

# Our Lady and St John Catholic College

North Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 1PY

**Inspection dates** 26–27 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. From their starting points in Year 7, students do not make sufficient progress in a wide range of subjects including mathematics. Too few students reach the higher levels of attainment in any subject at GCSE level.
- Teaching over time is inadequate because it has consistently failed to enable students to make sufficient progress.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve. They do not challenge students to complete work to the best of their ability or to present their work well.
- Teachers do not use information about how well students are achieving to provide activities in lessons which enables them all to make at least good progress. Teachers' marking does not consistently help students to improve their work.
- Behaviour is inadequate. Students do not show enough respect for the school environment or their teachers and do not take enough pride in their work. Outside of lessons, some students are unable to manage their behaviour well, or show respect for fellow students.
- Despite improvements attendance is too low. Too many students are persistently absent.
- Senior leaders and governors have failed to bring about the required improvements in teaching and achievement swiftly enough. As a result performance has declined since the last inspection. Leaders do not have an accurate view of how well the school is performing. They do not monitor the work of the school rigorously enough or have a precise enough understanding of what actions are needed to make improvements.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not make enough progress in English and mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students in the resourced provision make good progress because they are supported well.
- The school provides students with a wide range of enrichment activities which support their spiritual and cultural development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 32 lessons taught by 32 different teachers. Two of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed students' behaviour around the school as well as in lessons. They talked to students informally about their learning, as well as holding more formal meetings with groups of students from each key stage.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the teaching staff, representatives from the local authority and the governing body.
- The views of 13 parents who responded to the online parental questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. In addition, inspectors reviewed questionnaires from parents who had submitted their responses on paper.
- The views of 51 members of staff who responded to a staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspection team examined a range of documentation, including data about students' achievement from internal tracking systems and analysis provided by school leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' monitoring records, including minutes of meetings and information provided relating to attendance, safeguarding and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Christine Birchall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Pauline Pitman	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- Our Lady and St John Catholic College is an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students who are from White British backgrounds is lower than average, with the remainder of students being mainly of Pakistani or Indian heritage.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium funding is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, the children of service families, and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of students who are supported at school action, school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs are higher than the national averages.
- The school makes alternative provision for a small number of students at the local authority pupil referral unit, the 'Year 11 Project' at Blackburn College and The Heights.
- The school has a resourced provision for 13 students with autism.
- The school has a small sixth form with 30 students currently on roll. It offers a small number of vocational courses.
- There has been significant disruption to the school due to changing premises twice while waiting for a new building this term.
- School leaders have been receiving support from a National Leader in Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in all subjects, especially mathematics, humanities and languages, to be consistently good or better, and hence raise the achievement of all students to be at least good or better, by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching
  - ensuring that all teachers use information about how well students are achieving to set work that challenges all abilities, particularly the most able
  - ensuring that feedback to students and marking of their work consistently provides them with clear guidance about what they need to do to improve
  - ensuring that all teachers consistently follow the school policy for literacy, correcting basic spelling and grammar errors, and challenging students to communicate their ideas clearly in writing
  - ensuring that mathematics teaching develops students' understanding of mathematical concepts and gives them opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to real life situations
  - ensuring that humanities teachers provide opportunities for students to analyse and evaluate information, so that they are able to reach the higher levels of attainment
  - ensuring that languages teachers give students sufficient opportunities to speak the language

and practise using new vocabulary

- ensuring that the teaching of English and mathematics in the sixth form is as good as the teaching in the vocational subjects.

■ Improve behaviour across the school, by:

- ensuring that students take responsibility for their own behaviour when they are unsupervised at breaks and lunchtimes, and that they show respect for each other, their teachers and the school environment
- challenging students in lessons to take pride in their work and do their best at all times
- improving attendance and reducing the proportion of students who are persistently absent
- ensuring that the school’s behaviour-management strategies are consistently and effectively applied by all teachers
- taking steps to ensure that there is a harmonious community where students from different cultures and backgrounds interact well with each other.

■ Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, so that leaders are able to raise achievement, improve the quality of teaching and improve behaviour, by:

