

# St Joseph's RC High School and Sports College

Chorley New Road, Horwich, Bolton, Lancashire BL6 6HW

## Inspection dates

19–20 March 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection there has been a decline in standards. Pupils' progress in the last two years has been below average. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders sometimes do not evaluate the impact of their actions effectively. Therefore, they do not always know which actions bring about improvement and which do not.
- Some teachers do not use assessment effectively to plan learning which meets pupils' needs. Consequently, progress is slowed.
- Sometimes teachers do not give pupils enough time to review their learning. Consequently, they are unable to refine their answers and produce better work.
- Not all teachers use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' understanding, particularly in mathematics and science.
- A minority of pupils sometimes lose concentration during lessons. This tends to happen when teaching is less effective and engaging. This off-task behaviour often goes unchallenged by teachers.
- The proportion of pupils who have been excluded for a fixed period is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Teachers' support for pupils with SEND is not always effective in overcoming their barriers to learning.
- The school's cross-curricular approach to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding (SMSC) does not provide pupils with a consistently effective personal development programme.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are dynamic and determined to drive improvement across all areas of the school.
- Leadership of teaching is effective. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated and teaching overall is improving. Current pupils are making improved progress as a result and standards of attainment are generally secure.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a good range of subjects to study at key stage 4.
- Pupils' attendance has improved considerably and is now in line with the national average.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They feel safe and secure.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' progress, particularly for those who are most able, those who are disadvantaged and those pupils with SEND, by ensuring that teachers:
  - use assessment information more effectively to plan teaching which meets pupils' needs and provides appropriate levels of challenge
  - use questions which help pupils to think deeply about their learning, particularly in mathematics and science
  - give pupils time to review their work so they can redraft and refine it in order to improve their learning
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - more effectively evaluating the impact of leaders' school improvement actions, to better understand which are having the most positive effect
  - ensuring that the school's approach to SMSC development provides pupils with a suitably well-rounded and effective programme
  - continuing leaders' successful work to improve teaching in order to eliminate remaining variability in the quality of teaching.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
  - ensuring that the proportion of pupils regularly absent from school decreases, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
  - providing appropriate support for pupils who cannot self-regulate their behaviour, so the proportion of pupils excluded from school for a fixed period reduces
  - ensuring that teachers follow the expectations in the behaviour policy to challenge those pupils who move off task during learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there has been a decline in standards. The published data for GCSE examinations showed a considerable drop in the amount of progress that pupils made. Although this increased slightly in 2018, it was still below the national average.
- The new headteacher arrived in May 2017 and was prompt in taking action to bring about improvement. He has been supported by the local authority and the diocese. The diocese has made available an executive headteacher for two days a week and a seconded deputy headteacher to ensure that the leadership team is complete. The local authority provides regular reviews to ensure that improvement is focused and rapid.
- Leadership at all levels has been strengthened. Middle leaders feel valued and empowered. They are keen and beginning to drive improvement within their areas of responsibility. Leaders know the school well and which areas need to improve and have focused their plans accordingly.
- Leaders have taken action to bring about improvement and have been successful in many areas. However, they do not routinely evaluate the impact of these actions. Therefore, they are unsure which have had the most impact on bringing about improvement and which have been less effective. As a result, leaders' plans are not revised effectively to speed up the rate of improvement.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is strong overall. Effective quality-assurance processes help leaders to identify staff training needs. They have been relentless in their drive to eradicate inadequate teaching. Teaching has improved markedly as a result. However, there is still some teaching which requires improvement, and teaching is not as consistently strong in some subjects as others. As a consequence, pupils' progress varies from subject to subject, and within different subject areas, depending on the quality of teaching they receive.
- As well as individualised support for teachers, leaders provide whole-school training. For example, leaders gave teachers the opportunity to share ideas on how to improve the challenge for the most able pupils. Consequently, many of the most able pupils are now making improved progress.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy. This policy is to ensure that poor behaviour is tackled more consistently across the school. Pupils' behaviour has improved as a result. Inspectors did not see any instances of disruptive behaviour during the inspection, although off-task behaviour does occur when teaching has failed to engage pupils effectively.
- The whole-school curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils benefit from a wide range of subjects to choose from at key stage 4. Pupils receive individual, good-quality advice and support to help them to choose appropriate subjects to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- British values, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), are promoted within the different curriculum areas. For example, in history pupils discuss the moral implications of slavery, while freedom of choice is discussed in

technology. Leaders have not evaluated the quality of these aspects of pupils' personal development, and so cannot guarantee that pupils are receiving a fully-rounded programme of SMSC development.

