

# Saint Pius X Catholic High School A Specialist School In Humanities

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106962
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	356061
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan McKenna

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>	651
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Audrey Hart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Eileen Gilmartin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Wath Wood Road Wath-upon-Deerne, Rotherham South Yorkshire S63 7PQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 24 lessons taught by 24 staff. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, students, governors, and a telephone conversation was held with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including policies, action plans, information about students' progress, attendance data, and records of internal and external monitoring. Responses to questionnaires returned by staff, students and the 95 returned by parents and carers were analysed.

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

- Whether the academic provision made by the school is satisfactory and is resulting in satisfactory progress for all groups of students, including in English and mathematics and across the full ability range.
- Whether there is enough consistency in the quality of provision and students' outcomes across all subjects.
- Whether pastoral provision is good and is resulting in positive personal outcomes for all groups of students, including their behaviour and attendance.
- Whether leaders and managers at all levels are improving the school fast enough.

## Information about the school

St Pius X is a smaller-than-average-sized Catholic secondary school. The very large majority of students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has specialist humanities status. The deputy headteacher became acting headteacher in September 2009 with the current senior leadership team being in position since that date.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

St Pius X is providing a satisfactory quality of education for its students. Its pastoral provision is good, resulting in a range of positive personal outcomes for students. Its academic provision is satisfactory. This is mainly because it is variable in quality. Some teaching, for example, is very effective, but some is considerably less so. The new senior leadership team's comprehensive monitoring and evaluation means that it is fully aware of where strengths and weaknesses lie and self-evaluation is accurate. Senior leaders are taking the right actions to promote improvement and are holding staff more accountable for their effectiveness. The quality of middle leadership is variable. Most middle leaders display a clear commitment to improvement and are working effectively to bring this about. Others are not having the required impact because their actions are not addressing weaknesses effectively enough. Overall, given the mixed picture outlined and while recognising the positive aspects, the school is currently demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Students' achievement is satisfactory. They enter the school with broadly average attainment. They leave with examination results that are broadly in line with national figures, both overall and in most subjects, including English and mathematics. Results are above average in a small number of subjects, such as history and physical education, but are below average in a small number such as design and technology and religious education, and at the higher grades in some others. All groups of students make broadly satisfactory progress, with some differences in standards that mainly reflect the national pattern, although boys tend to do better than girls, which is atypical. The most effective teaching engages students' interest, ensures their involvement, meets their different needs and promotes good learning. Some teaching does not promote their involvement sufficiently. Work does not always provide appropriate challenge for students and they do not always receive enough guidance on how well they are doing and how to improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory. The effectiveness of the specialism is mixed, with strengths in history and weaknesses in religious education.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Well-coordinated and personalised arrangements to support those students who are vulnerable for any reason are particularly effective, with good involvement of external agencies as required. As a result, students feel safe in school. Their relationships and behaviour are good. They show a well-developed awareness of spiritual, moral and social issues and make a positive contribution to the local community. Their attendance is average.

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

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching in order to raise students' attainment and accelerate their progress by:

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- ensuring that work in lessons provides appropriate challenge for the full range of abilities and needs
- ensuring that students are given precise information on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets
- providing regular opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning and ensuring that they are equipped to take some responsibility for it.
- Improve the effectiveness and consistency of middle leadership by:
  - ensuring all middle leaders undertake accurate and rigorous evaluation of the full range of monitoring evidence in order to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility, the reasons for them and what needs to be done to bring about improvement
  - taking well-targeted actions to build on strengths and to tackle weaknesses.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Students generally listen to what their teachers tell them in lessons, follow instructions and try to complete their work well. When teaching is particularly effective, students are more animated and engaged, are keen to volunteer answers and participate, benefit from the higher quality of input and challenge and so they learn well. In other lessons, however, they are more passive in their learning. While they do as they are asked, and usually make satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding, the fact that fewer demands are made on them either practically or intellectually means that their learning is at a slower rate than it could be. Some lack confidence to ask questions, express their views or let their teachers know when they do not understand something. Nevertheless, students' learning and progress are satisfactory overall, including in English and mathematics. This is the case for most groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This school has prioritised several groups to target for raising their attainment, including more-able students, and middle- and lower-ability girls whose aspirations it feels need to be heightened. There are some early signs that standards are beginning to rise as a result of actions taken recently, but these have yet to show significant impact in all examination results.

Students say they feel safe in school, because of positive relationships and the opportunities that the wide-ranging personal, social, citizenship and health education programme provides for them to discuss relevant issues. This programme also enables students to consider and evaluate moral and social issues, resulting in them being able to form reasoned opinions and make informed judgements. Most behave well in lessons and around the school and are considerate towards others. A minority do not always conform to school expectations of their conduct. Students contribute to the local community in a variety of positive ways, including through the choir, charity fund-raising, helping with Christmas lunch for elderly parishioners and by participating in events and competitions. Their contribution within school is more limited. Students understand how to keep healthy, but they do not always make appropriate choices, such as when buying snacks at break time. While students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is

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good, the latter aspect is not as well developed as the others. Persistent absenteeism is falling.

*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	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</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>	3
<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?

