

Mount Carmel Roman Catholic High School, Hyndburn

Wordsworth Road, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 0LU

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017 and 14 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires Improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires Improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires Improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires Improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of education have not had enough impact. Very high levels of staff turnover have slowed the pace of improvements since the last inspection.
- Year 11 pupils leaving in 2016 made insufficient progress overall. Although there were improvements in 2017, pupils' progress remains too variable for different groups and in different subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Recent actions are beginning to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make good progress.
- The quality of teaching has not improved quickly enough across different departments. This accounts for pupils' uneven progress in different subjects.
- Decisions taken in the past meant that the curriculum did not help pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers do not use assessment information sufficiently well to plan for pupils' different abilities. Aspirations and expectations are not high enough.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils have the opportunity to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, with strong support from the well-informed governing body, makes effective decisions which are leading to improved teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of their school. They are keenly aware of where improvements need to be faster.
- The recently improved curriculum is broad and balanced.
- Support for pupils' welfare is strong and successful in ensuring pupils' well-being. Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are secure.
- Pupil behaviour is good. The vast majority of pupils work well together. They are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should further improve the quality of teaching so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make the progress that they should across all subjects by:
 - ensuring that assessment practices are thorough and accurate so as to better inform teaching to challenge pupils and help them make rapid progress
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve.
- Leaders should insist that teachers promote pupils' numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Leaders, teachers and other members of staff should ensure that the progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities improves quickly.
- Leaders and governors should build on recent changes and appointments to ensure sustainable improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires Improvement

- Despite some signs of improvement in pupils' outcomes in 2017, leaders have not demonstrated enough success in improving the quality of teaching across different subject areas since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils' achievement is too variable and standards by the end of Year 11 remain below average. Inconsistencies in teaching remain and pupils are not thriving academically.
- Changes in staffing have slowed the pace of improvement. Leaders have recruited a significant number of new teachers and support staff since the last inspection. There is no doubt that leaders have had to face significant challenges in the recent past. Leaders have acted appropriately to overcome these barriers to success. However, the extent of these challenges have meant that leaders' actions have not always brought about sustained improvement to pupils' progress.
- The headteacher, supported by other leaders and the governors, has implemented new systems and structures for improving the quality of teaching. This includes more rigorous checks on what is happening in classrooms. These changes have recently contributed to an improvement of pupils' progress in some subjects, most notably in English. Leaders have an accurate understanding of where more needs to be done.
- Leaders want the very best for the pupils at Mount Carmel. However, this commitment has not translated into leaders and teachers having the highest possible academic aspirations and expectations for pupils.
- Assessment practices have not provided teachers with accurate information on which to plan learning. Leaders recognised this and introduced a new system in September 2017. This system, although in its infancy, provides teachers with more accurate information to help them plan learning.
- There are signs that the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing. However, disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough when compared to other pupils nationally. The school has a clear understanding of how the additional pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils is spent. A recent pupil premium review identified specific strategies to assist teachers in breaking down the barriers that these pupils have to their learning.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted well across the curriculum in all year groups. However, pupils who arrive at the school with weak literacy and numeracy skills receive a range of additional teaching sessions, during form time or after school, which help them to improve. These sessions are partly paid for by the Year 7 catch-up funding. Leaders evaluate the impact of these initiatives well.
- The updated system for managing the performance of teachers and their pay progression is clear and led effectively. Teachers' objectives focus on teaching and pupils' progress. Leaders systematically link training for staff to the school's plans for improving teaching and pupils' progress further. Teachers are positive about the training that they receive and the impact that this has on their teaching. However, this work to improve teaching does not always translate into improved practice in the

classroom.

