

Our Lady and St Bede RC School

Bishopton Road West, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS19 0QH

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough teaching is good or better. Although it is improving, it is not improving fast enough to close gaps in students' skills and understanding. The quality of teaching still varies, and too many lessons require improvement.
- Progress is not rapid enough throughout the school, particularly for lower and middle ability students and for those supported by the pupil premium.
- Teachers do not always use the information gathered on students' progress and attainment to adapt the work in lessons in line with their ability levels. As a result it is sometimes too hard or too easy for students.
- Students are not provided with enough opportunities to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Although senior leaders recognise what needs to be done to improve the school, some of the initiatives are too recent to have yet made a significant difference. The way the school uses data to check progress does not always help to secure the rapid progress students should be making.
- The school's evaluation of its work is not accurate. It does not take enough account of the progress students are making.
- Teachers do not give students enough time to make improvements once they have marked their work.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to improve their literacy and numeracy skills through work in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have put the right systems in place to raise achievement in the school. Consequently, this is an improving school.
- Students behave well throughout the school. Their attitudes towards learning are good.
- There is strong support for students in the autistic support provision and, as a result, they make good progress.
- Students' personal development as future citizens is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has worked successfully to improve attendance, which is now average.
- The governing body has a secure knowledge of the school's main strengths and weaknesses.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 lessons and parts of lessons. Three observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and members of the leadership team. Together with three members of the leadership team, inspectors looked carefully at students' work.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, three groups of teaching staff, including middle leaders, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors spoke to many students in lessons and at breaks and during lunchtimes. They also listened to students read in Year 7 and spoke formally to two groups of students.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's own evaluation of its work; the school's data for tracking students' progress; the work students were doing in their books; the school's documentation relating to safeguarding; documents relating to the monitoring of the quality of teaching; and information about teachers' professional development.
- Inspectors took into account the responses of the school's own surveys, the 28 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View and 40 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Griffiths, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Angela James	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector
Barbara Waugh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady and St Bede RC School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those whose parents are in the forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most students are of White British heritage, although some minority ethnic groups are represented, the largest of which is students of Asian heritage. A few students speak English as an additional language and of these a small minority are at the early stages of learning the language.
- The proportion of students identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- There is a specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs.
- The school uses off-site educational providers from North East Training Association and the local authority. Twenty-two students attend for part of their education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - sharing the best practice that exists within the school more widely between subjects
 - ensuring that work in lessons is always appropriately challenging for all students of differing abilities, particularly for lower and middle ability students
 - ensuring marking and feedback to students are of a consistently good quality so they know exactly what they need to do to improve, with an expectation that they act on such advice.
- Improve students' achievement and raise attainment by:
 - ensuring that they make good progress in mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4
 - maintaining the current focus on accelerating the progress of students who are supported by the pupil premium
 - giving students more opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that the systems to track pupils' progress are more effective in helping to secure improvements in achievement
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels are equally rigorous in monitoring the quality of teaching and in making sure all staff consistently apply the school's systems and policies for improvement
 - ensuring that leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Despite improvements in 2013 in the number of students who attained five or more passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, too many students are not making the progress they should by the time they leave Year 11. There is too much variation in the progress of different groups of students across a number of subjects, particularly for lower and middle ability students.
- Standards in GCSE English and mathematics have risen. The progress students made in English in 2013 was good. Although achievement in mathematics is improving, it is not increasing at the same rate as English. In 2013, students' achievement across other GCSE subjects was very variable. Standards in additional science, core science and English language were ahead of those in other subjects. Standards in information technology and physical education were well below average.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to improve their reading, writing and, in particular, their mathematical skills by practising them in different subjects.
- The school's projections for 2014 indicate Year 11 students are likely to attain overall results which are in line with national averages and that the progress they make will improve.
- The achievement of the most able students is not good because, in some lessons, teachers are not using assessment information to move them on quickly in their learning. For example, in a sample of mathematics books looked at by inspectors, there was evidence that some students are often repeating the same calculation instead of being moved on to work that is more challenging.
- The school's tracking system shows that the majority of students are now making at least expected progress. However, there is inconsistency in the way this is being used by some teachers to set demanding targets. Data provided by the school show that progress for some students is not fast enough.
- Progress in lessons is inconsistent, particularly in Key Stage 3. In some lessons, the work is too hard for some or too easy for others. This means that the most able are not always fully challenged and students with weaker skills struggle to understand the work.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement because it is inconsistent. The school ensures that the complex needs of students with autism are well met and, as a result of the effective support they receive, they make good progress. The progress of students supported at school action, however, is weaker across the school.
- In 2013, students supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, attained almost two GCSE grades lower than their classmates did in both English and mathematics. Effective interventions introduced by leaders since September show that this is being tackled and that gaps in attainment are beginning to narrow.
- Those students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme receive additional support to improve their literacy skills. The school's data show that the gap between them and others in their year group is being reduced, particularly in English. During the inspection, weak readers read with confidence and explained that the support they receive is helping them to make progress and they now read for pleasure.
- Early entry was effectively used for some students in mathematics in 2013. The school currently does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students who attend courses away from school for part of their learning are well monitored to make sure they are benefitting from the provision and gaining qualifications. They achieve well and their attendance is carefully checked.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there is an increasing proportion of good and better teaching, there are still too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which are limiting the progress students make.
- Teachers generally plan lessons to make sure students are given work that will get the best out of them. However, students do not always make good progress in lessons because the work set for some is too hard, while for others it is too easy. For example, in an English lesson, some students found the prepared resources too difficult to read and work for the most able lacked challenge. As a result, students' progress was not good.
- Marking has improved across the school. It frequently provides clear advice on the next steps in learning, which encourages students to respond and improve their own work. However, students are not always given the time needed to follow the advice given by the teacher.
- Some teaching is good. Some teachers use their assessments of how well students are getting on in lessons to ensure they get the support they need to achieve well. For example, in a Year 10 art lesson, students were designing a final piece of work for assessment and they were observed setting themselves a target at the beginning of the lesson and planning how they were going to achieve it. They made good progress because the teacher then provided them with detailed feedback on how to improve their work.
- Similarly, some teachers have high expectations of their students and set varied and challenging tasks which engage and capture their attention. In a Year 7 geography lesson on waterfalls, the teacher used exciting resources which prompted students to work out together how waterfalls are formed. They worked with enthusiasm and, because of the teacher's timely support, they made good progress.
- The skills of the classroom assistants are used well to support those who may be struggling, particularly those with special educational needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Parents, staff and students are positive about behaviour in lessons and around the school. Students move around the school calmly and are polite and helpful to each other. This is underpinned by the school's Christian ethos which places a high emphasis on mutual care and respect. Behaviour is well led and managed throughout the school.
- Students have good attitudes to learning; they work well independently and with others and strive to do their best. They arrive promptly to lessons and are very quick to settle. Students are well prepared, bring the right equipment and are eager to learn. As a result of this, the majority of lessons flow smoothly without interruption.
- The recently introduced IBEDE (I Believe Effort Deserves Reward) system is well received by students who strive to achieve the rewards. This is having a very positive impact on behaviour, attendance and punctuality.
- Students are proud of their school. They take care of the buildings and grounds, which are free from litter and graffiti, and they enjoy wearing the school uniform which they helped to design. There is good adult presence around the school at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Attendance is rapidly improving as a result of the effective systems in place for checking on absence and intervening to support students and their families. Attendance is now average and the rates of persistence absence have reduced.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Inspectors interviewed many groups of students during the inspection and they say they are happy and feel safe in school. Students say that bullying is extremely rare and, if it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by caring staff. Parents agree that the school deals with bullying effectively. Students understand the potential risks of alcohol, drugs and the internet.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although school leaders show great determination in driving forward improvement, leadership

