

Holy Trinity Catholic Media Arts College

Oakley Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 0AX

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' GCSE results have improved considerably. All groups of students are making good progress, including those who qualify for the 'pupil premium' and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. This is because the school now has very good systems to monitor teaching and to help teachers to improve their practice.
- The school's strapline: 'Learn to love, love to learn' is an accurate reflection of students' positive attitudes to their learning and of the strength of the school community.
- Students, who come from a wide range of backgrounds, all feel safe and have a strong sense of community. Their behaviour has improved greatly over the past year and is now good.
- The school's senior leaders, led by an outstandingly able acting headteacher, have established a culture of continuous improvement. Subject leadership is now a strength of the school.
- The governing body has many new members and a new committee structure. It now provides clear and skilled strategic leadership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching still requires improvement.
- In some lessons the teacher talks for too long, so students are not active enough in their learning and do not get enough chance to develop their independence.
- The way subjects are planned does not always support teachers well enough. At times this limits students' opportunities to gain a full understanding and appreciation of the topics they are studying.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with a half-day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 27 lessons taught by 27 different teachers.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, teachers and students.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation and records including school self-evaluation, school plans, behaviour records, student assessment data and governing body minutes. They also scrutinised samples of work in English, mathematics and science.
- Inspectors examined 59 questionnaires submitted by staff, and 10 responses submitted by parents and carers to the on-line website Parent View.
- Inspectors also heard a small number of students read.

Inspection team

Robert Barbour, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Yasmin Bevan

Additional Inspector

Rena Saggi

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized comprehensive school.
- A high proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school receives specific 'pupil premium' funding based on this number.
- A high proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups. About a third are of Pakistani heritage, a sixth of Black Caribbean heritage and a tenth of White British heritage. The remainder are from a wide variety of heritage groups. A high proportion of students do not speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high. The proportion supported at school action is also high.
- The school makes use of a number of providers of alternative provision for a small number of students in Years 10 and 11. These are South and City College Birmingham, Archway Academy Independent School, Right Track, IMedia School and Birmingham City Football Club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that in more lessons:
 - there is an appropriate balance of activities between active learning and teacher talk
 - students are encouraged to develop as independent learners.
- Improve subject planning so that students gain an understanding at a deep and wide level and gain a greater appreciation of all the subjects they study.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students start at the school in Year 7 with attainment that is significantly below the national average. By Year 11 their results are broadly average. GCSE results improved sharply in 2012. The proportion of students gaining five grades A* to C including English and mathematics increased substantially. Students make good progress at the school.
- The school enters some groups of students early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics, but no students give up either of these subjects, and the most able students are not disadvantaged by this policy.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals, and so gaining funding for the school's allocation of the pupil premium, also make good progress. Their progress is significantly better than that of such students nationally, and the gap between their progress and that of other students is closing rapidly as measured by their average GCSE point scores. In 2012, by far the main increase in the proportion gaining five grades A* to C at GCSE was due to a sharp increase in the results for students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Disabled students, and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. Students who start the school with weak reading skills are well supported and make good progress.
- There is no difference in the progress made by students from different ethnic heritage groups. The school is a very cohesive community, regardless of faith background or ethnic heritage.
- Students enjoy their learning. They especially enjoy the range of educational visits and trips that are available. They also respond positively to opportunities to express themselves creatively in class. They respond well to the passion of some teachers for their subjects. Students' positive attitude to learning is a major factor in their success.
- A small number of students, currently 11, in Years 10 and 11 study an alternative curriculum that is adapted to their particular needs. Good links are maintained with the providers and the progress of these students is carefully tracked. These students value the opportunities available to them, and make good progress towards qualifications and in their personal development.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is improving steadily. During the inspection some outstandingly good teaching was observed. In these examples, teachers:
 - prepared interesting lessons that grabbed students' attention throughout the whole session
 - shared their passion for the subject so that students developed a deep understanding and love of their subject
 - asked searching questions to enable students to develop their understanding
 - helped students to develop the quality of their written work and encouraged the use of technical vocabulary
 - maintained a good balance between direct teaching and active learning
 - marked students' work helpfully and thoroughly
 - used information and communication technology to enrich their lessons with film, diagrams or pictures.