- The pupil premium funding is used mainly to improve teaching across the school. Leaders ensure that teachers have a focus on disadvantaged pupils during teaching. As a result, there is very little difference in the work completed by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Consequently, current disadvantaged pupils are beginning to reduce the difference between their progress and that of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. They experience mock interviews with local business leaders, and outside guests talk with pupils about possible career opportunities. There is a particular emphasis on opportunities for girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

### **Governance of the school**

- The influence of the Joint Executive Board (JEB) that was put in place to support the governors in their role, is very strong. The JEB is made up of a number of experienced educationalists and local authority representatives, as well as the headteacher and two members of the school's governing body. They have recently brokered a review of governance, so they can determine what actions to put in place to best support the governing body.
- The JEB is supportive and keen to bring about improvement. They hold leaders firmly to account and review rigorously the progress made by leaders towards meeting the targets in the school's improvement plan. They have ensured that governors receive the training they need to keep up to date on any changes in education.
- The JEB invites school leaders to the board meetings to report on their areas of responsibility. This ensures that all members of the JEB have a full understanding of the ongoing improvements and the areas for development.
- The use of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is monitored by the JEB. They have recently brokered an external review of the use of the pupil premium to determine if this funding can be used more effectively. The findings of this review have just been received. Consequently, leaders have not had time to consider the findings of this review and how to respond in order to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress further.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. There are well-defined structures and processes which ensure that only adults who have undergone appropriate checks are employed by the school. Staff are trained regularly and there are updates to ensure that they are kept informed of any changes. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.
- Pupils told inspectors they know how to keep themselves safe. They said that bullying did happen on occasion. However, when it does, teachers deal with it well. Pupils said

there is always a teacher with whom you can talk if you need help. Leaders have also introduced a messaging service which ensures that pupils can confidentially ask for help at any time.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand about the dangers of grooming and how to stay safe when online. There is a robust school council which takes a keen interest in the safety of pupils in school. Currently, this council is engaged on a campaign to raise awareness of pupils' mental health. Leaders listen to the pupil council and act on their concerns.
- Leaders work cooperatively with alternative providers to ensure that all safeguarding checks are in place and pupils attend regularly. Attendance is closely monitored, and absence followed up promptly, in line with school policy. The lead teacher for careers makes frequent visits to check that pupils are safe and making good progress.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have introduced a new system to monitor the quality of teaching across the school. This has led to a marked improvement in teaching and learning overall. Leaders provide time for teachers to share good practice, and individualised support is provided for those who need it. Much more of the teaching across the school is now consistently good and where this is the case, pupils are progressing well.
- Strong links with local schools and teaching organisations have been established and are having a positive impact on teaching standards. For example, heads of department meet regularly with their counterparts from other Bolton schools. This allows leaders to moderate pupils' work and to improve the accuracy of assessment. Consequently, teachers have a clearer understanding of what pupils need to do to improve.
- Despite the improvement in teaching, there is still a minority of teaching which does not meet pupils' needs. This is because some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not use assessment effectively to build on what pupils already know. The tasks they set do not provide enough challenge and some pupils lose concentration during lessons. Where this is the case, pupils' learning suffers.
- This variability across teaching is also seen within departments. For example, in mathematics there are some examples of strong teaching where pupils develop a deep understanding of mathematical processes. In these instances, teachers develop pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, some teaching focuses on simply giving pupils methods to follow rather than developing their mathematical understanding. Pupils often struggle because they cannot remember which method they have to use in different situations, and don't have sufficient underlying knowledge to work it out for themselves.
- The variation in teaching quality seen across different departments has slowed leaders' attempts to embed literacy across the curriculum. Leaders' intention is that teachers regularly support pupils' literacy skills in all subjects. Initially, whole-school literacy has been superficial, focused on ensuring that pupils have the skills they need to access the curriculum. For example, teachers have been supporting pupils in better structuring their extended writing.

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils typically have positive attitudes to learning and recognise the importance of their education. However, when teaching is less effective and engaging, these positive attitudes dip and this has an impact on pupils' work and progress.
- Pupils talked about how to keep themselves safe, particularly when they are online, such as when using social media. They spoke confidently and compassionately about the different protected characteristics and the need to treat with respect people who are different to them.
- There is a well-developed and active pupil council which is listened to by school leaders. The work of the school council has brought about improvement in the provision of meals in the canteen. The school council is raising the awareness of mental health and has recently raised money for the charity MIND.
- Pupils' SMSC development together with their understanding of British values could be stronger. These areas are covered through the normal school curriculum. Leaders do not monitor the quality of these aspects of the curriculum. Inspectors rarely saw discussions about these aspects of the curriculum taking place during learning.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of bullying, which they explained was ongoing harassment or intimidation and not just a one-off event. Pupils felt that bullying did happen in school, but teachers dealt with it well. They know that there is always somebody in school they trust and with whom they can talk if they need help.
- Leaders use alternative provision for a small number of pupils who are struggling to remain in education. They ensure that placements give pupils structure and meet their needs.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The introduction of the new behaviour policy has brought about clear improvements in pupils' behaviour. There are high levels of supervision in social areas and staff wear high-visibility jackets, so they can be easily seen by pupils. Pupils typically treat each other and adults with respect.
- Pupils' behaviour in social areas is strong. Pupils talk respectfully to each other and to staff. Pupils were confident and helpful when they talked with inspectors. During the inspection, they waited patiently and quietly to go back into school after the fire alarm.
- Despite the improvements in pupils' behaviour, the proportion excluded for a fixed period remains above the national average. There was a large increase in these exclusions at the start of the year because of the behaviour of a small group of pupils who found it difficult to adjust to the more rigorous expectations of what is acceptable

