

# Mount St Mary's Catholic High School

Ellerby Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS9 8LA

**Inspection dates** 5–6 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There is not enough good teaching and teaching is not yet good in all subjects. Students do not always have sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves and are not always given work which helps them to make the progress they should.
- Achievement varies too much. It is not yet consistently good across all subjects and particularly in English.
- The presentation and content of students' written work is weak in a number of subjects.
- Students do not always know how they can improve their work.
- In some lessons, teachers do not implement their plans to provide additional help to students who are making too little progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school's senior and subject leaders and the governing body have acted decisively so that teaching is improving strongly. They have involved all staff in improving teaching and achievement.
- The headteacher has maintained staff and students' morale, despite the major rebuilding programme and the actions needed to improve teaching.
- Achievement is good in some subjects, including science, modern languages and design and technology.
- Students' behaviour is good. Students are courteous and friendly.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong because the school promotes this very well.
- Students say that they feel safe because the school takes good care of them.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons of which a number were joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors examined information on students' performance for the school year 2011/12 and detailed information provided by the school on current learning and progress. They also looked at work in students' books.
- Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority, members of the governing body, staff and groups of students.
- Inspectors took into account 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team observed the school's work, examined minutes of governing body meetings and considered the school's own and external evaluations of its work.
- Records relating to attendance and behaviour, information on the quality of teaching and the setting of targets for teachers were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Thompson	Additional Inspector
Christine Kennedy	Additional Inspector
Steven Beverley	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is of a similar size to most secondary schools.
- The school has recently been through a period of extensive rebuilding and refurbishment.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel) is above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There is an above average proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages and who speak English as an additional language. Students come from a wide variety of different heritages and speak many different languages.
- A number of students attend off-site provision on a part-time basis, run by the Leeds Catholic Schools Partnership in conjunction with City of Leeds College. These programmes provide students with qualifications leading to further training or apprenticeships in different areas of work, including childcare, hair and beauty, construction and mechanics.
- 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 proportion of good teaching by:
  - providing work in all lessons which helps all students to make the progress they should
  - increasing the opportunities for students to find things out for themselves
  - using the information and approaches which have proved successful to date to ensure further sustained improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Increase students' achievement, particularly in English and in their written work, by:
  - improving the consistency and accuracy of marking so that students know how they can improve their work
  - ensuring that the approaches identified to increase the rate of progress of individual students are used consistently in lessons and that their effects are checked so that approaches can be adjusted accordingly
  - developing the quality of presentation and content of students' written work in all subjects

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, although improving, it is not yet consistently good across all subjects, and particularly in English.
- In GCSE examinations taken in 2012, the proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, dropped markedly when compared to previous years. A key reason for this was the sharp decline in the number of students gaining grades A\* to C in English. Although attainment in mathematics was below the national average in 2012, the school's results in this subject show some improvement over the last three years.
- Year 11 students in 2012 attained well in some subjects, including science, as did those who studied modern languages and design and technology.
- There is no evidence that students' performance has been adversely affected by early entry for GCSE examinations.
- The 2012 results also indicated that students had not made the good progress they should during their time in the school. This was most marked in English.
- Attainment on entry to the school is significantly below average in both English and mathematics, but irrespective of their starting points, students' progress through the school varies and is not yet consistently good in these subjects, particularly in English.
- Following the 2012 examination results, the school's leaders took decisive action to put things right. There are now better systems to track students' progress, with close checks on the progress of individuals, groups and classes in all subjects. This is starting to improve students' progress.
- Sometimes students do not make the progress they should in lessons because the work they are given is not adjusted to their needs or because they do not know how they can improve their work.
- Students' communication skills are good and their reading and mathematical skills are improving as a result of the school's effective approaches. For example, during registration the Year 10 'young leaders' work well with the Year 7 classes on mathematical activities. However, the overall presentation and content of students' written work remains weaker.
- Students with English as an additional language make good progress because of the support they receive. This is reflective of the school's good promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement in the same way that it does for all students. However, these students show marked gains in their confidence in learning because of the sensitive support they receive.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium did not do as well as other students in 2012. In both English and mathematics, their average attainment was the equivalent of one grade lower than that of other students. The current progress of these students is improving because of the careful checks that are made and the additional help which is provided.
- The progress of students targeted for the Year 7 catch-up programme is improving as a result of the carefully planned help they receive, particularly in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- The students who attend work-related training at places away from the school are gaining practical skills and a renewed interest and confidence in learning. This helps them to go on to further training or employment when they leave school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although much good or better teaching was seen during the inspection, there remains a significant proportion of teaching that requires improvement.
- Teaching in English particularly requires further improvement. Significant staff absence has

caused instability in the English department, so that the quality of teaching, although sometimes good, is too inconsistent to ensure students' good progress.

