

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Secondary School

Trafalgar Street, Southwark, London, SE17 2TP

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All school leaders, teachers and other staff share the same 'no excuses' approach which has ensured that all students make outstanding progress. School leaders create a highly successful environment in which teachers make a huge impact on achievement and personal development is prized.
- Examination results are consistently well above those found in most other schools. Students make outstanding progress throughout the school.
- All students, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, achieve outstanding results, in line with all other students.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Students conduct themselves with impressive courtesy, generosity towards others and commitment to achieving the very best. Students feel completely safe within the school.
- The sixth form is outstanding and prepares students very well in order to compete equally for places in the best universities and workplaces.
- Teachers are extremely good at motivating students, helping them to work really hard and do exceptionally well. Teachers respond swiftly and energetically to the needs of the students, making sure that there is nothing to prevent them from making progress and achieving the highest standards.
- There is a rich and varied range of extra opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom, including trips and charity work.
- The school places a strong emphasis on spiritual values, reflection and service to others. All members of the school community consistently demonstrate these values day by day.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, including three joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors also observed registration, assembly, times before and after school and lunchtimes.
- They looked at students' work and listened to some students reading.
- Inspectors met with groups of students across the age and ability range to discuss achievement, teaching, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of teachers, external partners working with the school and governors.
- Inspectors took into account the 25 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors looked at the school records of attainment and progress of current students, results from the 2012 examinations, the school's checks on how well it is doing, lesson monitoring documents and teachers' performance management records. They also looked at the school's figures for attendance and exclusion, safeguarding and child protection records, behaviour records and the minutes from governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Adrian Lyons

Her Majesty's Inspector

Niel McLeod

Additional Inspector

Avtar Sherri

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Full report

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Secondary School is a mixed 11 to 18 school. The sixth form is in its second year of operation. It is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The school converted to academy status in November 2012, keeping the same name as its predecessor school. As a new converter academy, the school remains within the Diocese of Southwark. When the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2007 it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is currently housed in a temporary new school building in Southwark, awaiting the move to a permanent new building in Camberwell.
- The predecessor school's specialisms were mathematics, computing and modern foreign languages. These continue to be a focus for the new school.
- The majority of the students are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Black African heritage. Over half of the students speak English as an additional language.
- Nearly half of the students are entitled to additional government funding known as the pupil premium.
- A small number of students attend courses away from the school site, such as in catering or construction.
- The number of students supported through school action, school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is above that in other schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is currently executive headteacher of another secondary school in the area as part of a federation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the teaching and provision in the sixth form and prepare students for sixth form study by providing even better opportunities for students to develop their confidence in speaking and reflection.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of students is outstanding

- Students begin school with lower than average attainment. They make outstanding progress, going on to attain GCSE results that are well above those found in other schools. Students benefit hugely from the tenacious spirit of their teachers and the school leaders in reinforcing the 'no excuses' attitude.
- The school takes steps to ensure that all students achieve the highest grades, in particular a highly regarded rank order system that is regularly updated and published so that students and their parents can see how they are progressing in their learning. Students say that this is 'healthy competition' and that although they sometimes 'worry' when the rank order is about to be published, they are 'proud' when they have moved upwards. Students say it 'feels great to be first'.
- Students who are known to be entitled to free school meals and who receive additional support through the pupil premium do at least as well as other students in the school, and better than similar groups of students nationally. Their average point scores (which show the total of their GCSE results) match those of the other students in the school. Disabled students and those with special educational needs all make outstanding progress.
- In the sixth form, students are guided towards choosing appropriate courses. Students' results so far are extremely promising and their progress within lessons is frequently outstanding. The school is rightly proud that in the sixth form's first year, students are heading for top universities.
- Teachers have extremely high expectations about students' homework, which is set regularly and frequently. When students have difficulties completing work at home, space and time are provided for them in school so that no one falls behind.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and students are confident that teachers will help them do well. Teachers have extremely high expectations of students and accept nothing less than their best. Students thrive because teachers know them as individuals and offer a lot of extra support and feedback. This is particularly evident in sixth form teaching. For example, students in a drama lesson were expertly encouraged to take on director and observer roles in a powerful ensemble piece of physical theatre. The students talked in detail about each other's performance and how this contributed to their assessment, making outstanding progress.
- Teachers manage lessons with complete confidence and determination. They question students well and often check students who get answers wrong, or who need to explain their answers in more detail. Teachers keep a watchful eye on students' self-discipline and concentration and are quick to issue firm reminders about attentiveness. Students take good notice of the teachers' reminders and explanations and are respectful and enthusiastic.
- In the best lessons teachers target students and involve them all in class discussion or group talk, rather than relying on 'hands up'. In these lessons, students are enabled to become more vocal and expressive, which helps to build confidence in their own ideas and spoken English. In a very few less successful lessons, students do not have enough opportunities to speak out confidently or share their ideas.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and focus on what students need to demonstrate to achieve high grades in examinations and tests. Teachers choose materials and resources well to help students gain new knowledge and experiences. In a Year 12 English lesson, students were excited and challenged by their study of 'identity' in two texts which they related to their own experiences. The teacher skilfully channelled and focused their work in the lesson, in order to meet the requirements of the highest grades, but also succeeded in deepening the students' emotional involvement in their work.

