 4, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects in different year groups. Some observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons, assemblies and other activities.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with pupils to listen to their views, both formally and informally.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, newly qualified teachers, groups of pupils and representatives from the governing body. Inspectors also spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority and from the diocese of Shrewsbury.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation that covered: information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan; minutes of meetings of the governing body and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaks, lunchtimes, in assemblies, in lessons, form times and at the end of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at a sample of their books, jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. Inspectors also took into account the 80 responses to a questionnaire for staff and the 44 responses to a questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Helen O'Neill, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Hampson	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Sibson	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector

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

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