- In all years, the curriculum is broad and balanced. The improved range of subjects offered is ensuring that more pupils can now follow pathways which prepare them for the future. In addition, leaders effectively extend the curriculum by offering a wide offer of clubs and activities after school. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Weak decisions taken in the past regarding the curriculum have been rectified.
- Funding to support the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is accounted for but the impact of this funding is not apparent. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make good progress.
- The school's arrangements to keep pupils and adults safe in school meet requirements. Leaders monitor carefully the safety, attendance and behaviour of pupils who are educated away from the school site.
- Leaders and teachers develop good relationships with parents. Staff understand that resolving learning and behaviour difficulties at school is more successful if strong partnerships exist between home and school. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View were positive about the support provided by the school for their children. Some parents described how well their children had settled in the school, even if they were admitted at different points in the school year or part way through a key stage.
- The headteacher has embraced the support offered by the local authority, the headteacher of an outstanding school in the locality and by the diocese.
- Leaders' evaluation of recent improvements is honest and accurate; they are implementing further plans to ensure that improvements impact widely across the school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is committed to ensuring that pupils achieve their best. To this end, governors ask searching questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. While they can see improvement, they are equally aware that there is still more to do to eradicate inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors audit their own skills and seek training as required. The chair of the governing body has recently taken on the role of overseeing the use of additional funding, particularly pupil premium funding, to ensure that all governors have a better understanding of how this funding is used.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have recruited additional staff to increase the rigour with which safeguarding concerns are identified and followed up. Staff thoroughly assess visits pupils make outside school to evaluate the level of risk. Appropriate actions are taken to minimise any risk to pupils and adults.

- Adults have received relevant training to ensure that they can respond to any safeguarding concerns.
- Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, especially when they are online. For example, a recent session delivered by an external organisation helped pupils to understand the risks associated with online social networking sites and the misuse of mobile phones.
- Links with the local authority's safeguarding team are strong. Leaders respond rapidly if any pupil is identified as being at risk. Leaders work well with parents when this is required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires Improvement

- Although there are signs of improved teaching in some parts of the school, the pace of change since the previous inspection has not been rapid enough. Consequently, teaching has not made enough difference in raising pupils' outcomes over time.
- Assessment practices up to September 2017 have not always been accurate. This has led to teaching not routinely meeting the needs of pupils. Inspectors saw pupils working well above the targets that they have been set which means they are not being challenged sufficiently.
- In some subjects, and across different year groups, teachers do not plan learning activities well enough. These teachers do not have a sufficient grasp of what their pupils already know, understand or can do. This hampers pupils' progress.
- Teachers' expectations are too variable, which leads to inconsistencies in how well pupils present their work. Too many teachers do not systematically develop pupils' skills and confidence in communicating clearly in the subjects that they are learning. Some teachers accept inaccurate use of terminology and do not insist pupils spell key subject words correctly. Too many teachers accept poorly drawn graphs and displays of information, which encourages inaccuracy and a lack of precision in pupils' work.
- Teachers do not do enough to promote pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, regardless of the subject they teach. This in turn limits pupils' grasp of basic skills and hinders their success in reaching the standards that they should.
- Where teaching is more effective, pupils make greater gains in their learning. This is because teachers expect pupils to think hard, to join in discussions and to make well-considered contributions in response to teachers' effective questioning.
- Most teachers use their good subject knowledge to interest and engage pupils, and to respond to pupils' questions with interesting examples.
- The school is effective in supporting pupils to read often and widely. Leaders have taken steps to provide a range of appropriate reading material and all pupils have a regular session where they read a book of their choice. Moreover, pupils always carry a book with them. Pupils with less strong reading skills have regular sessions using suitable multi-sensory computer software to help them improve.
- Teachers are given good advice about helping pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to learn quickly. However, this advice does not lead to sufficiently effective teaching. It

does not ensure that such pupils' learning is good enough. Teaching assistants provide support to these pupils. However, such pupils are capable of reaching much higher standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Well-informed, sensitive and skilled staff ensure that pupils have someone to go to with any concerns. Pupils are effectively taught strategies to help them overcome worries or anxieties. This helps pupils to manage their mental and physical health and well-being.
- Pupils from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs work and learn together harmoniously. Pupils discuss controversial topics sensitively and sensibly. In a religious education lesson, pupils discussed a recent provocative statement made at a public event. Pupils reacted strongly to the statement about how people who did not have a religious belief were 'broken'. They discussed the implications of such an assertion fairly, and articulated their reasoning well. Pupils work together well to share ideas.
- Pupils talked positively about their individual opportunities to find out about future courses and qualifications from Year 9 to Year 11. The number of pupils who do not engage in education, training or employment after Year 11 is close to the national average. Most pupils choose courses at 16 which lead to employment, apprenticeships or further training. Fewer pupils than seen nationally move on to a sixth form for further study.
- Leaders make good provision, through the curriculum, to make sure pupils are aware of the risks of responding to online invitations to share information or to build friendships. Similarly, pupils are helped to avoid becoming involved in risky activities outside school, or to use mobile phones inappropriately. Staff provide opportunities to discuss current events and explore the values and attitudes of different people. As a result, leaders prepare pupils well for life in a modern democracy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a strong culture of mutual respect that permeates the school. Pupils co-exist amicably and work together well. However, a small number of pupils can challenge this harmony at times.
- Pastoral and senior leaders know pupils well and anticipate incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders have recently introduced strategies to ensure that pupils remain in school and reflect on such incidents, rather than being excluded. Consequently, exclusions from school have been reduced.
- Most pupils behave well in and around school. Leaders have improved the behaviour policy and this is leading to more positive attitudes to learning. Discussions with pupils indicated that a number of boys had increased their efforts and improved their work, partly because of the new rewards system. However, some staff are not yet confident in using some of the newer approaches. This means that the full implementation of the

