

# Harrytown Catholic High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106143
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	355896
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Davis 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>	772
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs L Tommony
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Cunningham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Harrytown Lane Romiley, Stockport Cheshire SK6 3BU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4305277
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. Teaching and learning were observed in 31 lessons and 30 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. The inspection team examined the school's self-evaluation of its work, the school development plan, students' work and data on their current performance, minutes of meetings, and policies. Inspectors also considered an analysis of 251 parents' and carers' questionnaires as well as those from students and staff.

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

- The reasons for improved outcomes for students and whether the rising trend in attainment is sustainable.
- The effectiveness of support and challenge provided by the school to more-able students.
- The effectiveness of the school's actions to address the comparative underperformance of girls.

## Information about the school

Harrytown Catholic High School is a smaller-than-average secondary school on the outskirts of Manchester. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is less than half the national average. The school has specialist status for science and has gained the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

Harrytown Catholic High School is a good and rapidly improving school, with many outstanding features. Good progress has been made in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. There has been a sharp rise in attainment over the past three years. Data provided by the school on current performance suggest that this has been sustained. Attainment is well-above average in English, mathematics and science. Learning and progress are good for most groups across the school, but the proportion of students gaining the top grades in external examinations is below average in some subjects. The learning and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Students' achievement is good overall.

The school has a relentless focus on improving and celebrating achievement. It provides a warm, welcoming, inclusive environment in which all students are valued. Students appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive; as one student commented, 'This school never gives up on you.' Procedures for safeguarding are good and students feel safe in the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community, reflecting the school's insistence that students care for others less fortunate than themselves. The extent to which students develop workplace skills is also outstanding. The school has worked effectively to improve attendance, which is now above average. Behaviour is good and movement around the school is orderly. Students are friendly, reflective, cooperative and polite. They say that there is very little bullying and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Students show enthusiasm for their studies and relationships between students and teachers are good. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to engage the students and support their learning.

The use of assessment to support learning is good. In many areas of the curriculum, such as English, assessment is used highly effectively to support learning. However, on occasions, teachers do not always use to good effect the wealth of assessment information available when planning lessons. As a result, activities are not always matched sufficiently to the needs and abilities of students.

The curriculum is good and contributes effectively to improving outcomes in achievement and attendance. A broad range of traditional subjects is on offer and the science specialism has led the way in introducing a variety of vocational courses which better meet the needs, interests and abilities of some learners. The specialism contributes also to effective links with local primary schools and provides opportunities for further education for local adults.

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Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The headteacher, ably supported by the leadership team, has successfully inspired the school community to share his vision and ambition in order to secure improved outcomes for students. As a result, the school is characterised by high expectations and there is a tangible confidence that attainment will continue to rise. Areas of weakness have been tackled robustly and planning for further improvement is highly fit for purpose. Self-evaluation is highly accurate and, as a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is also outstanding. The school provides good value for money and deploys resources effectively.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. It has highly effective strategies to challenge racism and incidents of this nature are very rare. However, strategies to address the comparative underperformance of girls at Key Stage 4 are at the early stages of development and therefore the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination is only satisfactory.

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

- Raise attainment further by:
  - increasing the proportion of students gaining the top grades in external examinations
  - devising and implementing effective strategies to eradicate the comparative underperformance of girls in Key Stage 4.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - disseminating existing good practice more widely
  - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that better meet the needs and abilities of all students.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Students enter the school with prior attainment that is above average. They make good progress now as they move up through the school and attainment at the end of Year 11 is well-above average for many key indicators. Therefore, their achievement is good overall. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is well-above average and the school benefits from strong leadership in these areas of the curriculum. The school recognises that, in some subjects, the proportion of students gaining the top grades in examinations has been below average and strategies to combat such underperformance are at the early stages of development, as are those to eradicate the comparative underperformance of girls. The learning and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Intervention and support are used highly effectively to secure good outcomes for these students. Progress in lessons observed during the inspection was good overall.

Students feel safe in the school. They trust staff and feel that they can confide in them should problems arise. Behaviour is good, allowing lessons to proceed productively. The number of exclusions is decreasing. Students have a good appreciation of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and there is a higher-than-average take-up of school meals. Opportunities to participate in extra-curricular sport are appreciated by the students.

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Students show pride in their school and their achievements. They assume responsibilities willingly and play a substantial role in the local community, supporting a charity for the homeless and working with a residential home for senior citizens. Workplace skills are developed through a well-planned programme of work-related learning and are supported by good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Punctuality to lessons was exemplary during the inspection and attendance is above average.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The students have the opportunity to reflect on ethical issues both in lessons and on retreats. For example, in an outstanding Year 9 religious education lesson observed during the inspection, students discussed the problem of evil from a Christian perspective, showing insight and the ability to consider complex and challenging philosophical concepts. Students speak highly of 'Themed Days' which afford them the opportunity to appreciate cultural diversity.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</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 is good overall. In the best lessons, teachers plan interesting and challenging activities that engage students fully, enabling them to acquire knowledge, refine skills and enjoy their learning. Such lessons are characterised by a brisk pace, a clear sense of purpose and high expectations. However, some inconsistency in the quality

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of teaching is evident. In weaker lessons, activities lack variety and too much talk from the teacher leads to a lack of engagement on the part of students.