and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is not good and students are not making sufficient progress, particularly lower and middle ability students.

- Some subject leaders have yet to develop their leadership skills sufficiently in order to be fully effective in helping to raise standards. As a result of this, there are inconsistencies in what teachers expect students to achieve in lessons.
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning is focused on how best to tackle underperformance. However, self-evaluation requires to be further sharpened so as to give a more direct message about underperformance, how that underperformance is being tackled and the success measures used to judge the process.
- As a result of this, leaders do not always have an accurate view of how well the school is doing. For example, the system to check the quality of teaching does not focus sharply enough on the progress students make in lessons or over time when judging their improvement. The school has an inaccurate view of how much good and outstanding teaching there is in the school.
- Teachers enjoy the training they receive and say that it is helping them to improve the quality of their teaching. They say the most effective training is when they learn from the best practice in the school and they would welcome more opportunities to do this.
- The school uses appropriate systems to manage teachers' performance, and clearly links their performance to decisions about their pay.
- The school now has a strong focus on improving the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium. As a result of the strong leadership provided, there are effective systems in place to support students to make more rapid progress. For example, the funding has been used to create smaller classes in English and mathematics so that teachers can provide students with more individual support. There are good systems in place to check that this is making a difference in raising achievement.
- The school provides high-quality care for students with autism. Learning support assistants are well trained, dedicated and skilled. As a result of this the base is preparing autistic students extremely well for the next step in their education. Leaders and managers, however, are not tracking the progress of other disabled students or those with special educational needs, particularly those supported at school action, well enough. Currently, there is an inconsistent focus on ensuring that all identified students make good progress.
- The curriculum is kept under review to make sure it meets students' needs. There is a wide range of activities that promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school runs a large number of external trips and visits which provide memorable experiences for students.
- The local authority has worked in close partnership with the school, providing effective support where issues and concerns have been raised.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and know what still needs to be improved. They are increasingly challenging leaders and managers and play their part in ensuring that standards are continuing to improve.
 - They have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing with examination results in relation to national averages and they recognise that the progress students make is not yet rapid enough.
 - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching but they are less knowledgeable on salary progressions and promotions.
 - They can explain how they know that the school uses its pupil premium funding effectively, and they have a good understanding of the way managers are now doing all they can to close gaps in performance between groups of students or 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	111758
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	430935

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	700
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Roberts
Headteacher	John Smith
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2012
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