

Mount St Joseph: Business and Enterprise College

Greenland Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire, BL4 0HU

Inspection dates 11–12 February and 16 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The achievement of students is good with students making rapid gains from low starting points.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding.
- Achievement in English is outstanding.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They work hard and support each other.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average for secondary schools.
- The school's work to ensure that students are safe and secure is outstanding.
- The alternative provision for older students makes a strong contribution to the achievement of the students involved.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The headteacher and other leaders are passionate about the care for and success of students.
- Staff strongly support school leaders.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school.
- Parents are very positive about the work of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able students do not consistently achieve as much as they could.
- Gaps between the achievement of students entitled to the pupil premium and others in the school are not closing over time and have increased in mathematics.
- In lessons, teachers do not always respond effectively to students' different levels of understanding.
- Teachers' marking varies in quality and on occasions does not always help students to reflect on their work, or know how best to improve it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 lessons taught by 39 teachers including two joint observations with senior leaders. They examined students’ work in lessons. They visited form groups and observed other activities during morning form and assembly time.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and the special educational needs coordinator. They met with groups of students and talked with others in lessons and around the school.
- Documents were examined including the school’s self-evaluation information, improvement plan, safeguarding records, governing body minutes and data relating to students’ achievement.
- Meetings were held with a group of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed 39 responses to Parent View, which is the Ofsted on-line questionnaire. The school’s own parental surveys were examined along with 41 staff questionnaire returns.
- Year 10 students were not in school during the inspection. They were undertaking work experience.

Inspection team

David Selby, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Paul Chambers

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Mark Shenton

Additional Inspector

Jonathan Woodyatt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- Thirty-four students in Years 10 and 11 attend off-site, alternative provision, part-time at Bolton College, Bolton WISE, DBBC, Total Fitness and Training4Today. Two students in Year 9 attend such provision at Raise the Youth.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium¹ is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students that the school has identified as disabled or having special educational needs and requiring support through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and most of these students speak English as an additional language.
- The headteacher is supporting a headteacher in a nearby school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the achievement of the most able students and close the gaps in achievement between those supported by the pupil premium and others in the school.
- Improve teaching further so that it is consistently good and with much that is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the strongest practice in the school is fully implemented by all teachers
 - all teachers respond effectively to students' different levels of understanding in lessons
 - marking and feedback to students are consistently good or better.

The pupil premium is specific, additional funding provided to support the education of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years, children who have been looked after continuously for a period of 6 months and children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- While there are considerable strengths in the achievement of students, this is not outstanding because it is not consistently high for the most able students. Also, gaps between the achievement of students entitled to the pupil premium and others are not closing over time and have increased in mathematics. Achievement in different subjects is not consistent.
- Students enter the school with attainment that is well below the national average and with low levels of literacy. By the end of Year 11 the proportion of students gaining at least five GCSEs at grade C or above including English and mathematics is well above the national average.
- Students' attainment and progress in English are very strong. The school acts very effectively to ensure that the levels of students' literacy increases. Achievement in English is outstanding.
- Over the last three years, the most able students have made less progress than others. When compared to similar students nationally, the success of higher-attaining students in their best eight GCSE passes is below that of others, whereas middle- and lower-attaining students make much more rapid progress.
- In 2013, the proportion of more able students making or exceeding the nationally expected level of progress in mathematics is less than expected.
- In 2013, a much lower proportion of students gained A* and A grades at GCSE in science and mathematics than found nationally. Overall attainment in mathematics measured by the points scores students achieve has declined relative to the national average over the last three years. While school scores have remained the same, national average scores have increased.
- The proportion of students gaining GCSE grades from A* to C is above or matches that in other schools in almost all subjects.
- Over time, rates of progress in science have increased and now match the national average. While more students are entered for GCSEs in humanities and modern languages, progress in these subjects has slowed.
- The school's own data indicate that achievement at GCSE will rise in 2014, particularly for more able students. Inspectors observed good or better progress in the large majority of lessons visited.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium achieve well when compared to similar pupils nationally although they were behind their peers in school by approximately three-quarters of a GCSE grade in English and a full grade in mathematics in 2013. These gaps increased from 2012 to 2013. While the proportions of students supported by the pupil premium and of others making expected progress in English and in mathematics are above the national average, the gap between these groups in school has not closed in English and has risen in mathematics. More able students supported by the pupil premium make relatively less progress.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs have similar achievement to other students. Care is taken to ensure that they learn quickly from when they join the school and good support means that this continues.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in a large majority of lessons is good or better. Over time this has led to strong achievement for most students.
- Teachers are well prepared and lessons are planned in detail. There is a consistent approach to teaching which leads to good learning because students know what to expect. Where teaching is strongest, teachers confidently adapt their plans to respond to students' different levels of understanding. Conversely, where teaching is less effective, tight adherence to prepared plans restricts learning for groups of students of different abilities. Although good overall, teaching has not closed the gaps in achievement for all groups of students.

