

# St Cecilia's RC Technology College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119800
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379894
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sally Kenyon 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>	457
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Canon Paul Mitcheson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Tattersall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Chapel Hill Longridge Preston PR3 2XA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 28 lessons taught by 26 teachers. They held meetings with students, staff, governors and the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at evidence from a work scrutiny and responses from 206 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The achievement of middle and higher-ability students to determine whether teaching provides sufficient challenge.
- The use of assessment to support learning to improve achievement.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all students.
- The effectiveness of the governing body in ensuring that the school is held to account and meets statutory requirements.
- The capacity of leaders and managers at all levels to tackle weaknesses and secure improvement.

## Information about the school

St Cecilia's is a smaller than average secondary school. It is a specialist technology college. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average whilst the number with a statement of special needs is average. The school appointed a new headteacher in September 2010.

**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 Cecilia's Roman Catholic Technology College is a satisfactory school. Some aspects of the school are good, including behaviour, community cohesion and care, guidance and support. One parent commented, 'St Cecilia's is a school with a caring Catholic ethos which works hard to nurture individual children. The school aims to offer a 'family' atmosphere and prides itself in knowing students as individuals'.

Students' attainment on entry to the school is above the national average. Achievement is satisfactory, due to satisfactory progress leading to above-average attainment in Key Stage 4. The school has recognised that, historically, target-setting has not always provided sufficient challenge to secure good progress for all groups. As a result, it has employed the services of a consultant to support the newly-formed data team to install new data systems and ensure that targets are at least adequately challenging, and in some cases aspirational. The school has also created robust systems for tracking students' progress, and last year's target setting proved to be accurate. Senior and middle leaders strategically analyse data of exam performance to inform school improvement planning. However, not all areas of school improvement are yet thoroughly grounded in strategic data analysis.

Teaching overall is satisfactory. In some lessons, students make outstanding progress as a direct result of meticulous planning to meet all of their specific learning needs. For example, in an outstanding art lesson, students were grouped by ability and given stimulating and exciting learning resources tailored to their needs. Students found the learning resources engaging, motivating and challenging, and they allowed the more able to extend their learning and use more sophisticated thinking skills.

Where teaching is satisfactory, students do not make good progress because learning is sometimes slow to start and too much of the lesson is led by the teacher. Opportunities are missed for learning to be checked; when it is checked, it is sometimes only for a few students so the teacher cannot ascertain the progress of the whole class. Extension activities are not always provided for the more-able students, and sometimes inappropriate extension activities are set that do not permit higher level thinking to take place. Planning does not always include specific learning strategies to allow students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make the same progress as their peers.

The headteacher has already brought about significant improvements. The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement based upon well-focused improvement plans and broadly accurate self-evaluation. Middle leaders are directly involved in school improvement, for example, driving the increased use of data in school, using performance management to improve the quality of teaching and gaining consistency in the quality of oral and written feedback to students. However, the school does not currently fully exploit the collective expertise of middle leaders in self-evaluation to accelerate school improvement.

The governing body is passionately committed to the school. However, its role in self-evaluation is limited. Over the past year it has started to attend training events for governors in order to hold the school to account more effectively. Members of the Governing Body engage with parents and carers through school events and work directly with the school on issues such as the monitoring of exclusions.

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?**

- Improve the quality of teaching to secure good progress for all groups by:
  - using data consistently to inform lesson planning and match the work to students' abilities
  - ensuring consistent use of effective teaching strategies to support students with specific learning needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more-able
  - embedding a whole-school approach in assessment to support learning.
- Increase the rigour of self-evaluation by:
  - systematically analysing outcomes for all groups to inform improvement planning
  - expanding the role of middle leaders and governors in whole-school monitoring and review
  - enhancing procedures around the monitoring of risk assessments.

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

<b>3</b>
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The very large majority of students' attainment seen by inspectors through lesson observations was above average. This, coupled with historically accurate tracking data predicting significantly improved results for 2012, shows that attainment is rapidly improving. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall and are on track to meet their targets.

The large majority of behaviour seen in lessons is good. Often, behaviour in lessons is directly linked to the quality of teaching. The procedures for students being referred to isolation during lessons have been reviewed and as a result of careful monitoring, referrals have greatly reduced. Instances of bullying are rare and

students are confident that there are a number of adults they could turn to if they had a problem. Students reported that they feel safe in school and almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree.

Persistent absence was well above the national average in 2009/ 2010. The pastoral liaison officer targeted this group and has reduced persistent absence by half for 2010/ 2011. The school is monitoring persistent absence closely to ensure that it continues to reduce and falls below the level of similar schools nationally. Attendance is average because, while for some groups attendance is high, for others it is low and although these groups are now being monitored, the full impact of this work is yet to be seen. Students report that they feel well prepared in terms of skills and guidance for life outside school and the overwhelming majority of them continue into further education, employment or training.

Students and the school council members are actively involved in their school and local community. For example, they have secured more dustbins for the school site as some were concerned about rubbish and they go out to work in the community by carol singing for the elderly. Through a Christmas fundraiser they managed to buy four chickens, one goat and a vegetable patch for a village in Africa.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. There is a clear sense that the Catholic faith is at the core of the school's work; this is evident in classroom displays and was seen in a Year 9 assembly where prayers were said and the story of the good Samaritan read from the Bible. Many students take the opportunity to attend a religious retreat at Savio House.