behaviour. These pupils have all received appropriate support. Consequently, there have been fewer fixed-term exclusions recently.

- During learning pupils are generally attentive and actively engaged. The work in their books demonstrates they take pride in their work and have good attitudes to learning. However, where teaching is not engaging, some pupils lose interest in their learning and stop working. Teachers do not always challenge pupils about this. Consequently, these pupils make less progress.
- Leaders track pupils' attendance and offer support to help pupils to attend more frequently. Leaders' actions have ensured that overall attendance has risen to be in line with the national average. This is true for all groups of pupils.
- Overall, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is now in line with the national average. However, for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the proportion regularly absent from school, while reducing, remains above the national average.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- The published outcomes for GCSE examinations show that the proportions of pupils who gain a standard pass or a higher pass, in both English and mathematics, are above the national average. Results in 2018 were, although still above national average, lower than in 2017. Improvements in the teaching of English and mathematics mean that an increased proportion of current pupils are on track to attain well in English and mathematics this year.
- Pupils' attainment in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects is typically higher than the national average. However, the low number of pupils opting to take modern foreign languages at GCSE means the proportion of pupils that actually take the EBacc has been below average. This has improved for current pupils in Year 10.
- Although pupils' GCSE attainment is strong, the progress that they make is not. Pupils' progress declined significantly in 2017 and remained markedly below average in 2018. This indicates that pupils' attainment could reasonably have been expected to be even stronger than it was. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Leaders' actions are, however, beginning to bring about improvement for current pupils, and their progress is improving across all subjects. Leaders' focus on improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils has led to current pupils in that group making progress which is closer to that made by other pupils in the school, and hence other pupils nationally. Similarly, the most able pupils' progress is improving. As a result, these pupils too are beginning to make progress closer to the average for their peers nationally.
- Although pupils' progress is improving, the strength of this improvement is more secure in some subjects than in others. For example, in mathematics and science, pupils' progress is not as strong as in other areas. This is because in these subjects, some teachers do not develop pupils' understanding to full effect. Teachers' questioning often does not require pupils to think deeply and develop their ideas.

- The coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND monitors the performance of pupils with SEND. When these pupils fall behind, the coordinator offers advice and support to teachers to help these pupils to make improved progress. As a result, these pupils are now making better progress.
- Leaders provide high-quality careers education. This, together with pupils' above-average attainment in English and mathematics, ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Almost all pupils quickly enter further education or training. For the small number of pupils that do not move onto appropriate destinations at the end of Year 11, leaders continue to offer support. Consequently, over the last three years only a very small number of pupils have not moved into further education, training or employment.



## School details

Unique reference number	105262
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10057983

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	877
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Patti Jones
Headteacher	Mr Anthony McCabe
Telephone number	01204 697456
Website	<a href="http://www.stjosephsbolton.org.uk">www.stjosephsbolton.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:ldavis306@st-josephs.bolton.sch.uk">ldavis306@st-josephs.bolton.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	2–3 June 2015

## Information about this school

- St Joseph’s RC High School is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is much lower than the national average.
- In key stage 4, a small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Bolton Impact Trust, A&D Joinery, WYG Engineering, DOC Electricals, Eagle Specialist Vehicles, Perton Partnership Ltd and Sacred Heart Primary School.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects, including joint observations with school leaders.
- Inspectors alongside school leaders formally scrutinised pupils' work from Years 8, 9 and 10, across a range of subjects. They also looked at pupils' work when observing teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors spoke with a group of curriculum leaders, teachers and a group of non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors also met formally with three groups of pupils from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. Inspectors also spoke with pupils informally during social times.
- An inspector spoke with the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body, as well as the chair of the JEB.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including school policies, safeguarding procedures, leaders' self-evaluation and leaders' school-improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the 80 responses to the pupils' survey, the 38 responses to the online staff questionnaire, the 122 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 54 free-text responses from parents.

## Inspection team

Erica Sharman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Colin Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Rochelle Conefrey	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Greenough	Ofsted Inspector

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