

St Wilfrid's RC College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108736
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	337135
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	919
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Arthurs
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Wright
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Temple Park Road South Shields Tyne and Wear NE34 0PH
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. During the inspection 42 lessons were observed, involving 41 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, senior and middle leaders and managers, and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including, the school's improvement plan, attainment and progress data and safeguarding procedures. The responses to 389 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those completed by staff and students, were considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by average-attaining students in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science to discover if the recent decline has halted
- the attainment of all groups of students to establish if it is as high as it should be
- the consistency of teaching and teachers' skills in using assessment information to motivate and challenge students in all subjects
- the inspection team investigated how well new systems for monitoring and

evaluating the school's work have been adopted, and the extent to which they are enabling good practice to be shared for the benefit of all students.

Information about the school

The school is a secondary school of average size. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The school community is predominantly White British, with only a few students from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is low. The school has specialist status for mathematics and computing. It has gained a number of awards including Healthy School status.

The school has experienced considerable upheaval in the last two years, during the building of a new school on the site.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. Too many students of average and above average ability fail to make the expected progress in English, mathematics and science. This means that when students leave the school, the majority do not reach the expected level for their age in these subjects, despite having joined the school with average or above average attainment. Too few students reach the higher levels in examinations. In other subjects, students achieve better and are more likely to reach their potential. For example, results in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average and boost the school's overall performance significantly. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their curriculum is well planned to ensure they enjoy learning and success. Nevertheless, too many students leave the school without the basic skills they need to prepare them for their next stage of learning or employment. Overall achievement is inadequate.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because teachers do not consistently use effective strategies to discover what students know and need to learn next. This prevents effective lesson planning to ensure good progression. The result is a mismatch of work to ability, which either leaves students unable to access learning readily or, when the work is too easy, they become bored and do not make enough effort. In effective lessons, teachers have a good grasp of what students need to learn and expectations of work and cooperation are clearly communicated. The curriculum fails to provide for the progressive development of knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3. This contributes to the failure of a high proportion of pupils meeting their targets in GCSE examinations. Extra-curricular activities are good and contribute well to developing students' social skills and enjoyment of school life. Staff ensure that students feel safe and are cared for in school. However, arrangements for students leaving the site at the end of the school day are not monitored carefully by staff.

Students behave well and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy and adopt healthy lifestyles. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are tolerant of the views of others and are eager to make links through sporting, arts and fund raising activities to broaden their contact with the wider world.

Leadership and management are inadequate. Senior leaders, including the headteacher, do not give a strong enough lead to the work of the school. They do not hold colleagues

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sufficiently to account or share good practice effectively. School self-evaluation is inaccurate, largely because monitoring activities are not focused on the most significant weaknesses and they are not rigorous enough in identifying underperformance. The school has declined considerably since its previous inspection. Leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to make the necessary and urgent improvements required. The management of English, mathematics and science is inadequate because the leaders and managers of these departments have failed to halt the decline in performance in their subjects over a three year period. They have no coherent strategy for making improvement or an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning in their departments. There has also been some disruption due to staff absence. Governance is inadequate because the governing body has not challenged the school sufficiently over its declining performance. Members of the governing body do not have an accurate picture of the school's performance or of its significant weaknesses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, raise students' attainment and improve their progress in English, mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that both higher-attaining and average-attaining students achieve the grades expected of them in English, mathematics and science
 - ensuring attainment is at least in line with the national average in each subject, for students currently in Year 11 and for all subsequent year groups
 - increasing the proportion of students gaining A and A* grades in all subjects.
- Improve the skills of leaders and managers and the governing body as a matter of urgency, by:
 - making clear to the senior leaders their key role in all aspects of the school's performance
 - ensuring that senior leaders give clear direction to staff at all levels about their role in school improvement, and spell out their accountability for this
 - ensuring that senior leaders have clearly defined roles and line management responsibilities and are able to demonstrate their contribution to school improvement
 - improving the skills and effectiveness of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science to raise attainment and inspire ambition in their departments
 - ensuring that the governing body has a full and accurate picture of the school's effectiveness, through direct monitoring of the school's work, from which they can support and challenge the school and hold the headteacher to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in all lessons, especially English, mathematics and science, by:
 - ensuring that teachers' use of assessment information supports students' learning
 - raising teachers' expectations of how hard students should work in lessons
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that it clearly informs students of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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- Improve the curriculum in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3, by ensuring that it provides continuity and clear progression and prepares students for work in Key Stage 4.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Learning and progress vary widely, ranging from good to inadequate, but are inadequate overall. This is because in too many lessons, especially in English, mathematics and science, students are not sufficiently challenged or motivated to give their best. In these lessons, too many fail to consolidate their subject knowledge because they are not given sufficient opportunity to apply new knowledge and practise skills. This is reflected in students' books, where incomplete and poorly presented work illustrates how little enthusiasm they have for their learning. In other lessons, where learning is well structured and students learn from doing rather than listening, their enthusiasm and pride shine through in good quality work that is well presented and does justice to their abilities.

