

St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104835
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	377135
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	906
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr. Philip Swanson
Headteacher	Monica Gallimore
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 39 lessons taught by 39 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of students. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at monitoring of students' progress, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and documentation relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires from 601 parents and carers were scrutinised, together with those returned by staff and students.

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

- How well students make progress and achieve, especially in English and mathematics.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels are driving improvement, especially in English and mathematics.
- How accurately leaders and managers evaluate the effectiveness of the school.
- How effectively teaching and the use of assessment impact on students' attainment, learning and progress.

Information about the school

This is an average-size secondary school in which the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Almost all students are White British. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has been a specialist college for business and enterprise since 2004. It is an accredited Fair Trade establishment. It has gained Healthy School status and, recently, the quality mark for Investors in Community Engagement. The school has also gained the BECTA ICT Award, the National Church Schools Award and has Investor in People status. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008 and has put in place a new, extended management structure across the school.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to attainment, progress and achievement, especially in English and mathematics.

The school provides inadequate value for money because students' achievement is inadequate. For too long the attainment and progress of all groups of students, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have been too low, especially in English and mathematics. Consequently, too many students have left school without the qualifications they should have gained to provide them with adequate preparation for their future economic well-being. Since being appointed, the headteacher has put in place a range of measures to tackle underachievement by, for example, improving weaker teaching so that it is at least satisfactory, sharpening the use of assessment and introducing monitoring of teaching and learning. These measures are starting to have the desired effect. In 2011, GCSE results improved significantly, especially in mathematics and to a lesser degree in English. However the improvement is not yet rapid enough for students' progress to be judged satisfactory. School predictions, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that attainment and progress are improving securely as the measures put into place start to impact. As a result, the school is demonstrating satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Attainment in vocational subjects related to the school's specialism in Business and Enterprise has been strong because the specialism has been well managed and well taught. However, the impact of the specialism on teaching in other subjects such as English and mathematics has been limited.

The good, effective pastoral support and care provided for students ensure that they feel exceptionally safe in school. Their contribution in school and in the local community is outstanding. The school is very highly thought of in the local area as a result. Students say how much they enjoy school and how helpful and supportive all the adults working with them are. Students' behaviour is consistently good both in and outside lessons.

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the school accepts that to accelerate improvement further and overcome the legacy of underachievement, it is necessary to increase significantly the proportion of good teaching and to make sure that all teaching challenges different groups of learners appropriately. The satisfactory and improving quality of the curriculum is supporting the drive to raise attainment.

The headteacher and other senior leaders are providing satisfactory and improving leadership and management. They are giving a clear focus on the urgent need to improve students' achievement. They are putting in place appropriate measures to bring this about. Previously, leaders and managers evaluated the school's effectiveness too optimistically. This masked weaknesses and did not give forward planning a sharp enough focus on tackling specific areas of weakness. Sharper monitoring is now starting to provide leaders and managers with a much clearer picture of how well the school is doing and where to focus their efforts to bring about necessary improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate students' progress so that it is more rapid, especially in English and mathematics, to prepare them better for their future economic well-being by:
 - making sure that teaching is at least good
 - making sure that teaching is consistent in matching tasks closely to the needs and abilities of different groups of learners
 - making sure that students are more actively involved in their own learning to promote their independent learning skills
 - making sure that leaders and managers are rigorous in monitoring the quality of students' learning and progress in lessons and use the outcomes to provide sharper focus on improving their quality
 - making sure that leaders and managers at all levels evaluate accurately the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work to provide a sharper focus in strategic planning on improving achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

In lessons, students show positive attitudes to learning. Their enjoyment is most evident when lively teaching challenges them to think for themselves. In some lessons, however, students spend too long listening to the teacher and become passive and sometimes lethargic. The quality and pace of learning and progress drop as a result. Relationships between adults and students are strong. Consequently, behaviour is consistently good. Students join the school with broadly average levels of attainment. In some subjects such as science, physical education and vocational subjects students attain well and make good progress. However, in recent years, students' progress in the key subjects of English and mathematics, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, has been too slow and attainment too low. In 2011, however, GCSE results in English and mathematics and in the proportion of students attaining five or more passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, rose significantly. There was also a proportionate rise in attainment in English and mathematics for students with special educational needs

and/or disabilities. Despite this improvement attainment and progress in English and mathematics are still not high enough.