policy is taking some time.

- As teaching improves, there are fewer instances of inattention to learning. However, inappropriate behaviour still happens occasionally, particularly when teaching is less engaging for pupils and their attention wanes. Where pupils are challenged and work is matched to their ability, their behaviour supports their learning well.
- The behaviour of the small number of pupils working away from the school site is good because they are using their talents and interests in the alternative provision setting.
- Pupils' attendance in 2015 and 2016 was below the national average. It has improved significantly this academic year.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has been too high. Leaders' concerted efforts have resulted in persistent absence being reduced.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Achievement overall continues to be below the national average. In 2016, GCSE results indicated that pupils made much slower progress than other pupils nationally. In 2017, the school's work to improve learning began to have impact and the overall rate of progress improved. Nonetheless, this was not sufficiently rapid enough to raise pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment was above the national average in a number of subjects, for example English literature, science, textiles and geography. In contrast, attainment was below the national average in too many other subjects.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in 2015 and 2016 was particularly weak. The progress made in 2017 was not as slow, but this group continue to make slower progress than other pupils nationally and the standards that they reach are low.
- More-able pupils are making faster progress than in the past and the proportion of pupils reaching the highest grades is increasing.
- Pupils currently at the school make uneven progress. In some subjects, for example English and science, they move forward quickly. In others, their progress is still too slow. Inconsistencies in teaching, low aspirations and weaker progress in the past mean that too few pupils are overcoming a legacy of underachievement. Too many pupils have weaknesses in basic skills which hamper their success.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making increasingly better progress because teaching is being shaped to meet their needs more effectively.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make good progress. The aspirations for these pupils are not high enough. Inspection evidence indicates that these pupils underachieve.
- Pupils who follow courses away from the school site achieve well and make better progress because they are following courses that engage their interests and meet their needs.

School details

Unique reference number	119804
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10036773

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	725
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Rushton
Headteacher	Mr Xavier Bowers
Telephone number	01254 233 458
Website	www.mountcarmelhigh.co.uk
Email address	head@mountcarmelhigh.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized 11-to-16 voluntary-aided comprehensive school.
- The school has begun the process of joining a multi-academy trust set up under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Salford.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium additional funding is above the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Pakistani. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016. These are the

minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- A very small number of students are educated off-site at The Heights Free School in Blackburn.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects and visited a number of classrooms where intervention sessions were taking place. A number of these activities took place jointly with the headteacher and members of the school senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with pupils both formally and informally in lessons and around school, and discussed their learning and activities with them.
- Inspectors studied a number of the school's documents, such as the school's evaluation of its work, school plans to develop provision further, safeguarding documents, policies, and the school's assessments. The school's records of attendance, exclusions and behaviour were also seen, including information about the progress, behaviour and safety of pupils educated away from the school site. An inspector also held a telephone conversation with the leader of the alternative school site.
- Together with leaders, inspectors looked at pupils' written work across a number of subjects since the beginning of the school year. Pupils were spoken to more formally about their work and their learning.
- Several meetings took place with the headteacher, with senior and middle leaders, and with teachers. Inspectors met with the senior adviser from the local authority, with the national leader of education from Penwortham Girls' High School, and with the chair of the governing body and two governors.
- Inspectors also considered the 59 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and took account of the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors made a further visit to the school on 14 December 2017 to gather additional evidence about the effectiveness of leadership and management and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They met with the headteacher and other senior leaders and scrutinised current pupils' learning in lessons, in their books and in the school's own assessment information. Informal discussions were held with pupils.

Inspection team

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