

Mount St Mary's Catholic High School

Ellerby Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS9 8LA

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' achievement in mathematics and a range of other subjects requires improvement. Across the school, students make the progress expected of them but too few do better than this.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make less progress than their classmates.
- The progress being made by disadvantaged students in mathematics is not improving quickly enough to match that of others in the school. Consequently, attainment gaps are not closing.
- The quality of teaching is variable and requires improvement. Work set is not consistently well developed to meet the needs and abilities of all students. Therefore, students are not making good progress.
- Students' behaviour requires improvement because when teaching is not good, they do not contribute well enough to their learning. The attendance of White British students is below average.
- Subject leaders have not always had high expectations or been thorough in checking the quality of teaching to ensure that all groups of students achieve well. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress made by students is inconsistent.
- Since the last inspection, the actions of leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that the quality of teaching and students' achievement are consistently good. Hence, the overall effectiveness of the school requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- There is good teaching in the school and where this happens students make good progress and learn well.
- Personal development is promoted strongly through the curriculum. There are highly effective experiences throughout the curriculum that develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- Around the school, students and staff treat each other with dignity and respect. This leads to the many different ethnic groups in school forming a harmonious community.
- Safety is good. Students say they are safe in school and well cared for. Parents and staff agree with this.
- There are clear improvements in students' achievement in English because of the actions of leaders to improve teaching.
- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for students. They have increased support and challenge to improve the quality of teaching and leadership across the school. The quality of governance in holding the school more rigorously to account is improving securely.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons. Five observations were undertaken jointly with leaders of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in the school. An inspector also listened to some students reading and briefly observed the teaching of students whose first language is not English.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. They also met with school staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, school policies and the minutes of the governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed students' work in lessons and analysed samples of students' books.
- Inspectors evaluated 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also analysed responses to a school questionnaire completed by parents.
- Inspectors analysed 62 inspection questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Pridding	Additional Inspector
Steven Goldsmith	Additional Inspector
John Ashley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Although the majority of students are White British, the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well above average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- There are nine alternative providers used by the school. A few students from Year 9 to 11 work off-site for one day each week at Leeds City College, Leeds College of Building, TLC North, The Beck, Nacro, Involve, Hunslet Rugby League Club and Skills4U. A very small number of students attend full-time, alternative provision at the Catholic Offsite Student Provision (COSP).
- The school holds the Safemark award and the Stephen Lawrence Education Standard award.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good, especially in mathematics, in order to ensure good progress for all groups of students, by:
 - matching work precisely to the needs and abilities of students so that they all make good progress
 - having high expectations of what all groups of students can produce in their work
 - making sure that the most able students quickly engage with challenging tasks to reach the highest standards
 - ensuring that students have more opportunities to write extensively and apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects
 - planning effectively to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs so that they make good progress
 - ensuring that all students are engaged in their learning at all times so that all make rapid progress.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good across all subjects and within all subjects
 - all subject leaders have high expectations and are thorough in checking the quality of teaching in their areas to ensure that it is consistently good or better
 - subject leaders check that all students are making good progress
 - the additional government funding to support disadvantaged students is used more effectively quickly to improve the progress of disadvantaged students in mathematics
 - the attendance of White British students improves to at least average.

