

Canon Slade CofE School

Bradshaw Brow, Bolton, Lancashire, BL2 3BP

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school's firmly held values and caring ethos underpin all aspects of its work and are proudly endorsed by the students, staff, leaders and governors who make up the 'Canon Slade family.'
- All students make outstanding progress as a result of excellent teaching that challenges their thinking and encourages their independent learning. Achievement is exceptionally strong in English, mathematics, performing arts, physical education and history, leading to consistently very high attainment. Although standards are high in science, students' progress is not as strong as in other subjects.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make excellent progress academically and their personal development is exceptional. The vast majority of students secure places at the universities of their choice.
- Staff know all the students extremely well. They quickly recognise when students require personalised support and this enables students to make outstanding progress.
- Students relish the many opportunities the school provides for them. They willingly contribute their time and talents to ensure that the school is a rich and vibrant place that combines tradition with innovation.
- Students' behaviour is excellent and contributes to their exceptional learning.
- The headteacher and senior leaders communicate their vision extremely well to staff and students. Their roles are clear and effective teamwork means that any areas of concern are addressed quickly and effectively.
- The leadership of teaching is highly effective. Staff benefit from an exciting programme of professional development that encourages them to share their ideas and use varied approaches to engage students. Evaluation of the impact of these approaches is not yet fully developed in all subjects.
- Governors are an integral part of the school's life and mission. They are extremely well-informed and rigorous in their work.
- Links with parents are strong. The vast majority of parents are highly-supportive of the school and think their children are safe, happy and well taught.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 50 lessons across a range of subjects, of which five were joint observations carried out with school leaders. An inspector heard a group of students reading and talked to them about how the school helps them to develop their reading skills.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors considered 149 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) prior to and during the inspection and took account of other evidence submitted by parents through letters and telephone discussions. The school’s own surveys of parents’ feedback were examined. Inspectors analysed 123 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school development plan, students’ work, progress data, minutes of meetings, attendance data and records showing how the school cares for and protects students.

Inspection team

Shirley Gornall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Catherine Laing

Additional Inspector

Patrick Feerick

Additional Inspector

Andrew Henderson

Additional Inspector

Mary Liptrot

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school. Students join the school from over 100 primary schools covering a wide area.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is very low in comparison with national figures.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is average. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of students supported at school action, or school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs are much lower than average.
- A small number of students study vocational courses off site for one day a week with employers such as Sure Start, Manchester United Academy and Alliance Learning.
- Around one fifth of students in the school's large sixth form attended other schools for their 11-16 education.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school holds numerous awards including the Cultural Diversity Award (Diamond), Investor in People, Dyslexia Mark and Careers Education Quality standard.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in science so that the proportions of students exceeding expected progress match those in English and mathematics.
- Continue to share innovative teaching strategies and assess their impact across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students join the school with starting points that are above average in most subjects. The standards that they reach at GCSE are significantly higher than those found nationally, with well over four fifths attaining five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics every year. Overall, a third of grades achieved by students are at A* and A. These results represent excellent progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Students make particularly strong progress in English and mathematics due to consistently effective, imaginative teaching and well-targeted support for any student who is falling behind. The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students make exceptional progress in performing arts subjects, for which the school has a well-deserved regional reputation. Progress in music and drama is enhanced for many students by their enthusiastic participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Public performances by the school's bands are of an inspirational quality.
- Students' attainment in science is well above average but the proportions of students making better than expected progress are not as high as in English or mathematics. The school is aware of this discrepancy and has planned actions to accelerate progress in science.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve significantly better than their peers nationally. The gap between the average point scores gained by this group and other students in the school is closing quickly due to the school's carefully targeted use of additional funding, which includes providing individual tuition to students and paying transport costs for eligible pupils in order that they can attend events outside school hours. Additional support is contributing to students' excellent achievement and the outstanding promotion of equal opportunities.
- Students who are disabled or with special educational needs make outstanding progress as a result of high-quality teaching and very effective and well-coordinated support, the impact of which is closely monitored. Staff who support students' learning are knowledgeable and dedicated. Parents are very appreciative of the lengths the school goes to in order to meet their children's needs. For example, one commented, 'the school helped my daughter at a particularly difficult time, and nothing was too much trouble.'
- A few students who are following vocational courses spend one day per week off site during Key Stage 4 in order to gain practical experience of work such as childcare and construction. The remainder of their lessons take place in school and they make the same outstanding progress as their peers to achieve challenging targets.
- Most students are enthusiastic and competent readers who regularly read for both information and pleasure. The school's literacy coordinator, head of English and librarian ensure that reading is given a high priority and that books are celebrated. The library is a vibrant hub of the school that students regard highly. Standards in writing are high. Students are expected to write for different purposes and audiences in various subjects. They take considerable pride in the presentation of their work.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding, leading to most students progressing to the universities of their choice to continue their studies. Attainment is exceptionally high in many subjects and is particularly notable in history, law and performing arts.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- 'Lessons are exciting and make us think,' one student told an inspector. Her enthusiasm is shared by the vast majority of students, who have highly positive attitudes to learning that contribute significantly to their rapid progress.
- Teachers work very hard to deepen students' understanding and encourage their independent thinking and research. They ask thought-provoking questions and continually encourage students to probe deeply. This is demonstrated powerfully in history lessons where imaginative approaches to exploring cause and effect result in students having insightful understanding of the significance of key events.
- Teachers know their students extremely well and plan lessons that build on their skills and knowledge. Many lessons include well-structured opportunities for students to work collaboratively, debate ideas and give feedback on each other's performance. Students' analytical skills are particularly well developed in performing arts, physical education and English. Challenging tasks interest students and lessons are effectively structured so as to maintain pace and deepen learning.
- Teachers' marking provides students with precise guidance as to how to improve their work. Students act readily on the feedback they receive, for example in correcting spelling errors.
- Many lessons provide students with opportunities to reflect on important issues, express their own viewpoints and challenge the opinions of their peers. Consequently, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of learning are embedded in different subjects and discrimination is consistently challenged.
- Teaching in the sixth form provides an excellent foundation for students' higher education. Strong, mutually respectful relationships between staff and students underpin purposeful learning and all students are encouraged to develop their individual perspectives, talents and skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students are enthusiastic ambassadors for the school who play their part in ensuring that it is a safe, orderly, welcoming place. They respect the school rules, hold their teachers in high esteem and display an eagerness to learn that underpins their high achievement. A remarkably high proportion of students willingly give their time to support events such as the school's open evening. Students place a high value on the pastoral care offered by the school through form tutors and the chaplaincy team. They support the school's ethos actively and readily engage in mature reflection about the effects that their own behaviour and attitudes have on others.
- The school council and 'action teams' play an important role in identifying how the school can improve further, including by giving feedback on lessons. They rightly regard themselves as partners in the drive for excellence in all things and have a very positive influence on their peers.
- Sixth-form students provide excellent support to younger students through their work as mentors.
- Students from different backgrounds work well together and respect each other's cultural differences. Students readily accept the school's challenge to make a positive contribution to the local community and beyond, as shown by their high levels of participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and their acceptance of challenge in working voluntarily abroad on charitable missions.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Safety is regularly discussed and students are confident about the steps they should take if they have any concerns. They are adamant that bullying of any form is extremely rare and that staff have a 'zero tolerance' approach to it. The school's behaviour logs confirm that there are few incidents of bullying either in the school or at alternative provision and even fewer of repeat offences. No student has been permanently excluded from school recently and the incidence of fixed-term exclusion is much lower than that found nationally.

