

Inspection of The McAuley Catholic High School

Cantley Lane, Cantley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN3 3QF

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

The headteacher of this school is James Tucker. This school is part of The McAuley Catholic High School single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Garry Thickett.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They are well cared for by staff. The school has developed strong pastoral systems. These support pupils, including students in the sixth form, to participate fully in the school community. The school has implemented new policies and routines to manage behaviour. These have created a calm environment, where pupils can learn effectively. When incidents of bullying or other unkind behaviours occur, adults act swiftly and effectively to resolve them.

Leaders, including trustees, have acted to address the issues raised at the previous inspection. Pupils now study a broad curriculum over their time in key stage 3. This supports them to be better prepared as they move into their GCSE courses. Most pupils achieve well in external examinations. This helps them to be well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders aspire for pupils to play a positive role within the school, as well as the local and Catholic communities. Opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme are well used and valued by pupils. The school uses opportunities such as these and residential visits to help pupils to become more independent and resilient young people.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has experienced a number of changes in leadership roles since the previous inspection. This includes the headteacher and other senior and middle leadership responsibilities. New leaders have prioritised making improvements to the curriculum. The early impact of these changes is seen in pupils' achieving improved outcomes in external examinations.

The curriculums in many subjects, including science and art and design, are carefully planned and well established. In these subjects, the knowledge and skills that pupils learn build in complexity over time. Teachers explain new knowledge clearly. What pupils learn builds on what they already know. In some other subjects, the school is continuing to strengthen the curriculum.

In some lessons, the work that pupils complete is not as well matched to the aims of the curriculum as it could be. When this happens, the most important information that pupils need to know is not prioritised sufficiently. In others, although teachers check what pupils know, this does not consistently result in teachers making adaptations to close gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school has developed effective systems to support pupils in the early stages of learning to read. These help pupils to improve their reading and to access the rest of the curriculum.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They share detailed information with teachers

about how they can meet the needs of pupils. This enables teachers to support pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers.

The sixth-form provision is a strength of the school. Students in the sixth form benefit from their time there. The school has diversified the range of subjects that are available to students. These reflect students' changing interests. Lessons are calm and focused. Students develop secure knowledge of the subjects they study. Through the school's careers programme, students are well informed about the options available to them when they leave the school.

Through the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, pupils learn about important topics, such as healthy relationships and consent. Many pupils talk confidently about the beliefs of different faiths. This contributes to the school's inclusive ethos. Despite this, other aspects of what pupils know, particularly their understanding of fundamental British values, are less secure. The school has not adapted the curriculum to close these gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Pupils engage in a variety of extra-curricular activities. These are well attended, including by disadvantaged pupils. The school uses external speakers, as well as educational visits, to broaden pupils' horizons. Many pupils engage in purposeful leadership roles, including in the sixth form, where, for example, some students are trained to support younger pupils with their reading.

Pupils, including in the sixth form, attend school regularly. The school has a clear understanding of the barriers to attendance. It works effectively with families to remove these. This forms part of the school's strong pastoral support offer. The school prioritises the well-being of pupils. Staff from the pastoral, SEND and safeguarding teams meet regularly to review what support individual pupils might need. This ensures that pupils receive the help they need.

Trustees have a strong commitment to the school. They and school leaders have an aligned vision for ongoing improvement. Leaders at all levels have improved the school since the previous inspection. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Despite this, the school's checks on some areas of improvement are not ensuring that these changes are consistently implemented.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, the work that pupils complete is not well matched to the aims of the curriculum or pupils' prior knowledge. When this happens, it limits how effectively pupils learn the most important knowledge identified within the

curriculum. The school should ensure that work is consistently closely aligned to the aims of the curriculum.

- Some opportunities to adapt the curriculum to address pupils' misconceptions or gaps in knowledge are missed. When this happens, including in PSHE, pupils' knowledge of the curriculum develops more slowly. The school should ensure that assessment information is routinely used to adapt the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge continues to build.
- The school's system for checking actions to improve the school is not as strong as it could be. Some initiatives are implemented inconsistently. The school should ensure that its quality assurance procedures lead to consistent implementation of new initiatives.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140865 |
| Local authority | Doncaster |
| Inspection number | 10297401 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,441 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 272 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Garry Thickett |
| Headteacher | James Tucker |
| Website | www.mcauley.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 25 June 2021 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of The McAuley Catholic High School, a single-academy trust.
- The headteacher started in this role in September 2023.
- The chair of the trust started in this role in November 2023.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hallam. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2022.
- The school uses six registered and six unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector met with members of the trust board.
- An inspector spoke with the school's diocesan improvement partner.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, sixth-form provision and personal development.
- An inspector spoke with staff at some of the alternative provisions used by pupils at this school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, design and technology, art and design, drama and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work and curriculum documentation in English, music and religious education.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. They looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from governing board meetings as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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