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 management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Over time, leaders and managers throughout the school have not ensured that all groups of students achieve as well as they should. Their work has not strengthened the quality of teaching sufficiently to ensure that it is consistently good across the school.
- The additional government funding to support disadvantaged students has not been used well enough to secure swift progress in mathematics to close attainment gaps. In English, leader's work is helping these students to improve because of better targeted support and more effective teaching.
- Most leaders and managers, including governors, have high expectations and aspirations for all students. However, this is not universal across the school: some middle leaders and staff do not have high enough expectations of students. As a result, the checking of the quality of teaching and students' progress has not been thorough and consistent enough to strengthen progress for all groups of students.
- Senior leaders and governors have a good grasp of the strengths and the areas for improvement across the school. They are rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and middle leadership to ensure that all students can achieve well.
- Performance management for teachers is thorough and is identifying the skills that teachers and leaders need to improve. The headteacher has increased the support for teachers and leaders through the use of coaching and external support brokered by himself and the local authority. Senior leaders are challenging underachievement and taking appropriate action when teaching and leadership falls short of what is expected. Training to improve aspects of teaching is having a positive impact as is clear from the signs of improvement in students' progress, particularly in English, but it has not ensured that teaching is consistently good across the school.
- A performance review system is in place for all employees in the school. It supports their development and career aspirations. This is a good example of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The inspection questionnaires returned by staff show that staff are proud to be members of the school. They are appreciative of the support they are getting to improve the quality of teaching and help students do better.
- Leaders have ensured that off-site and alternative provision is well organised. They have good links that make sure students' achievement is checked regularly, students are safe and they behave well.
- Leaders ensure that there are good arrangements for safeguarding and child protection which meet statutory requirements. Staff are appropriately trained and vigilant in ensuring students' safety. Leaders work well with other agencies in the local authority and the diocese to ensure that vulnerable students are well cared for and supported. Governors check the effectiveness of procedures with school leaders.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of subjects for students with a good emphasis on developing reading skills. All students in the school participate in well-structured careers guidance which contains work experience, interview training with employers from businesses in Leeds and visits to local universities and colleges. Almost all students who left Year 11 in 2014 went on to education, training or employment. However, over time, the curriculum has not been effective in ensuring that good progress is made by all groups of students.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. In this multicultural school all groups get on well together. Good relationships are a key feature in lessons and around the school. There are a wide range of visits and activities, both cultural and sporting, that students engage in well. Work to support spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is planned well across the school, as is work to ensure that students understand life in modern Britain. This contributes well to tackling discrimination and building good relationships.
- The local authority's work with the school is valued highly by both governors and the headteacher. The local authority is challenging the school to improve and is working with the headteacher to confirm views about all aspects of the school. It has brokered support to assist in developing teaching and clarifying what needs to be done to improve. However, its work has not ensured that the overall effectiveness of the school is good at the present time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Over time, governance has not been effective. However, governors commissioned a formal review of governance in July 2014 to improve their work. Changes to governance took place in September 2014 and the governing body is now better equipped to challenge and support the school to improve. Its capacity to hold the school to account is improving securely.
 - Governors have undertaken effective training and are clear about what has to be done to improve the effectiveness of the school. They have a good understanding of students' achievement in comparison to

national achievement. Governors know the quality of teaching across the school and are clear that it is not consistently good. They understand fully the arrangements linking teachers' performance and pay. They have supported the headteacher in tackling underperformance and recognised strong teaching and leadership. Governors are supporting the school effectively in its drive for improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Students' attitudes to learning vary according to the quality of teaching they receive. This leads to some students losing concentration and not focusing well on their work and this slows their progress. Also, when expectations of them are not high, students do not always take pride in their work and presentation is variable.
- Students are pleasant, polite and courteous to visitors and to each other. Around school, they are well behaved and get on well together. They take good care of the school site which is free of litter.
- The school is a calm and purposeful place. Students are punctual to school and to their lessons.
- Overall, attendance is broadly average. The school checks attendance well and over the past two years it has improved. However, despite the school's good work to improve attendance, White British students' attendance is lower than that of other groups of students.
- Students say they know their views are listened to and that the school acts on their findings. For example, they gave their opinions on the new rewards and sanctions system and, as a result, they clearly understand what is required of them.
- Students are enthusiastic about raising money for charitable organisations. For example, they organise enterprise activities such as 'the restaurant challenge' where Year 8 students invite their parents and guests to a meal. Proceeds go to nominated charities.
- Staff and students treat each other with dignity and respect and this ensures that the school is a harmonious community.
- There are good links with the providers of off-site and alternative provision to ensure students are well behaved and most students attend well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students are clear about what constitutes bullying and say that it is infrequent; records confirm this. Should it occur, students have every confidence that the school will deal with incidents highly effectively.
- Students have a good understanding of internet safety. Form time and information given to them in lessons and assemblies support students' good awareness of what to do should there be any problems with internet safety.
- Students are clear about how to keep themselves safe and assess risks to their safety. The school informs students about what to do should they feel their safety is compromised. All students spoken to by inspectors said they felt safe and well cared for in school.
- Procedures for safeguarding students are highly effective. Staff are vigilant and take immediate and decisive action should they believe any student might be in danger. There are effective links to outside agencies to support the most vulnerable students.
- Arrangements for safety to support students studying off-site are good. There are clear arrangements with providers to check the safety and attendance of students.
- Parents and staff share the same, positive views about students' safety.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across and within subjects. Consequently, students do not make good progress over time, particularly in mathematics.
- Inspectors' scrutiny of students' written work shows that, when teachers have high expectations, students' work is presented well and they make good progress. However, expectations of the quality of the work that students should produce are inconsistent. This leads to variability in the quality of presentation and the pride that students take in their work. When this happens, students' progress is not good.
- The most able students are not challenged well enough right from the start in some lessons and spend too

long on easy tasks rather than being quickly challenged by higher levels of work. As a result, their progress is not good. However, when they are challenged well they 'rise to the occasion'. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson all students enjoyed the challenge of rearranging complex mathematical formulae, shared their learning well and all of them made good progress.