- Students respond well to feedback from their teachers. For example, students in an art lesson were extremely keen to show the inspector their work which was marked in a highly effective way. The students maintained a written 'conversation' with their teacher, reflecting on how much progress they were making task by task.
- Systems for checking on how well students are doing over time are detailed and effective. Assessment and test results are collected, published and reviewed so that each teacher can plan carefully for the next stage of their students' learning. The very few students at risk of exclusion, or who are struggling to keep up with the school's high expectations, are also supported to avoid falling behind by a comprehensive care and guidance programme.
- All teachers demonstrate their strong emphasis on the quality of students' reading, writing and speaking during their lessons. Students who have difficulties with their reading and writing are helped to achieve well by effective programmes which encourage accurate practice of letter sounds and symbols (phonics) and targeted support from teaching assistants. There are times and spaces in the school for students to read privately and they take full advantage of this opportunity. They read widely for pleasure and are encouraged to challenge themselves. For example, all Year 10 students participated in the 'Shakespeare by heart' competition, for which they had to learn and recite a Shakespearean speech.

The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding

- Students demonstrate outstanding behaviour in and out of lessons. In lessons and other activities, such as assemblies and when preparing to enter the building at the start of the day, their behaviour is highly respectful and orderly. Changes in activity within and between lessons are calm and show excellent self-control and discipline.
- Behaviour around the school, in corridors, at lunchtime and at the end of the day is also exemplary. Students are always friendly, courteous and helpful.
- Students' positive attitudes to school and their respect for the standards expected are shown in their excellent attendance, which is well above average for all groups. The students also respond well to the school's firm policy on punctuality, which prepares them well for working life.
- Relationships between staff and students are warm and mutually respectful. Teachers and other staff always demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and achievement and this is expressed as firm discipline, but also as genuine affection and care.
- Students are adamant that they feel safe at school and they know that the staff are there to help and support them as much as they can, in and out of school.
- Incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are very rare and when they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students are well aware of the dangers of bullying in all its forms. They say that there is very little prejudice-based bullying or derogatory language. Parents say that they are very happy with the strong discipline in the school.
- Levels of exclusion are low in the school. If students behave badly there is a strict, but supportive, system of rehabilitation designed to return the student to lessons, through the excellent Footsteps unit. The Footsteps staff work closely with heads of year and provide outstanding support for students at risk of exclusion or who need extra help with attending school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, governors and staff are ambitious for their students, totally focused on raising and maintaining high achievement and committed to embedding the 'no excuses' message throughout the school, including for parents and students themselves.
- Senior and middle leaders check the quality of teaching and students' achievement regularly, thoroughly and frequently. The school also employs two external advisers to assist with evaluating its work fairly. School leaders are not satisfied with anything less than good

teaching, so in rare instances when a teacher's performance is less than good, there is prompt intervention, holding the teacher to account and support to improve that teacher's work. Leaders make decisions about staffing and student grouping in order to ensure that the students' achievement comes first. For example, after the mock GCSE examinations, students are placed in tutor groups according to their results and are given extra revision work and examination practice in addition to their timetabled lessons.

- The policy of entering some students early for examinations is used effectively. Decisions made to enter students early for examinations are reviewed and analysed carefully. The very few students who take examinations in Year 10, but do not achieve their target grade, are obliged to sit the examination again in Year 11 in order to aim higher. Students who achieve their target grades are then able to go on to study subjects at a higher level, preparing them well for the sixth form.
- Governors, senior leaders and middle leaders ensure that the quality of a teacher's work is linked to pay scales. In order to achieve salary progression, all teachers, including the headteacher, have to achieve challenging targets, based on the progress that students make.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have created a school in which teachers believe all students can make outstanding progress. Teachers are committed to extra work and finding imaginative solutions to problems. For example, some students have been trained as mathematics 'buddies' and spend free time helping other students. Teachers work together, both in formal groups and less formally as a team, devoted to improving the life chances of the students.
- Led by the headteacher in his role as executive headteacher, the school's work to support a neighbouring school has created additional demands, but also provided training and development for all teachers. The partnership illustrates the school leaders' and governors' strong commitment to improving outcomes for children in the area as a whole.
- The school offers a rich range of courses to suit all students, including the growing sixth form. Leaders constantly review courses and students' choices and plan carefully for changing needs. For example, the school recruited highly experienced sixth form teachers and ensured their expertise was shared with existing teachers to support the new sixth form provision.
- School leaders make effective use of the additional pupil premium funding to boost students' progress. Spending includes recruiting an additional teacher to work with the special educational needs coordinator and the English department, laptops for individual students and a computer-based literacy programme which is used highly effectively. School leaders are able to point to specific students and groups who would not have progressed towards their targets and achieved such high results without this additional support.
- Students who attend courses away from the school site, such as catering or construction, are monitored for attendance and progress and their safety is checked regularly in line with all statutory requirements. These students are making excellent progress.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements and all staff are actively involved in keeping students as safe as possible in and out of school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to achieving high standards and maintaining the reputation of the school as one of the highest performing schools in the area. They hold the headteacher and school leaders to account for the quality of teaching and achievement in the school. They are directly involved in checking that staff performance management targets are met and teachers only move up the salary scales if their students achieve well. Governors are well informed about achievement and behaviour and challenge the school to improve teaching further. They hold the headteacher to account for the efficient financial management of the school. All governors need to acquire even greater and more detailed understanding of how much impact the pupil premium is having on the outcomes for specific groups and individuals.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100860
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	400180

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Maintained
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	752
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Gould
Headteacher	Serge Cefai
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
Telephone number	02077086500
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