- Good teaching observed in mathematics revision lessons in Years 10 and 11 was successful in covering gaps in students' knowledge and in building confidence before the examinations.
- However, work in students' books in mathematics and in some other subjects, particularly in Years 8 and 9, is not always marked carefully enough, so that students remain unclear as to how they can improve their work, therefore limiting their progress.
- In some lessons, students do not have sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves, so that they are over-reliant on the teacher to tell them what to do.
- Where teaching is good, students are encouraged to talk about their learning and to work with others. The concerted focus on teaching reading, for example, through recent initiatives involving the entire school, has improved students' reading skills. Teachers in all subject areas have analysed how to teach writing more effectively, but have not yet adopted these ideas. Consequently, writing and presentation require further improvement.
- The school's system for tracking students' progress gives a clear picture of the progress of each student in every subject. Teachers receive this information regularly and use it to plan approaches to increase all students' progress, recording these in their lesson plans. Where teaching is good, the approaches are implemented consistently and with good effect in the classroom. However, where teaching requires improvement, not all students are given the work or additional help planned to make the progress they should.
- The teaching of disabled students, those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium is often effective when in small groups and with support from teaching assistants. However, in a significant proportion of lessons, teaching for these students shows the same variation as that for other students and also requires improvement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students' behaviour in lessons is good, even when they do not find the lesson very interesting.
- Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly and students arrive at most lessons on time despite the complex layout of the school's buildings. Students are courteous and friendly.
- Students say that they feel safe in school and that the school takes good care of them. They report that bullying and racial incidents are rare, but that if any do occur adults deal with it swiftly. Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and a secure understanding of how to stay safe.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs told inspectors that this a 'great' school and that they feel happy and safe.
- Of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire, all agree that their children are happy and safe at school.
- There are clear improvements over time in the behaviour of students with particular behavioural needs. The number of exclusions has shown a marked reduction over the last three years, as has the removal of students from lessons for unacceptable behaviour.
- Students' behaviour is managed well and students respond swiftly and politely to requests from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Attendance is slightly below average, but is improving each year due to the school's effective actions.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Despite the extended period of refurbishment and building work and the actions needed to tackle much of the underperformance in teaching, the headteacher has ensured that the morale of staff and students has remained high.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have also taken effective steps to improve students'

achievement, through improved checks on the progress that all students are making. They have identified accurately where further improvement is required.

- As part of the school's drive to improve the quality of teaching, considerable responsibility has been placed on subject leaders and upon every member of staff to improve teaching and achievement. Staff have responded vigorously to this challenge so that teaching is improving rapidly, but leaders and staff recognise that the changes have not yet brought about consistently good teaching and achievement.
- Senior leaders and governors have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching which is recorded in a variety of comprehensive and detailed forms. This information has been used very well to ensure that staff receive suitable support and training. However, this information is not yet gathered together in one place, or analysed systematically so that it can be used across the school to secure further sustained improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The range of subjects and experiences provided by the school are suitable to prepare students for further education and employment, but students' weaker skills in English and in writing place some limitations on this.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Students take good care of one another, are eager to take responsibilities, including as prefects or raising funds for charity. Students from a wide variety of backgrounds get on well together.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school works particularly well with other agencies to help students whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The local authority provides good support for the school. This has helped the school to identify accurately its strengths and areas for development and has helped senior and subject leaders to improve teaching and achievement to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good knowledge of the work of the school, its strengths and areas for development. This is informed by governors' visits to their 'linked' departments, by attendance at a wide range of school events and by meetings with students and staff. Governors ask a variety of pertinent questions and have supported the actions taken by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement. In recent months, governors have helped to ensure that only good or better teaching is rewarded with promotion or additional pay. They ensure that resources are used to improve students' experiences and achievement and have a good knowledge of the use of the pupil premium to provide additional teaching and support, checking whether it is closing the gap in attainment between those known to be eligible and other students. They recognise that this has yet to be achieved but that improvements are being made.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108097
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	412569

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	910
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cinta Culkin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Cooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2455248
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