- Work set does not always match the needs and abilities of all students precisely enough to help them make good progress. Often, work set is not pitched appropriately for the varying levels of abilities in a class; consequently, some students find the work too easy and some too hard. This results in some students being off-task and not focusing on their work; this is not always managed well and some students remain off-task although generally not disturbing others. However, when work is pitched appropriately, as in a Year 9 English class studying Macbeth, all students were industrious and made good progress.
- Planning to support the learning of disabled students and those who have special educational needs does not incorporate all of the information available to teachers to meet the needs of these students. This means that support assistants are not always provided with clear guidance about what has to be done to ensure that these students make good progress.
- Reading is supported well across many subjects with well-prepared information that students can interpret and understand. There are good opportunities for students to write extensively but students do not develop this skill consistently well across a wide range of subjects. Students do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics, and this does not help to develop and improve their numeracy skills at a faster pace.
- Good relationships between adults and students are a feature in all lessons. Questioning is generally good and students usually engage well in answering. Marking is improving: the new 'PINS' system for providing students' with information about how to improve their work is becoming established and students generally respond well.
- There is good teaching that students enjoy with well-planned, interesting tasks that challenge them appropriately and meet their individual needs and abilities.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement as students' progress across a range of subjects is no more than expected.
- From starting points that are generally well below average, the proportion of students who attained five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including mathematics and English was well below average in both 2013 and 2014. Not enough students made good progress because the quality of teaching has not been consistently good over time.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make less progress than others. Over time, leaders have not identified students' needs appropriately and the quality of teaching has not served these students well. Very recently, the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs have been identified more precisely and improvements in progress are occurring. However, not all teaching uses the information provided to match activities closely to the needs of these students and this hampers their progress.
- The majority of the most able students do not make good progress because the work set for them does not always challenge them enough. As a result, too few students reach the highest GCSE grades in a majority of their subjects, including mathematics.
- Information provided by the school, supported by inspection evidence from observing learning and scrutiny of students' written work, shows that students' progress is improving. It is improving well in English because of the determined efforts of leaders to check students' progress more carefully and support those who are falling behind. This year, more students are on track to attain five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, by the end of Year 11.
- Previous GCSE examination results and the school's own information show that students of all abilities do well in religious education because of good teaching.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- An analysis of students' work by inspectors shows that students are making good progress in English. However, in other subjects their progress, although improving overall, remains inconsistent.
- The progress of those students whose first language is not English is much better than others in school and is above the national average. The school supports them well in learning English and, once they are competent in using the English language, they make good progress across their subjects because of a strong commitment to their studies.

- Those few students attending off-site provision for one day a week achieve similarly to others in the school.
- Very few students attend full-time, alternative provision. Comparisons between those students and others in the school and nationally are, therefore, not statistically valid.
- The progress made by disadvantaged students in English and mathematics is below that of others in the school and nationally. Progress has improved quickly in English because of better teaching but not so in mathematics.
- The 2014 GCSE results showed that the attainment of disadvantaged students in English was two thirds of a grade lower than other students in the school and almost a grade lower than other students nationally. In mathematics, they were one GCSE grade lower than other students in the school and over a grade lower than other students nationally. This represents a narrowing of the previously wider gaps in attainment in English but not mathematics where gaps did not close.
- The school is promoting reading well, using computer systems to check students' progress and understanding of what is being read. Reading is promoted well across a range of subjects. In form time, students read for pleasure and younger students are supported well by Year 10 students who are trained as reading mentors.
- The national method for counting, or not counting, GCSE English results changed in 2014 and depended on the dates students sat particular English examinations. The impact of this change did not affect any individual student's results in GCSE English, but resulted in the school not meeting the government's current floor standards.

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	108097
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	462241

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	906
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Skinner
Headteacher	Mark Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2013
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