Students enjoy school. They show good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Their participation rates in the wide range of sporting enrichment activities are high. Students are unfailingly polite and courteous to each other and adults. They enjoy taking on the numerous opportunities they are given to take on responsibilities such as by becoming prefects and managing all-age activities such as the allotment club and fair trade activities. Students are exceptionally active in the local community by, for example, working with the elderly and participating exceptionally actively to support many local action groups. Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in their good behaviour, their good levels of awareness of environmental issues and in their mature awareness of global issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Students make good progress when their thinking is challenged and when they are expected to come up with ideas for themselves. In a Year 9 geography lesson, for example, the use of photographs stimulated students' interest and spurred them on to find out for themselves why certain locations are suitable or unsuitable for urban development. Students grasped fully the links between landscape and population distribution. However, where teaching is satisfactory, it frequently provides too many answers too readily for the students. This encourages passivity in their learning, limits the development of independent learning skills and slows students' potential rate of progress and the quality of learning. The use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory and improving. Tracking students' progress is becoming more focused on identifying and tackling underachievement. Teachers are starting to use assessment more effectively in some lessons to match tasks more closely to the differing needs and abilities of learners. However, too many lessons still provide the same tasks for all learners irrespective of their needs.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Leaders and managers have overhauled the curriculum to make it much more appropriate to the needs and abilities of different groups of learners. Younger students benefit from core activities with an emphasis on developing numeracy and literacy while the new pathways for Key Stage 4 students are designed to make sure that the courses they follow are appropriately challenging according to their needs. The school provides a wealth of enrichment activities including regular visits abroad. These provide strong support for students' personal development and well-being.

Pastoral care and support for all students are highly effective, especially in enabling students who are potentially vulnerable to be fully included in the life of the school. Transition arrangements for students into Year 7 are very successful in enabling them to settle quickly into secondary school. Students are happy with the advice they receive before choosing their Key Stage 4 options and for their options when they leave school. Effective procedures for promoting attendance are in place and have led to significant improvement in attendance over the last three years.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has reorganised the management structure of the school to provide much clearer roles and responsibilities. Leaders and managers are now driving the school forward more strongly and with gathering pace. Assessment data are being used more effectively to hold staff more rigorously to account for students' progress and achievement. Weaker teaching is being challenged more effectively. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching have been introduced. However, the concentration is on teaching without an equal focus on monitoring the quality of students' learning in lessons. Leaders and managers recognise the importance of combining the two. The effect of these initiatives has been to provide a more effective focus on improvement. The early signs of impact are evident and inspection evidence shows that improvements are gathering pace securely. The governing body is providing satisfactory support to the impetus to drive up attainment and achievement.

The improved attainment and achievement in 2011 were evident for all groups of learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The more effective use of assessment is enabling the school to identify the needs of different groups of learners more accurately and is adding to the school's ability to fulfil its strong commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities.

Procedures for safeguarding are fully in place. Appropriate checks on the suitability of adults working with students are carried out meticulously. Training in child protection for staff is regular and of good quality. Good links have been forged with outside agencies to provide necessary support for vulnerable students.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It plans its activities coherently and evaluates their impact. The school itself is a very harmonious community in which students treat each other respectfully. Students are very active in their local community. Trips abroad and opportunities in the curriculum make students aware of cultural diversity, although opportunities for first-hand experience of other cultures and religions are limited.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires returned by parents and carers indicate that a very large majority are very happy with the education provided by the school. A small minority of returned questionnaires indicate that a few parents and carers do not think that the school helps their son/daughter to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors looked closely at this and were satisfied that the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles for its students is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise 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 601 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 910 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	219	36	357	59	20	3	3	0
The school keeps my child safe	310	52	283	47	4	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	264	44	303	50	17	3	3	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	243	40	332	55	8	1	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	278	46	302	50	5	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	211	35	343	57	24	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	176	29	366	61	44	7	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)	254	42	312	52	12	2	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	226	38	346	58	11	2	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	277	46	294	49	13	2	2	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	203	34	351	58	22	4	2	0
The school is led and managed effectively	280	47	308	51	3	0	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	322	54	260	43	7	1	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).

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">■ 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.



16 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise, St Helens, WA9 3HE

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school. Your school takes good care of you to ensure that you feel exceptionally safe. Your commitment to the school and the local community is excellent.

Your school is being given a notice to improve because achievement, especially in English and mathematics, has been unsatisfactory for too long. The situation is starting to improve but not yet rapidly enough. Your school will now receive a monitoring visit and will be re-inspected in 12 to 18 months' time to make sure it has maintained and accelerated the current improvement. In order to make sure this happens, I am asking the school to do the following things:

- Accelerate your progress so that it is more rapid, especially in English and mathematics, to prepare you better for your future prospects by:
 - making sure that most teaching is at least good
 - making sure that teaching is consistent in matching tasks closely to the needs and abilities of different groups of learners
 - making sure that you are more actively involved in your own learning to promote your independent learning skills
 - making sure that leaders and managers are rigorous in monitoring the quality of your learning and progress in lessons and use the outcomes to provide sharper focus on improving their quality
 - making sure that leaders and managers at all levels evaluate accurately the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work to provide a sharper focus in forward planning on improving achievement.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure that the necessary improvements take place as rapidly as necessary.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector

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