- Relationships between teachers and students are good. Good learning is recognised and encouraged by the use of rewards.
- Teachers observe each other's work as part of the systematic approach to improving teaching. Along with regular training this ensures teachers have a common understanding of what is expected of them. They have a good knowledge of a range of strategies to help students learn.
- Marking is inconsistent. The best marking encourages students to review their work and think about how they can improve. However, this is not seen in all books. Students' spelling, punctuation and grammar are rarely corrected and there is little impact on learning.
- Many lessons support the development of students' literacy skills. This leads to improvement in students' writing although sometimes students are not given opportunities to develop their reading. Additional lessons to help students to catch up with others are effective and use a combination of teaching from teachers and support from other students. Students describe how these sessions help them to make rapid progress.
- The use and development of students' numeracy skills across subjects other than mathematics is rare.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. They are keen to learn, work hard and work together well. They respond well to good teaching and learn rapidly. Conversely, on the less-frequent occasions where teaching does not challenge them, some students lose interest and do not pay full attention to the tasks expected.
- Attendance is increasing. The school's records indicate that it is now above the national average. Punctuality to lessons is good.
- There have been no permanent exclusions over recent years. Fixed-term exclusion is reducing and is below the national average.
- The school's records of incidents of poor behaviour are detailed and indicate that bullying is rare, racist incidents are very rare and that no homophobic incidents have been reported over the last two school years. Students say that any racism is dealt with extremely seriously although some commented that homophobic language was heard but not near teachers.
- The students' behaviour seen by inspectors around the school was almost always very good whether teachers were present or not. This reflects the positive ethos of the school.
- Almost all students are friendly and welcoming. Occasional comments from students to inspectors did not follow the school's code of behaviour.
- While a relatively small number of responses to Parent View were recorded, those received indicated that the very large majority of parents agree or strongly agree that behaviour in the school is good. This matches the conclusions from the school's own surveys.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. No incidents that indicate students may be unsafe were seen in lessons or around the school. Students say they feel safe and no parent completing the Parent View survey disagreed. Students are aware of ways they can keep themselves safe when using electronic communication.
- Arrangements for ensuring the safety of students attending placements out of school are thorough. Students spoken to who are involved are confident that they are safe.
- Systems and procedures for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and other leaders demonstrate a clear determination to further improve the school. They have a passionate commitment to care for and achieve the best for the students. They are strongly supported by the highly professional staff team.
- The school is well organised and its day-to-day management is highly effective.

- Leaders closely monitor the achievement of students. Data are used to plan for improvement; for example, in planning how any students at risk of falling behind can be kept on track through specially planned work in class or extra teaching. The impact of actions taken is checked and plans adjusted if needed. In the past, actions taken have not closed the gap in achievement between more able students and others.
- The systems for improving teaching and learning are well established. Commercially produced materials are adapted to ensure they match the needs of the school and the expertise of groups of teachers used to make sure improvement happens. Lesson observation is used by leaders to monitor teachers' effectiveness and to share good practice. Teaching is improving.
- When less-strong areas of school performance are identified, actions are taken to ensure these improve. For example, a leader has recently been appointed to ensure that provision for the most able students is as good as possible. Leaders have secured improvement. For example, attendance has risen and the relatively new house system has improved the care and support of students.
- Students supported by the pupil premium achieve very well compared to similar students nationally but the additional funding has not had a consistent impact on closing gaps in achievement in the school. The additional funding has funded smaller classes for Key Stage 4 English and mathematics. The funding available to help Year 7 students catch up has been used to help potentially vulnerable students to settle quickly. School records show that reading scores have risen.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of students. The choice of subjects available to students is wide. The well-organised alternative provision strongly supports the wider success of the students involved. Advice and guidance to students occur at key points in school life and include work experience for students in Year 10.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Students reflect on their own and others' beliefs in religious education and assemblies. Effective citizenship work with a Year 7 form group helped students understand their role in society through taking part in a mock election. Students help each other through peer mentoring and the prefect system. Students have opportunities to take part in a wide range of artistic, cultural and sporting activities.
- The school provides support to other schools. The headteacher is mentoring the new headteacher of a local school and the strong practice in English is being shared.
- Parents who have responded to Parent View and the school's own surveys are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors use their good understanding of the school to provide support and challenge to leaders. They know about the achievement of students in the school and where teaching is strong or less so. They work with the headteacher to ensure that pay rises are linked to teachers' performance.
 - Governors have successfully supported the school through a period of financial challenge, eliminating a budget deficit at the same time as students' attainment has risen.
 - Governors know how the school uses the pupil premium but are less clear about its impact on closing gaps in achievement.

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	105263
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	440717

This inspection 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	887
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Waldron MBE
Headteacher	Paul Roach
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2011
Telephone number	01204 391800
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