The use of assessment to support learning is good. Systems for tracking the performance of students and putting in place intervention and support when students are not performing as well as they might are highly developed and are used effectively in many areas of the curriculum. However, in some instances, teachers do not use this information effectively when planning lessons. As a result, activities are not always tailored sufficiently to the needs and abilities of individual students.

The school has developed a good curriculum with a wide range of traditional subjects and an increasing variety of vocational courses. The curriculum has resulted in improved outcomes for students and in their attitudes to learning. Provision is broad and balanced and enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Support is highly tailored to individual needs throughout the school. Students feel that the move from primary school is particularly well supported. Similarly, those leaving school are provided with high-quality advice and guidance on possible routes for the next stage in their lives. Students speak highly of the school's work in this respect, as do parents and carers; as one parent commented, 'We cannot praise the school enough for showing so clearly that every child matters'.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has shown vision, determination and passion in driving the school forward. Leadership at all levels is a strength of the school. The headteacher speaks highly of the contribution that all members of the school have made to improved outcomes. There is a shared sense of pride in all that the school has achieved. A culture of high expectations and accountability has been embedded and, as a result, there is a relentless and discernible ambition to secure further improvement.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. Rigorous training for middle leaders has enabled effective delegation of responsibilities and therefore all members of the school community are clear about how their work contributes to improved outcomes for students. However, the school does not as yet provide sufficient opportunities to share existing outstanding practice so that all lessons may be as good as the best.

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The school is supported by an able and knowledgeable governing body. The governing body has an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is highly effective in holding the school to account.

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. Channels of communication are open, efficient and appreciated by parents and carers. The school is keen to involve parents and carers in decision-making and they are consulted on a wide range of issues relating to their children's education. The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being is good. Effective links exist with primary schools, other secondary schools and further education providers. Furthermore, links with institutions such as the fire service and local businesses help to prepare students for the world of work.

The effectiveness with which the school tackles discrimination and promotes equal opportunities is satisfactory as the impact of the school's actions to address the underperformance of girls is yet to be seen. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is good. The school is itself highly cohesive and inclusive. It reaches out to others that are less fortunate, both within and beyond the local community. Students are actively involved in raising money to help people in difficult circumstances both locally and overseas, for example in Africa or Haiti. Procedures for safeguarding are good and the school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

There was an average return to the Ofsted questionnaire. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and most say that their children enjoy school and that it meets their children's needs. Most parents and carers feel that the school informs them well of



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their children's progress, while a very large majority feel that their children are making enough progress and that the school prepares them well for the future.

A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be good overall during the inspection and that the school has appropriate systems to manage poor behaviour should it occur. A few parents and carers raised concerns regarding bullying, but when inspectors spoke to groups of students they said that bullying is rare and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively. Most parents and carers feel that the school is led and managed effectively and a very large majority are happy with their children's experience at Harrytown Catholic High School.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harrytown Catholic High School 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 251 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 772 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	30	149	59	22	9	4	2
The school keeps my child safe	108	43	131	52	9	4	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	93	37	144	57	11	4	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	31	142	57	23	9	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	73	29	154	61	13	5	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	18	167	67	24	10	6	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	11	170	68	42	17	1	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)	66	26	165	66	14	6	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	24	157	63	9	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	23	130	52	34	14	15	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	19	137	55	36	14	6	2
The school is led and managed effectively	61	24	156	62	29	12	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	76	30	145	58	19	8	3	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.**



10 June 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Harrytown Catholic High School, Stockport, SK6 3BU**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome we received during our inspection of your school. We were impressed by your friendliness and the kindness you show towards one another and people less fortunate than yourselves. We found that your school provides you with a good standard of education. Many of you enjoy taking part in the life of the school and you make an outstanding contribution to your local community. You make good progress as you move up through the school and attainment at the end of Year 11 is above average.

Teaching is good overall. We noticed that you enjoy lessons that are imaginative and challenging. Your behaviour is good and you are very polite. The school cares for you very well and you trust your teachers. You know you can talk to them if you have a problem.

We identified a number of areas where we think the school should make improvements. We have asked the headteacher to make sure the best teachers share their ideas with other teachers so that all lessons can be as good as the best, with interesting and stimulating activities that meet your individual needs and abilities. We have also asked the headteacher to make sure those students who are capable of getting the best grades in examinations do so and to make sure that girls do as well as boys. All of you can help in the improvement of your school by continuing to attend school regularly, working hard and taking advantage of the many opportunities available to you.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Davis

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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