

# SS John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Humanities College, Colne

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119785
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358627
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Chambers HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	734
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Mary Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Chris Bohills
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Gibfield Road Colne Lancashire BB8 8JT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 33 lessons involving 32 different teachers and held meetings with groups of students, staff and a member of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including improvement plans and data recording the progress of current students. They received and scrutinised 213 parental questionnaires, as well as questionnaire responses from 135 students and 47 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of current students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether progress in mathematics is good enough.
- The strengths in management and whether these are evident across the school.
- The outcomes that have improved most strongly and securely since the last inspection.

## Information about the school

Saints John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Humanities College serves mainly the Roman Catholic communities in Colne and the surrounding areas of East Lancashire. It is smaller than average for a secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with that found in most schools. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. Nearly 90% of the students are of White British heritage. The school has specialist status in humanities and holds a number of awards, including Investors in People and Sportsmark.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Saints John Fisher and Thomas More provides a satisfactory standard of education. Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have successfully improved several aspects of the school's provision and there is evidence that this improvement is continuing. As a result, outcomes for students have improved: for example, attendance rates have risen and GCSE examination results have risen faster than the rate of improvement nationally. Students show many good personal qualities. They behave well and many take advantage of the wide range of opportunities that is provided to engage in physical activities.

Students enter the school with attainment levels that are broadly in line with national expectations. Results in recent GCSE examinations have been close to average overall. For example, in 2010 the proportion of students gaining five or more passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics was 57%, compared with a national average of 54%. This compares with 44% attaining the same measure at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of students gaining the highest A\* and A grades is below average. Measures of progress indicate that students make progress in line with that made by similar students in other schools. Although there is evidence to suggest that current students are making better progress than those who have recently left, this improvement is not fully established and has not had sufficient impact on examination results for students' achievement to be judged better than satisfactory.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. Many examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection. Where teaching is good, teachers make clear links with previous learning, set the learning in context and make regular reference to the criteria associated with particular GCSE grades or national curriculum levels. Positive relationships between teachers and students contribute strongly to students' positive attitudes. Where teaching is less successful, teachers' questioning provokes responses from only a small minority of students; on other occasions, questions are not sufficiently probing or teachers allow only limited time for students to reflect. While some examples of excellent practice were seen, not all teachers take sufficient account of the different abilities within the class in selecting appropriate objectives and learning activities.

Leaders and managers are beginning to use data effectively to monitor the progress of individual students, so that they can identify underachievers and provide appropriate support. However, the use of data to monitor the progress of groups is currently underdeveloped. The school's good capacity to improve is demonstrated by the rise in GCSE results together with better outcomes in other areas. For example, at the last inspection attendance was average and now it is above average; behaviour was satisfactory and is now good. Improvements are also evident in the quality of care, guidance and support offered by the school. Self-evaluation is generally accurate, although managers have an over-generous view of the quality of teaching. Within the

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overall improvements in students' achievement, there is variation between different subjects: for example in the key subjects of English and mathematics, improvements are less securely established than elsewhere in the school.

The school's specialist status contributes positively to students' successes. Recent GCSE results in English literature and religious education have been among the best in the school; results in English language and drama have been in line with other subjects. Additional options in Key Stage 4 include GCSE courses in media studies and i-media. Within the local community, the specialism has provided a focus for joint projects with partner primary schools and a well-established adult literacy course.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment, with a particular focus on increasing the proportion of A\* and A grades at GCSE.
- Improve teaching and learning through:
  - adapting teaching to cater for all abilities in the class
  - using questioning that involves more students and promotes deeper thinking and reflection.
- Sharpen the school's use of data to provide better information about overall progress and the progress of groups.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Achievement overall is satisfactory, with most groups making progress in line with expectations. After some years of underachievement, students' progress in mathematics is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well relative to their starting points. This is because they are well-supported in lessons, particularly when teaching assistants provide direct and well-targeted coaching. Students learn best when the work is well-tailored to their ability and they have opportunities to discuss their ideas with other students. Students enjoy tackling new work and respond well to challenges.

Students feel safe. They say that bullying is rare and most believe that staff deal well with any bullying incidents that occur. As a result of the school's efforts to raise awareness, students have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and this is reflected in the school having gained the local authority's Healthy Eating Award. More students take school dinners than in most schools and increasing numbers walk or cycle to school.