- raising teachers’ expectations for what students can achieve
- setting challenging targets for students’ progress
- ensuring that the systems for checking how well the school is performing are robust, and based on a wide range of evidence
- ensuring that leaders have clear action plans to bring about improvements, and that they regularly check whether the actions are having the required impact
- ensuring that senior leaders are rigorous in holding middle leaders to account for the progress of students in their subjects
- systematically sharing the good practice which exists in the school
- ensuring all staff follow and support rigorously the school’s behaviour management strategies.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students' attainment overall is well-below national averages when they start school in Year 7. However, from their starting points, students do not make enough progress in a number of subjects including mathematics, languages and humanities. The gaps between their attainment and the attainment of students nationally are not closing rapidly enough; consequently, achievement is inadequate.
- School leaders have concentrated on increasing the proportions of students who gain grade C in GCSE examinations in mathematics and English. They have not set challenging enough targets for students' achievement based on their individual starting points, and they have not analysed progress at all in subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result teachers do not set work which is challenging enough for the most able, and too few of those students attain the highest grades at GCSE in any subject.
- Despite the fact that in 2013 most predictions for how well students would achieve were over-optimistic, leaders have not taken steps to ensure that teachers' assessments this year are more accurate. As a result, though they are confident that results will improve in 2014, the evidence for this is unconvincing. There is also little evidence that any improvement will be sustained, because the school's own data shows that a significant number of students currently in Year 10 and Key Stage 3 are achieving well below their targets in a number of subjects.
- Work in students' books in a number of subjects indicates that they are underachieving. Although a school literacy policy is in place, too few teachers challenge and correct students' literacy errors, and this means that even the most able struggle to communicate their ideas clearly and convincingly. There is evidence that the Year 7 catch-up funding is increasing the reading ages of those targeted students, but across the school generally students' reading skills are variable, and opportunities are missed to promote reading across the curriculum.
- In many cases in mathematics, although students are able to apply the formulae which they have been taught, they do not understand the mathematical concepts behind the methods they are using. This means that even when they are given opportunities to apply their skills to real life situations and problems, they do not always have the understanding to do so.
- Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals do not make enough progress. Gaps between the attainment of these students and those who are not eligible for free school meals in English and mathematics widened in 2013. Though the school's data suggests that gaps may be closing for students currently in school, it is inconsistent, and those students who are supported by pupil premium funding typically attain between half and two thirds of a grade lower in GCSE examinations than those who are not.
- There has been no early entry to GCSE examinations in mathematics this year; and in English, leaders have entered only a very small number of students (16) whom it was felt would benefit from a final opportunity to take the speaking and listening component of the examination. This was an appropriate action and has not had a negative impact on students' achievement.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds do not make enough progress. The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs requires improvement overall. Those in the resourced provision and alternative provision achieve well, because they benefit from well-targeted support, which is closely monitored to check that it is working. However, for others their progress is better when they have individual support than it is in the classroom.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Although the small number of vocational courses is entirely appropriate and meets the needs of the students well, too few students achieve in English and mathematics. As with students in the lower year groups, students struggle to communicate their ideas clearly and teachers miss opportunities to correct basic spelling and grammar errors.

**The quality of teaching is inadequate**

- Teaching over time is inadequate because it has failed to enable enough students to make good progress across too wide a range of subjects. A scrutiny of students' work confirms that teachers do not consistently provide activities which meet the needs of all abilities and enable them all to make good progress.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve. Although students' work is assessed, assessments are not always accurate and teachers do not use their findings about how well students are learning to set activities which enable them all to make good progress. When students fall behind, there is too much emphasis on providing additional catch-up activities outside lessons in Year 11, rather than making sure that teaching enables students to make good progress within lessons.
- In a number of lessons, particularly humanities, teachers provide students with basic factual knowledge ('the story'), but do not provide them with sufficient opportunities to analyse or evaluate the information. This prevents students from being able to reach the highest levels of attainment. In languages, students are not given sufficient opportunity to speak the language and therefore are unsure of the vocabulary and pronunciation.
- Teachers miss opportunities to enable students to develop their reading and writing skills outside English lessons, or their numeracy skills outside mathematics.
- Marking and feedback do not consistently provide students with clear and precise information about what they need to do to improve their work. Nor are there enough opportunities for students to respond to teachers' marking and to use the guidance they receive to improve individual pieces of work. Teachers do not challenge students to do their best work and make vague positive comments such as 'good work', even when the student is working well below their target level.
- Teachers do not always ensure that additional adults in the classroom are used effectively to support students' progress. Teaching in the sixth form enables students to make good progress in vocational subjects but not in English and mathematics, because students are not motivated to see the importance of developing their English and mathematical skills.
- Where teaching is most effective and has the greatest impact on students' achievement teachers ask good questions to probe students' understanding and check misconceptions. They provide constructive feedback and give students the opportunity to improve their work. They have a good understanding of students' abilities and provide the right level of challenge and support in lessons to ensure that all students make good progress. However, this good practice is not shared widely enough across the school.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. In too many lessons, students do not have positive attitudes to their learning. This means that they do not work as hard as they could, or make sure that they complete work and present it neatly and with pride.
- Between lessons and at break times a significant number of students do not treat others with respect. They do not move aside or show consideration for others in crowded areas, and language is frequently inappropriate. When such behaviour is challenged by teachers, students do not immediately do as they are told and occasionally respond in an inappropriate fashion, such as mimicking the teacher. Students talk of groups, or 'cliques' of students who get together to cause problems.
- Although classrooms are tidy, students show a lack of respect for the rest of the school environment. They drop litter and do not care that someone else will have to clear it up after them.
- Inspectors were approached by a number of groups of students who said that 'there was a lot going on under the surface of the school'. They talked of racism within the school and felt that leaders did not do enough to promote cohesion and harmony within the school community.