- Parents and staff agree that the students' behaviour is outstanding.
- Attendance is consistently significantly higher than the national average. Students are punctual to despite the considerable distances that some travel.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads purposefully from the front and sets high expectations of staff and students alike. He is a regular visitor to lessons and enjoys daily conversations with students about their learning. He combines steely determination with compassion in a way that inspires the school community. Under his leadership standards have risen and the talents of leaders and teachers have been nurtured and celebrated.
 - The school's senior leaders, heads of subject and heads of year work very effectively to ensure that all students achieve exceptionally well in a calm, reflective and supportive environment. The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders have been adapted to reflect the school's priorities and there are clear lines of communication and accountability.
 - The leadership of learning is excellent. Teachers' creativity is encouraged and a well-considered programme of professional development provides them with opportunities to learn from each other's good practice. The impact of this strategy across all departments has not yet been fully evaluated.
 - Pastoral staff, including the chaplaincy team, make a significant contribution to the leadership of the school and its place within the wider community. The spiritual life of the school is apparent in assemblies, lessons and through the vast range of activities that enrich students' experiences outside the school day, including an extensive volunteering programme.
 - The school is orderly and well run. Effective systems ensure that the two thousand individuals who are on the school site every day are safe and that their work makes a purposeful contribution to the big picture of sustained excellence. Equally, safety is checked at alternative providers sites.
 - The school's management of teachers' work is robust. Challenging objectives focused on students' achievement are set for all teachers and their pay progression is linked to their success in ensuring that all students reach the standards of which they are capable.
 - The school's self-evaluation is rigorous, taking into account the views of parents, students and staff as well as wide-ranging pupil performance data and quality assurance outcomes. Leaders have a clear view of the school's priorities and the ways by which they will achieve their next challenging goals; complacency is not permitted.
 - The local authority and the diocese know the school well and provide it with appropriate support.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is dedicated to promoting the spiritual mission of the school and ensuring that all aspects of its work are of the highest possible standards. Governors hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account in a rigorous and principled way. They are extremely well informed about the school's work and fulfil their statutory duties conscientiously. Governors are knowledgeable about standards and ensure that the performance management of staff is tightly linked to scrutiny of students' progress. Governors monitor the school's budget carefully, including pupil premium funding, and ensure that the school provides excellent value for money.

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	105267
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	402971

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1686
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Canon Matthew Thompson
Headteacher	Canon Philip Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2008
Telephone number	01204 333343
Fax number	01204 333340
Email address	contact@canon-slade.bolton.sch.uk

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