From above average attainment when they join the school, students make inadequate progress in English, mathematics and science, so that their examination performance in these subjects is below average by the end of Year 11. There has been a picture of persistent underachievement in these subjects since 2008. A broader picture of attainment shows that on other measures, students appear to be doing well, with above average performance, for example, in ICT and art and design. Nevertheless, the failure to reach even satisfactory targets in the core subjects indicates inadequate attainment and students are not well prepared for the next stage of learning, despite their good attendance and punctuality. Students' achievement is inadequate overall, although those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and acquire secure basic skills.

Students' behaviour is good. It is especially praiseworthy around the school where, despite cramped conditions, students manage movement between lessons calmly and with a minimum of supervision. Students are keen to support and improve the school and wider community. They willingly take on responsibility as peer mentors or school councillors.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is inadequate because of widespread weakness in the teaching of English, mathematics and science. In these and other subjects, teachers' use of assessment to decide what students will learn next is ineffective. This is because assessment is not rigorous enough either through the use of sharp, targeted questions in lessons, or by careful marking of students' work to discover how well they are learning. Too many lessons are not well pitched, so that in some the work is too difficult, while in others students are bored because the work is not challenging. In too many lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of how hard students should work and accept low output and poorly presented work. In the better lessons, a more accurate knowledge of students' needs gives teachers higher expectations which drive a faster pace so that students' learning is good. In such lessons, there is a balance of teacher talk and student activity, which students say they prefer. Students' work is rarely marked and cursory when it is, giving little or no advice on how to improve.

The curriculum is inadequate because the programmes of study for English, mathematics and science do not ensure progression in knowledge, understanding and skills for students in Key Stage 3. Time spent in Key Stage 4 revisiting topics that have not been securely learnt, contributes significantly to slowing progress through the GCSE syllabus. Some aspects of the curriculum are satisfactory; for example, the range of non-academic courses available for students in Key Stage 4 is developing so that there are several

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pathways for students to achieve success. The specialist status in computing has a good impact on students' achievement in the subject, but only has a limited effect on other subjects. Provision for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. They have programmes of study that are closely tailored to their needs so that they make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. Staff give generously of their time to run clubs at lunchtime and after school, to meet the high demand from students, who say they 'thoroughly enjoy' their clubs.

Students trust staff to look after them and are confident they will listen to and support them with any problems. Teachers know students as individuals and are alert to any changes that may signal concerns. Support for students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable is good. Their needs are well identified and the inclusion manager makes prompt links with external services to ensure they have any additional support that they need. There are effective arrangements for students and their parents and carers on entry in Year 7. Students in Year 11 rightly feel that guidance about their future options is barely satisfactory. The school acknowledges this weakness, but has no clear plans for improvement in the current school development plan.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, including the headteacher, are not providing the necessary direction, drive and ambition to improve the school or to ensure that significant weaknesses are identified and remedied. They have too little impact on the work of the school because they do not hold staff sufficiently to account for raising standards or for following school policies and procedures. Staff morale is low and there is little evidence of a concerted effort towards improvement. This is reflected in the inconsistencies in practice, for example, in the marking and assessment of students' work, which are recognised by students, parents and carers. The management of English, mathematics and science is inadequate primarily as the leaders of these departments have not ensured there is an appropriate curriculum for Key Stage 3; they and senior leaders have failed to recognise the impact of this on students' progress and attainment by the end of Key Stage 4. Several departments are developing good practice, partly in response to the links with a partner school in the last academic year, but this is not used rigorously to have a school-wide impact.