Relationships between teachers and students in lessons are good, and contribute towards students doing as teachers ask of them. Teachers are usually clear about what they want students to learn and explain this at the start of lessons so students understand what they are doing and why. Secure subject knowledge and tasks given help to promote relevant knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, flair and skill are shown in the way that teachers stimulate students' interest, set activities that demand that students get actively involved and motivates them to do so, ensure the right degree of challenge for all and check their understanding so it can be promoted further. Not all teaching is of this quality. Sometimes teachers talk too much and they do not give enough time for students to work independently or to make sure they draw everyone into discussions, so learning is at a slower pace. The same work is sometimes given to all students irrespective of their different ability, which, particularly but not exclusively, disadvantages the more-able. Students' understanding is not checked thoroughly and misunderstandings are not always corrected. Some teachers make good reference to National Curriculum and examination requirements and the criteria for attaining different levels and grades, but not all do and this limits the extent to which students can take responsibility for their learning. So, too,

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does the fact that students are not always given precise enough information about how they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work or reach their targets. When this does happen, students' learning is better.

The curriculum is broad with an appropriate range of options and pathways, including some that are vocational, to meet the needs of students. Provision for gifted and talented and the more-able students is not fully developed across all subjects but work is underway to improve this, albeit that it is at an early stage in some cases. While provision for English and mathematics is satisfactory and improving, the cross-curricular promotion of basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, is not yet planned for systematically. Although students' transport arrangements place some limitations on extra-curricular provision after school, a satisfactory variety of activities are nevertheless offered with good uptake by a broad range of students. The personal, social, citizenship and health education curriculum is effective in most aspects, but is less so in promoting a commitment to healthy lifestyles.

Effective pastoral care arrangements for all students are in place, with additional ones targeted on those who need extra support. These draw on internal expertise and are supplemented by a wide range of external agencies. As a result, vulnerable students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are helped to be able to cope with school life, meet expectations and are enabled to make progress in their learning. The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is variable. When thought is given to their deployment and they have a specific role informed by the needs of students, it is good. However, when their role in lessons is unclear and unplanned, their contribution is less effective. Arrangements to promote attendance have become more robust and coordinated and so are having a greater impact than previously. Arrangements for students' transition into Year 7 and on to post-school options are good.

*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?**

The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher and increasingly by other, new, senior leaders, is establishing a climate of higher aspirations within the school. This is increasingly shared by other colleagues, so there is a momentum towards promoting improvement and change building up. They have clarified expectations of other leaders and staff and have put in place systems and procedures which are tightening aspects of leadership and management including accountability for performance, although some of these are relatively new and so have yet to have a full impact. Middle leaders have generally responded well to this and are enthusiastic about the role they have to play, accepting increased scrutiny because it is within a supportive framework. However, a

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minority of middle leaders are not effective enough, because their monitoring and evaluation lacks rigour and their understanding of the effectiveness of their areas and the reasons for it are superficial and so are not resulting in sufficient improvement.

The governing body is very committed to the school and understands its current effectiveness, its strengths and weaknesses well. They are developing their role of holding the school to account, helped by a sharper understanding of data about the school's performance. The school takes students' safety seriously and arrangements for safeguarding and checking the suitability of adults working in the school meet current requirements. The school values all students equally and ensures an inclusive ethos within which any discrimination is tackled. However, although the school checks on how well most of its different groups are doing, this is not yet comprehensive, and the outcomes are not being used to inform lesson planning as a matter of routine.

The school's own community is cohesive. Relationships with parents and carers are positive with increased information to them about how their children are doing and more opportunities for contact with the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when communication with parents and carers was a weakness. The promotion of community cohesion in a wider context is less developed, although the school has audited its provision and knows where it needs to take action. There are good partnerships with a wide range of agencies to meet students' needs and to broaden their experiences.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</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>3</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

The very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire outlining their views of the school were positive about all aspects of it, confirming the improvements made in this aspect since the last inspection. Inspection evidence supports some of these views, but finds that some aspects, such as academic outcomes and the



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quality of teaching, are satisfactory. The statement that the largest proportion of parents and carers disagreed with, albeit a very small minority, was, 'the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour'. Inspection evidence indicates that most students behave well and behaviour is good overall. A minority of students sometimes do not behave as expected, but the school has appropriate systems in place for dealing with this when it occurs.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint Pius X Catholic High School A Specialist School In Humanities 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 651 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	44	50	53	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	49	41	43	7	7	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	49	42	44	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	48	45	47	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	43	48	51	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	44	45	47	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	29	61	64	3	3	2	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)	51	54	40	42	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	41	49	52	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	42	36	38	13	14	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	32	55	58	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	40	42	47	49	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	54	37	39	6	6	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	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](http://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"> <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.**



1 December 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Saint Pius X Catholic High School A Specialist School In Humanities, Rotherham, S63 7PQ**

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for talking to us when we visited your school this week. I am writing to tell you of our findings.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. This is because the curriculum, quality of teaching and the progress that you make are all satisfactory and your attainment by the time you are 16 is in line with that reached by students nationally. Some teaching is good, with activities that interest you and are well matched to your different abilities, opportunities for you to become actively involved in your learning and with good feedback on how well you are doing and how to improve your work and reach your targets. However, not all lessons are as good as this and one of the things we have asked the school to improve is to make sure that all lessons have these features and so help you learn well.

The care and support the school provides for you are good, and are especially good for those who need extra help. This means that you feel safe in school, have good relationships with others, have a good understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues, make a good contribution to your local community and most of you behave well. Your attendance is in line with the national figures.

Your headteacher is very keen to improve the school further for you, and she, along with senior leaders and some other leaders, is taking effective steps to bring this about. The other thing we have asked the school to do is to ensure that all leaders carefully and accurately check how effective their areas of responsibility are so they understand the strengths and areas that require development and take well-targeted action to bring about improvement.

You can help by being as actively involved in lessons as you can and acting on the information teachers give you about how to improve your work. I would like to wish you all and your teachers and leaders all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan McKenna  
Lead inspector

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