Students show many good personal qualities. For example, they have a strong sense of what is fair and show tolerance when faced with individual differences. Religious education lessons, supported by well-planned assembly themes, contribute well to students' moral and spiritual understanding. Students' development of workplace skills is satisfactory: students show good levels of attendance and punctuality but GCSE results in mathematics

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and English, which have been below average in two of the last three years, indicate that other key skills are less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, rather than good as judged by the school. The large majority of lessons seen during the inspection were good, with one graded as outstanding and none that was inadequate; however, teaching has not brought about consistently good progress sustained over a period of time. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan a range of activities that interest students and help them to develop positive attitudes to learning. They have a thorough knowledge of external assessment requirements and use this to help students understand how to move their learning forward. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology in lessons but often fail to exploit the full potential of interactive whiteboards. The quality of in-class feedback and written feedback in students' books varies considerably. Inspectors saw examples of excellent practice but also saw examples of cursory marking and narrow strategies for in-class assessment.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory match to students' needs. The Key Stage 3 curriculum meets requirements and offers opportunities to study two foreign languages. At Key Stage 4, students benefit from additional options arranged through collaboration with other local schools; in addition, a broad range of science options has contributed to

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improved results at GCSE. However, not all students in Years 10 and 11 receive the recommended two hours of physical education per week. Leaders and managers have begun to strengthen provision for cross-curricular learning through, for example, 'Out of the Box' days. Students appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that are on offer: large numbers participate in clubs, such as those that focus on sport, art or drama.

Good care, guidance and support help students to feel well cared for. The school's Catholic ethos helps to underpin a caring and supportive environment, where students' individual needs are well understood. Vulnerable students benefit from extensive support and case-study evidence shows that this support can lead to improved outcomes. Extensive efforts to improve attendance have had a clear impact, particularly in reducing the proportion of students who are persistently absent. Good academic guidance contributes to keeping low the number of students not in employment, education or training after they leave at age 16.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have successfully raised expectations of staff and students and teachers work together with a common sense of purpose. The use of demanding targets has helped to raise standards of attainment. Improvement planning has appropriate areas of focus but relates more to provision than outcomes and, as a result, success criteria are not always clearly measurable. Arrangements for safeguarding students are well-established and meet all requirements. Governors fulfil their duties well, including those relating to safeguarding procedures. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are closely involved in monitoring improvements. The impact of the school's actions to secure equality of opportunity for students is satisfactory.

The school engages well with parents and carers. Leaders and managers seek their views regularly and can give examples of how the views of parents and carers have influenced important decisions. The school promotes community cohesion well within the school and the local community but does not always evaluate the impact of its actions. In 2010, students joined forces with students at other local schools in a co-ordinated effort to raise money for victims of the floods in Pakistan; in addition, the school's involvement with the local inter-faith group is helping to promote students' understanding of different religions. However, strategies for developing students' understanding of other communities nationally and globally are less well developed: for example, not all students are aware that the school has established links with a school in Kenya.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Nearly 30% of parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire, a proportion that is well above average for a secondary school. Views of the school are consistently positive, particularly in respect of students feeling safe and enjoying school. Inspectors noted the very large majority who responded positively about dealing with unacceptable behaviour and this contributed to the team's judgement that behaviour in the school is good. A small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about grouping arrangements for some lessons in Key Stage 3 and these were passed on to the school.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at SS John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Humanities College, Colne 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 213 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 734 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	91	43	116	54	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	41	121	57	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	64	30	114	54	33	15	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	33	125	59	5	2	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	79	37	123	58	4	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	23	130	61	25	12	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	18	146	69	17	8	3	1
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)	73	34	112	53	10	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	31	125	59	8	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	30	116	54	14	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	21	132	62	12	6	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	81	38	117	55	5	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	99	46	105	49	4	2	0	0

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



7 February 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Humanities College, Colne, BB8 8JT**

Thank you for the welcome you gave when a team of inspectors and I inspected your school recently. This letter is to tell you about what we found. We judged that Saints John Fisher and Thomas More provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school's leaders and managers deserve considerable credit for having improved several aspects of provision and outcomes since the last inspection. For example, attendance rates have risen and GCSE examination results have risen faster than the rate of improvement nationally. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving.

The school provides good care, guidance and support, which makes a strong contribution to your personal development. You show many good personal qualities. For example, you behave well and many of you take advantage of the range of opportunities provided to engage in physical activities. You told us that you feel safe. You have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and this is reflected in the school having gained the local authority's Healthy Eating Award. We note that more of you take school dinners than in most schools and that increasing numbers are walking or cycling to school.

In order to improve further, we have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to:

- raise attainment, with a particular focus on increasing the proportion of A\* and A grades at GCSE
- ensure that teaching caters for all abilities in the class and that teachers involve more of you in responding to questions and reflecting on your answers
- sharpen the school's use of data to provide better information about overall progress and the progress of groups.

Make sure that you play your part in making the school more successful. You can do this by setting yourselves high standards and aiming for the very best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Chambers

Her Majesty's Inspector

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