The governing body is not able to challenge the school over its effectiveness because it does not have secure, first-hand knowledge about its performance or provision. The governing body relies too heavily on reports about the school's work and individual

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members do not make enough planned visits to the school to corroborate these. Safeguarding procedures are met and the governing body and senior staff have sufficient training to ensure safe recruitment of staff. The school does not adequately promote equal opportunity for all students by ensuring that they all have access to learning so they can reach their full potential. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school promotes cohesion within its own community and in the locality but has not yet evaluated the impact of this work. As a result of the inadequate outcomes for students, the school provides poor value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of returned questionnaires included comments about various aspects of the school's work. Of these, only a few contained positive comments. These referred to students enjoying school and the effective provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspection evidence confirms that, although attendance is above the average for this type of school, not all students enjoy lessons as much as they could. It also confirms the effective provision for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Parents and carers raised concerns about the leadership of the school, the quality of teaching and the progress that students make, the fall in attainment in recent years, behaviour in certain year groups, communication with parents and information about how well their children are progressing. The inspection confirmed, with the exception of behaviour, that all of these concerns were aspects that needed to improve. Students' behaviour was good except in a few lessons which were slow-paced and uninspiring, minor disruption was not as promptly and firmly managed as it should have been.

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A small minority of parents and carers expressed anger at the lunchtime arrangements for students who take packed lunch. They were also very concerned that since the start of the current term, these students have been expected to sit on the floor to eat their lunch. The school's explanation was that furniture had not arrived to accommodate the high numbers. During the inspection, students were provided with additional classrooms to have their lunch.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Wilfrid's RC College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 389 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 919 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	113	29	237	61	27	7	10	3
The school keeps my child safe	125	32	248	64	9	2	3	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	79	20	238	61	49	13	8	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	90	23	239	61	37	10	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	102	26	232	60	29	7	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	18	223	57	62	16	7	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	17	255	66	47	12	6	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	86	22	242	62	26	7	10	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	90	23	236	61	39	10	5	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	117	30	191	49	38	10	13	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	67	17	213	55	54	14	11	3
The school is led and managed effectively	93	24	211	54	30	8	20	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	128	33	213	55	26	7	11	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Wilfrid's RC College, South Shields, NE34 0PH

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and were impressed by how well you behave when moving from class to class in such cramped conditions. You show good qualities of tolerance and caring, which are also reflected in your willingness to take on responsibility to help those less fortunate than yourselves.

While we could see that you are keen to do well, we also noted that many of you are not learning as well as you should, especially in English, mathematics and science, so that a large majority of you are underachieving. The leaders of the school have not done enough to improve this situation and have made too little improvement since the school was previously inspected. For these reasons, the inspection team has placed your school in special measures. This means that your school will get extra help to improve quickly. Ofsted inspectors will visit the school regularly to check that it is making rapid progress in improving provision for your learning so that you are able to reach your full potential.

To help your school get started on this improvement it has been asked to:

- quickly improve how well you do in English, mathematics and science
- improve the skills of leaders and managers and the governing body
- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that you make better progress and achieve in line with your capabilities, enjoy lessons and know how well you are doing
- improve what you study in Key Stage 3, so that you have a stronger foundation for your work in Key Stage 4.

We also noted that there are subjects and lessons where you do well, and could see how much more you enjoyed your learning when you were well challenged to work hard. The inspection team join me in sending our good wishes to all at St Wilfrid's in helping the school to improve.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector

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