Inspectors noted that there was relatively little evidence of students from different cultures and heritages mixing together. Racist incident logs indicate that there has been a recent increase in the number of racist incidents in school.

- Although the number of behaviour incidents and 'on-calls' from lessons (when teachers request to have students removed for poor behaviour) have been reduced, there is still evidence of a high number of incidents, including bullying, in particular year groups. Students report that it is not uncommon to hear homophobic language around the school
- Although most feedback from most parents was positive about the school, a number expressed doubt that behaviour is as good as it should be. A number of staff who completed the questionnaire also felt that behaviour within the school needed to be improved.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure within school requires improvement. All safeguarding requirements are met, the site is secure and students report that they are taught how to keep themselves safe, particularly with regard to e-safety. However, despite some recent improvements, attendance is still below national average. A significant number of students are still persistently absent, and a disproportionate number of these students come from particular groups, such as those supported by the pupil premium. The range of strategies which leaders have tried to reduce persistent absence have not had a sustained effect.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leaders have failed to bring about the necessary improvements in teaching and achievement and, as a result, the school's performance has declined since the previous inspection. This is because their monitoring activities are not rigorous enough and do not take into account a broad enough range of evidence. For example, when they are evaluating the quality of teaching, they do not look closely enough at work in students' books over time. As a result their judgements about the quality of teaching and how well the school is performing are inaccurate and over-optimistic.
- Leaders have focused almost exclusively on attainment in English and mathematics, and have therefore not paid sufficient regard to the progress that students make from their individual starting points in these and other subjects. As a result students' inadequate progress has not been identified and outcomes in a number of subjects have been too low for too long and are not improving rapidly enough.
- Targets which are set for students' progress are not ambitious enough. The school produces large amounts of data to track students' work, but does not analyse it sufficiently well to identify underachievement quickly enough. As a result there is heavy reliance on student catch-up programmes in Year 11, even though the data is showing that a significant number of students are already underachieving in Years 7 to 9.
- Although teachers' predictions last year for how well students were achieving were inaccurate, leaders have not taken any steps to ensure that they will be more accurate this year, for example, by moderating samples of work with other schools.
- Leaders have been unable to identify appropriate priorities to bring about improvements. Although there is a whole-school action plan and departmental action plans, they all have too many priorities and many of them are too vague. As a result actions are not precise enough to bring about improvements. Criteria for measuring whether actions are working are not precise enough and timescales for monitoring are too infrequent. Consequently, leaders are not able to check whether actions are working.
- Senior leaders are not challenging enough in holding middle leaders, such as subject leaders, to account for improvements in their areas of responsibility. This is because they do not have high-enough expectations and do not take into account information about how well students are achieving when challenging middle leaders about the quality of teaching in their departments.
- Although targets are set for teachers' performance management, they are not always linked clearly to challenging progress targets for students. Leaders provided training to staff to support them with improving their teaching, and teachers speak warmly of this. However, this training is

not always precisely suited to the individual needs of each teacher and the impact is not monitored closely enough.

- The school provides a broad range of enrichment activities which enhance the curriculum and promote the spiritual and cultural development of the students. For example, during the inspection, the school held a personal, social, health and citizenship day, in which students had access to outside speakers and covered a range of issues such as human rights, safety and health. Students speak positively of the range of clubs and after-school activities which are available to them.
- The promotion of equal opportunities in the school is inadequate because too few groups of students make good progress and achieve well. Leaders are not taking sufficient steps to promote harmony within the school community and some students feel that they do not tackle discrimination effectively enough. Senior and middle leaders have not secured good enough behaviour across the school.
- The local authority identified the school as causing concern, and brokered support through a partner school led by a National Leader of Education. This support identified many of the issues which were evident during the inspection, and helped to create systems to address them, such as strategies for monitoring teaching and using student data to identify underachievement. However, once that support was withdrawn, school leaders were unable to continue and embed the systems on their own.
- Newly-qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors do not have sufficient knowledge or accurate enough information about how well the school is performing to hold leaders to account, because they rely heavily on what school leaders are telling them. Although there used to be links between governors and school departments, these have not been maintained. Governors do not have information about performance-management targets and training for teachers, and are therefore not able to check the impact on improving teaching. However, they check that there is a link between teacher performance and pay progression. Although they know how pupil premium funding is spent, they do not know whether it is closing the achievement gaps within the school. Governors take all necessary steps to ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. There is a link safety governor, who has undertaken up-to-date safer recruitment training, and who regularly receives updates on systems for supporting vulnerable and at risk students.

## 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>	119790
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	426191

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>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	857
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jude Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Ballard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 588388
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