*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>	2
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>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>2</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>

## How effective is the provision?

While a very small minority of inadequate teaching was seen, a few outstanding lessons were also seen. In an outstanding music lesson, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities were making outstanding progress due to the

<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

well thought out learning resources tailored to their specific learning needs. However, there is inconsistent support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities because while the teachers and learning support assistants use praise and encouragement, strategies used for support are not always specific enough to student's individual learning needs.

The curriculum currently offers a great breadth of options, particularly at Key Stage 4. As a result of a curriculum review, the curriculum has been and will continue to be significantly refined. Some impact of this has already been seen with the reduction of diploma courses and the expansion of the modern languages curriculum at Key Stage 3. The school is taking a more personalised approach to the curriculum design having analysed the outcomes for different groups, for example it is working with a local college to improve provision for the more-able. Through the specialism, the school has been able to improve its provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and inspectors saw some good examples of ICT being used to enhance learning.

The school has a strong pastoral team who know students as individuals. Some parents and carers reported that good links with primary schools have ensured that their children have settled in well to school life. Students, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, feel safe in school and able to speak to a number of different adults in school if they have a problem. There are 40 prefects in Year 11 who take on break and lunchtime duties and lead sporting and other activities. Students from Key Stage 4 mentor conscientiously students in Key Stage 3. One parent commented, 'My daughter has just started in Year 7. She has come from a school with no other friends... the school has worked extremely hard at settling all new children and she thinks the school is great.'

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher is leading most effectively. He 'really listens to the views of parents and children' is the view of one parent, but this comment echoes those of others. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school is well managed and led. Since taking up post a year ago, the headteacher has effectively restructured the senior leadership team and reviewed staff training and performance management. The school has a small budget deficit that the governors and senior leaders are addressing.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Middle leaders observe staff and senior leaders conduct learning walks and have done joint observations with the School Improvement Partner. However, staff do not always receive formal feedback from learning walks and so many staff only have formal

feedback on the quality of their teaching once a year. Last year a well received programme of flexible learning was offered so staff could have an influence on their own professional development. Middle leaders commented convincingly that this had a positive effect upon improving the quality of teaching.

The school has some strong partnerships, one of which was fostered by a governor with a national company to do workshops on robotics for Year 7. Key Stage 4 students work closely with local primary schools to teach and encourage students in speaking languages. The school works very well with many agencies to support well-being, for example: the Orchard programme which takes place at a local secondary school has successfully engaged students in social and emotional aspects of learning.

Promotion of community cohesion is good. Students are involved in residential trips to Castlerigg where they work on team building and communication. The school invites leaders from a variety of faiths into school, they organise trips to France, Spain, Malta and Cyprus and do a cultural exchange with a school in Germany.

The school is engaging well with parents and carers through regular reporting, parents evenings and achievement evenings. It has recently established a parents' forum to expand this area of work.

The school effectively tackles discrimination and promotes equal opportunity. There are very few racist incidents and, if any occur, they are thoroughly investigated and reported. The school has useful data about the different groups in school and has examples of where it has targeted actions and made improvements.

Whilst safeguarding is satisfactory, governors, Salford Diocese and the local authority are aware of the need to support the school in ensuring that all risk assessments are robust and regularly monitored and reviewed.

*These are the grades for the 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>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>3</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>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the survey felt that their child enjoyed school and was safe in school. The very large majority think that school is

well led and feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. A very small amount of negative comments were received about communication and bullying. Inspectors followed these up with the school but found that most parents and carers feel that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively and that they take account of parents' suggestions and concerns. Some parents and carers commented about the school not providing enough challenge for more-able students and not having enough understanding of specific special needs in order to effectively support students' learning. These matters were raised with the school and inspectors found that there were some issues around the support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and some lessons where the more-able students were not adequately challenged.

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

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

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

The inspection team received **206** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 457 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	39	119	58	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	132	64	72	35	0	0	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	96	47	88	43	7	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	38	106	51	9	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	38	118	57	1	0	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	34	116	56	12	6	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	64	31	123	60	13	6	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)	79	38	100	49	2	1	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	83	40	103	50	8	4	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	90	44	100	49	6	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	30	108	52	12	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	98	48	95	46	5	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	115	56	82	40	1	0	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.**



22 September 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of St Cecilia's RC Technology College, Preston, PR3 2XA**

Please accept my sincere thanks for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school earlier this month. Thank you also for the time you spent telling us about your school and for completing questionnaires. We really listened to what you said and your contributions helped us come to our judgements.

To summarise, we found that:

- your achievement is satisfactory
- while there are some examples of good and outstanding teaching, overall it is satisfactory and this is limiting your progress
- your behaviour is good as is the care, guidance and support you receive
- the values of the Catholic faith are at the heart of your work to help people in your local community and raise money for those who are less fortunate.

The inspection team have asked the school to improve the quality of teaching by using information about the specific learning abilities and needs of each student to plan lessons more effectively. We have also asked that all teachers regularly check your understanding of learning to help you make good progress in lessons. We have asked the governors and leaders in your school to monitor and review all the school's work more closely to ensure, amongst other things, that your achievement continues to improve.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Kenyon  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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