

All Saints Catholic Centre for Learning (VA)

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 135479 |
| Local Authority | Knowsley |
| Inspection number | 360724 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Shirley Gornall HMI |

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

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|--|--|
| 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 | 1178 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 115 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Eric Seel |
| Headteacher | Mr Pete Bradley |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Roughwood Drive Northwood, Kirkby Merseyside L33 8XF |
| Telephone number | 0151 477 8740 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 52 lessons taught by 52 teachers and held meetings with students, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documents including improvement planning, assessment records, monitoring reports, minutes of key meetings, safeguarding records and the school's self-evaluation. They analysed 35 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 89 from staff and 224 from students.

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

- The extent to which students of all abilities make progress, particularly in mathematics and English.
- The impact of the organisation of the school day, including 100 minute lessons, on students' motivation, enjoyment and progress.
- The extent to which literacy skills are effectively taught across the curriculum.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders in monitoring, evaluating and directing improvement.

Information about the school

All Saints Catholic Centre for Learning is a larger than average secondary school which opened in January 2010 as part of the reorganised educational provision in Knowsley and occupies new premises in Kirkby. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is around twice the national figure. The very large majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national figure, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is broadly average. The school has specialist status for business and enterprise and has been accredited as an Investor in People and an International School. It holds the Career Education Information Advice and Guidance Award. The small sixth form serves the local area in collaboration with partner providers.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

All Saints Catholic Centre for Learning is a good school, characterised by its palpable mission of 'love and justice'. Under the strong and principled leadership of the headteacher, provision and outcomes have strengthened during a period of transition into impressive new premises. Students enjoy all the school has to offer and their achievement is good. Attainment is broadly average; the proportion of students achieving five good grades at GCSE or equivalent is well above average, however, the proportion securing good grades including English and mathematics is low in comparison to national averages, but rising quickly. There is some variability in attainment in different subjects. Students make good progress overall and have positive attitudes to learning. The school's Catholic ethos underpins its work as an inclusive, harmonious community where all students are known and valued as individuals. Students behave well, show respect and take responsibility for their decisions. They feel very safe and value the efforts made by staff to ensure their well-being. Attendance is broadly average but the proportion of students who are persistently absent is very low as a result of determined action taken by the school in partnership with other agencies. A small number of students arrive late to school despite the strong efforts made by staff to encourage punctuality. The school's specialism in business and enterprise makes a powerful contribution to students' experiences and outcomes, enabling them to develop entrepreneurial skills and a good awareness of the world of work. Their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) are well developed and applied in varied contexts across the curriculum but their skills in speaking and writing, particularly with regard to spelling and sentence structure, are weaker.

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some that is satisfactory and an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and teachers' assessment of students' work is generally very accurate. Inspectors observed some highly creative practice, particularly in mathematics where standards are rising strongly. On some occasions, however, the degree of challenge provided does not promote high-level achievement. Lessons are 100 minutes long and students' attention wanes when the range and pace of activities is insufficient to maintain their active engagement. A good curriculum has been developed, with an increased range of courses available at Key Stage 4 to meet individual needs. Outstanding care, guidance and support, including that provided through partnership with a wide variety of agencies, contribute greatly to students' happiness, self-esteem and good progress.

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide intelligent and determined leadership, articulating a vision which staff and students recognise and subscribe to. Their commitment to providing students with a learning environment in which they feel secure and flourish is realised in exemplary safeguarding practice. In partnership with a committed and knowledgeable governing body, leaders at all levels ensure a climate in

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which students' self-esteem provides a strong foundation for achievement. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's performance and have taken measured and effective action to reduce underachievement in significant areas and develop consistency of practice. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, contributed to by leaders, teachers, students, parents and carers and the local authority. The school has a track record of success in tackling underachievement which, combined with its streamlined and intelligent management systems, mean that it has good capacity for sustained improvement.

The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students make good progress from their starting points and achieve particularly well in subjects related to the school's business and enterprise specialism. They benefit from excellent care, guidance and support and are well prepared for their next stage in education or training. Their contribution to the life of the school is impressive.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, by raising standards in those subjects where performance is below the national average.
- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or outstanding by:
 - - ensuring that all teachers plan varied and stimulating activities to engage students for 100 minute lessons
 - - ensuring that expectations of students are sufficiently high and lessons are appropriately challenging.
- Enhance students' skills in speaking and writing by:
 - - adopting a consistent approach to improving spelling and sentence structure across subjects
 - - providing students with varied opportunities to speak and write for particular purposes and audiences.
- Improve the punctuality of the very small minority of students who arrive late to school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enjoy what the school has to offer and achieve well from starting points which are generally below average. In 2010, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE qualifications at A* to C grades including English and mathematics was below average, although the proportion gaining five A* to C qualifications was very high, partly due to the success of the school's vocational programme. Students' attainment is high in ICT, physical education and courses related to its thriving business and enterprise specialism.