- In a sociology lesson in Year 10, a teacher was also outstandingly successful in making group work the key to students' learning. He maintained high expectations for the standard of learning and the participation of each student. Students were keenly aware of their roles in particular activities. Their understanding of the subject developed very well, and in parallel with this students practised and developed a range of wider skills in speaking, listening and interviewing.
- Teachers are successful in developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. This was apparent as a Year 9 science class discussed moral issues surrounding acid rain, and a religious education class discussed world religions.
- In some lessons learning was less successful. At times teachers spent too long in the direct teaching at the start of a lesson, causing students to lose interest. Sometimes students are not encouraged to develop as independent learners and they remain too dependent on their teacher.
- In some lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 teachers occasionally moved their students onto more demanding work before they had gained a full understanding and appreciation of earlier work. Their planning is not supported by sufficient guidance from the scheme of work. The outcome of this is that students' grasp of the topic is superficial, and they are not gaining a sufficiently deep appreciation of the subject.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students has improved enormously over the past year. This is because the school now has clear systems for managing poor behaviour and encouraging good behaviour that are followed by all staff. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen sharply, as has the number of internal referrals as a result of inappropriate behaviour.
- Students say they feel safe on the site and the school is a harmonious and friendly community, where bullying is rare. Students are confident that if an incident does occur, they know how to report it and the matter will be sorted quickly. Students understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when using the internet.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school has good systems for monitoring attendance and liaising quickly with families if any patterns of lower attendance emerge. Students are punctual to their lessons.
- Where teaching is outstanding, students' behaviour is immaculate and they are absorbed in their learning. When the teacher is talking for too long or not maintaining students' interest, some low-level inattention results. Teachers are skilled in managing behaviour and actual disruption is uncommon.

The leadership and management are good

- Since joining the school in September 2012, the acting headteacher has led the school outstandingly well. He has ensured that progress has been maintained and that all areas of the school's action plan move forward.
 - The wider senior leadership team is also effective. Subject leaders were not effective in their roles a year ago, but now they are a strength of the school. All leaders and all teachers now
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have a good understanding of the data relating to students' performance. This is used well to identify when students are falling behind and to make sure that they make up any lost ground.

- The leadership of teaching is very effective. Good systems now ensure that staff get the training they need, and teachers are coached towards ever better teaching.
 - The management of performance is also successful. Teachers can only progress beyond the main pay scale if clear targets for students' performance are met. This policy has been applied for several years with some teachers not progressing. In the past year the process has been made more rigorous as the targets have been made much more precise.
 - The school receives approximately £250,000 for pupil premium funding, designed to ensure that less socially advantaged students make equally good progress as others. The school's use of this funding has been well thought out. Some is used to directly support catch-up; some is used to enhance students' self-esteem. Students appreciate the support they have received.
 - The curriculum is improving. Progress in science had been impeded as the courses on offer in Years 10 and 11 have not been matched closely enough to students' abilities. Now that this has been changed, students are making much better progress. In some subjects the schemes of work are not providing sufficient support, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9, to enable teachers to develop students' depth of understanding and enjoyment of subjects.
 - All aspects of safeguarding are managed well.
 - The local authority views the school as one that is on a rapid journey of improvement. It has been very successful in supporting that improvement over the past year. Some of this support has been from its own personnel and some has been arranged through networks of school support.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Many new governors are now in post, and the governing body has completely changed its committee structure. The local authority has provided good training, and the governing body has undertaken an audit of its members' skills. The governing body now has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including in teaching. Its members ask perceptive questions that hold senior leaders to account. Its revised committee structure means that areas that previously escaped scrutiny are now fully explored. The governing body oversees the management of staff performance well, including that of the headteacher. Its members understand and scrutinise the allocation of resources, including the pupil premium funding, to check they are having the desired impact on students' achievement.
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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	103538
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	399637

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	576
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Holland
Headteacher	Martin Jones
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2012
Telephone number	0121 772 0184
Fax number	0121 771 9788
Email address	enquiry@holytrc.bham.sch.uk

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