School data and lesson observations confirm that students make good progress. Rates of progress in mathematics have accelerated as a result of creative and energetic teaching. The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers due to high quality support which is carefully matched to their needs. Progress has accelerated for those students known to be eligible for free school meals.

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Students behave well in lessons and around the site, including in the large social spaces. They are courteous and polite and the majority concentrate well and show perseverance. Students report that incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, are rare and swiftly addressed by staff. They feel very safe in school and play their part in keeping their environment tidy.

During their time at All Saints, students develop attitudes and skills that equip them satisfactorily for the world of work. Their attendance is average and very few students are persistently absent. A small but significant number of students arrive late for school and sometimes miss out on valuable activities at the start of the day.

Many students develop entrepreneurial skills directly as a result of the school's specialist status, for example when working collaboratively to design and organise festive markets. They have a well-developed moral sense and appreciate the principles of fair trade, as shown by their engagement in a credit union to support overseas aid. Students take on a variety of roles within their community, including as mentors, team leaders and representatives of the school council. Their ICT skills are well developed and used in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. In general, their skills in speaking and writing are weaker than their numeracy skills. Their vocabulary choices are often limited and some are reluctant to express their views at length. Their spelling is often weak and sentence structures lack variety. The All Saints Pledge supports students at Key Stage 3 in taking responsibility for their physical, moral and cultural development. Their spiritual growth is evident not only in thought-provoking assemblies but through opportunities for reflection in lessons, for instance in an outstanding geography lesson where students showed a genuine sense of wonder about the phenomenon of the Northern Lights.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| 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?

The quality of teaching has improved since the school's opening due to a continual focus on developing and sharing good practice. Professional development seminars led by staff, and regular newsletters focused on learning have broadened the repertoire of teaching styles. The majority of teaching is now securing good progress, and some is outstanding. The best lessons are characterised by lively, engaging, creative teaching which challenges students to achieve ambitious targets. In a highly effective music lesson, Year 7 students showed sustained concentration, independence and enjoyment when composing using ostinato patterns. Year 10 students made excellent progress in understanding algebraic equations when they were stimulated by a range of carefully sequenced activities that developed their thinking skills. In English, teachers inspired their students to engage with Shakespearean language through well-chosen resources and infectious enthusiasm. In satisfactory lessons, expectations for what students can achieve are not sufficiently high. In such lessons, students are not always appropriately challenged to think for themselves and not consistently supported to produce extended written pieces or to speak confidently for varying purposes and audiences. Lessons are of 100 minutes' duration and where activities are not well paced and engaging, students' concentration wanes and they lose interest.

Most students know their targets and have a good understanding of their next steps towards achieving them. Teachers' marking is good, including a balance of praise and

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advice for improvement. Students are increasingly able to make accurate assessments of their own work and that of their peers. In the majority of lessons, teachers meet the varying needs of students effectively but on occasions there is lack of clarity as to how they deploy teaching assistants to support learning. The curriculum is broad, balanced and generally meets the needs of students. Wide-ranging, personalised pathways at Key Stage 4 enable students to achieve a variety of vocational qualifications, including through collaborative arrangements with other providers. Students at risk of underachievement are supported through various catch-up programmes, including one-to-one provision, whose impact is beneficial. Reading skills are developed, including through designated time in the Ready to Learn programme, but writing across the curriculum is less well developed. The school offers an excellent range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, from horse riding to drumming, which students value greatly. The school's impressive social space is a forum for both planned and impromptu activities led by both staff and students.

Students agree that the quality of care, guidance and support they receive is a significant strength of the school, commenting that, 'we are treated as individuals and helped to do our best.' They appreciate the outstanding support they receive on transition from primary school, when every student and their parents/carers have individual interviews with a governor and teacher. All students have personal tutors who take a keen interest in their progress. The quality advice and guidance students receive in determining their next steps post-16 is exemplary, resulting in the school having a very low level of leavers not in education, employment or training. Students identified as vulnerable, including those who are looked after by the local authority, are extremely well supported and nurtured so that they can enjoy all aspects of school life.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides determined, sensitive leadership. He is highly respected by staff, students, parents and carers and demonstrates absolute commitment to the community he serves. He is fully supported by skilled and experienced senior leaders who fulfil their duties with energy, integrity and good humour. Departmental leaders are hardworking, insightful and mutually supportive. As one commented, 'We are a strong team; we enjoy sharing ideas and learning from each other.' Leaders have successfully managed the opening of the new school in purpose-built premises whose design has necessitated transformation of organisational systems and pedagogy. It is testimony to their ethos and tenacity that they have achieved this while securing improved student attainment. School leaders at all levels have a firm focus on raising achievement and have developed clear and consistently implemented systems for demonstrating quality and

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ensuring accountability. Leaders' expectations are high and they take well-planned actions where teaching is found to be satisfactory in order to improve its quality.

Governors provide effective support and ensure that strategic decisions are properly considered. They are integral to the spiritual and secular life of the school and have a major role in maintaining strong relationships with the community. Equality of opportunity is ensured, for example, through curriculum policies and through interventions that support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in accessing all that is provided by the school. The school has worked hard to minimise differences in performance between different groups by working to remove barriers to achievement for all individuals. Students are adamant that discrimination of any form is not tolerated. Safeguarding procedures are exemplary, covering all aspects of school life, including robust procedures to ensure the well-being of students who access part of their education off-site. Highly effective partnerships have been developed with a wide variety of agencies to ensure that students' individual needs are met, in terms of curriculum provision and pastoral care.

The school is fully aware of its own context and contributes well to community cohesion. Strong links have been developed with the immediate community, particularly with local primary schools where All Saints students undertake mentoring activities. Charitable work is extremely strong, both locally and internationally. The school is well placed to build on its recent strong improvement and make further gains.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Sixth form

The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students achieve well from starting points which are typically below average. They are particularly successful in subjects relating to the school's specialist status. Sixth form students are positive role models who make a

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valuable contribution to the rest of the school, including through helping younger students in paired reading programmes and taking a leading role in fund-raising activities. The needs of sixth form students are met through collaborative arrangements with other partners and there is effective guidance in place to ensure that they access the courses most appropriate to their skills and aspirations. The establishment of internships in the finance industry to support students' entry into the world of work is a striking example of the school's commitment to broaden opportunities and raise ambitions. Each student's progress is meticulously tracked, with appropriate and rapid intervention taken whenever necessary. The sixth form is well led and managed by a dedicated team who have clear ambitions for its future development.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The percentage of parents and carers who completed questionnaires was much lower than average. The vast majority of those who responded say that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. They are pleased with the quality of teaching and care their children received and feel that the school is well led. A very small minority feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors took particular note of this view in observing behaviour in lessons and around school. They also looked at behavioural records and had discussion with staff and students. They found behaviour to be good and its management to be effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at All Saints Catholic Centre for Learning (VA) 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1178 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 13 | 37 | 20 | 57 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 14 | 40 | 19 | 54 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 24 | 69 | 11 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 18 | 51 | 17 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 13 | 37 | 21 | 60 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 13 | 37 | 22 | 63 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 8 | 23 | 24 | 69 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 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) | 13 | 37 | 18 | 51 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 14 | 40 | 21 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 11 | 31 | 19 | 54 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 8 | 23 | 23 | 66 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 13 | 37 | 20 | 57 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 17 | 49 | 16 | 46 | 1 | 3 | 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).

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"> ■ 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.



10 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of All Saints Catholic Centre for Learning (VA), Kirkby, L33 8XF

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we inspected your school recently. We were impressed by your caring and sensible behaviour and the pride you rightly take in your school. Thank you to those of you who gave up time to speak to us and those who completed the questionnaire. We agree with you that your leaders and teachers provide you with an exceptionally high standard of care and support. We think that you work well with the staff and make a strong contribution to the positive way in which your school is regarded by your local community. We were impressed that so many of you take on extra responsibilities such as being councillors, mentors and sports leaders. The inspection team consider yours to be a good school which provides you with a good standard of education. The way in which the school's business and enterprise specialism has been developed is very strong. Through activities such as planning and running the festive markets you gain skills that will be useful to you in later life. The school's procedures for keeping you safe are excellent.

We have identified some points for improvement. First, we have asked the school to raise results at the end of Key Stage 4 still further. To help achieve this, we have asked that the amount of good and outstanding teaching is increased. Your teachers already work extremely hard; you can help them by letting them know the sorts of activity that really help you think and learn best. You should also take note of the advice they give you when they mark your work. We have also asked the school to focus on helping you develop your skills in speaking and writing so that you are confident to communicate with people in a wide variety of situations in later life. Finally, we have asked for punctuality to improve. Those of you who arrive to school late in the morning must try to get there on time so that you do not miss out on important learning.

Please continue to support your school as strongly as you do. On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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