

Sion-Manning Roman Catholic Girls' School

75 St Charles Square, London, W10 6EL

Inspection dates 18–19 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's high expectations ensure that Sion-Manning continues to improve. Leaders and managers at all levels share an ambitious vision. This is reflected in the accurate and regular checking of the school's work including students' achievement and the improvements in teaching.
- Attainment is above national averages in most subjects, and students make good progress.
- Teachers provide a positive environment for learning; students have very positive attitudes towards learning, and as a result, teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through inspirational teaching, assemblies and visits. Their behaviour is good, they say they feel safe, and their positive relationships contribute strongly to their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough to ensure that all students achieve exceptionally well.
- Marking and feedback, particularly at Key Stage 4, are sometimes not detailed enough so that students have a clear idea of their next steps in learning. Opportunities are sometimes missed for students to improve their work by responding to the marking.
- Attendance is below national averages due to a small number of students who are absent too often.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 36 lessons or part-lessons. The majority of lesson observations were shared with senior leaders. Short visits were made to observe the quality of teaching and feedback to students. These were also joint observations with senior leaders.
- Work in students' books was analysed with senior leaders.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, evaluations of the school by external advisers, minutes of meetings of the governing body and its different committees and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to students about reading, met with different groups of students, and interviewed a sample of staff. They also spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives from the diocese, and from the local authority.
- The views of parents were sought through the school's surveys. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anna Ljumovic	Additional Inspector
Dr Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It was awarded specialist school status in visual arts in 2002.
- Most students are from a wide range of different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- Well over half the students are known to be eligible for additional government funding (the pupil premium). This includes students in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals in this school. This is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school enters students early for examinations in a wide range of different subjects and for different purposes. For example, many take examinations in their home language in Year 9 or Year 10.
- A small number of upper school students study vocational qualifications at the local authority-run School Engagement Provision, ensuring that they leave school with recognised qualifications. They are also given support for their behaviour at Walmer Road School and a charity called Endeavour.
- Since the last inspection, a new associate deputy headteacher has been appointed, and there have been several changes to the senior and middle leadership teams. The school appointed nine newly qualified teachers at the start of the academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more students make rapid gains in their learning, by:
 - making sure that marking consistently provides them with clear guidance on their next steps in learning, so that they can accelerate their learning in all subjects, particularly at Key Stage 4
 - making sure that students are given sufficient opportunities to respond to feedback and marking so that they can demonstrate that they have acquired the new skills and understanding
 - providing tasks at the start of lessons which better engage students of different abilities
 - increasing opportunities for students to use and apply their skills in investigation and problem solving.
- Reducing the number of students whose attendance is low, so that their attendance is at least at national averages by July 2014 by working in partnership with parents and other agencies.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students have skills similar to national averages on entry to the school. Attainment by the end of Year 11 has risen steadily in most key measures since the last inspection. Progress is good. Students are entered early for a number of different GCSE examinations, including English Language and mathematics. This helps those who have particular skills, for example in their home languages. More able students perform exceptionally well, as many make the most of early entries in subjects where they excel.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress in line with national averages. A few students come to school with complex emotional and social needs and are at risk of not doing as well as they might. Some are educated off-site, and with good support gain qualifications in vocational subjects, and make progress in line with expectations. Close contact with these students ensures that they are well cared for.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Some join the school at other than the usual times but receive a good induction and are well supported, so achieve well.
- Students funded through the pupil premium make good progress. Group sizes are often small, and this enables students to be given close attention. In addition, students benefit from support given by mentors, who help with their academic progress and also their emotional needs. In the summer 2012 examinations, these students performed only half a grade below their classmates in English, and had similar results to their peers in mathematics, narrowing the gap from the previous year. Both gaps are much smaller than those found nationally.
- In a minority of lessons, students do not always make the progress of which they are capable. This is because work at the start of the lessons is not well matched to their different needs and does not engage their interest. Insufficient attention is given to activities which promote independent thinking, investigation and problem solving.
- Reading is actively encouraged and Year 7 students make good gains in their reading skills through an engaging programme of computer-assessed work. An effective focus on developing language and vocabulary across the curriculum has resulted in improvements in reading, writing and communication. Plans to support students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium are in place but it is too early to assess their impact on progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. There is some that is outstanding. The best teaching is characterised by searching questioning which helps to probe the students' understanding and develop their thinking. Teachers are quickly able to identify when students are ready to move on. Year 10 students, for example, developed their ability to use persuasive language in an English lesson through careful questioning and being given good opportunities to share their ideas in small groups.
- Year 11 students made rapid gains in their learning in another English lesson so that they developed a deeper understanding of the social and historical context for the text being studied. Year 10 students made outstanding progress in their learning as a result of well-focused support and careful questioning during an information and communication technology lesson. Computers are used well to support learning across the curriculum, and students' skills are highly proficient.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to challenge students to reflect on their learning. Year 8 students made good progress in understanding different mathematical shapes, and, as a result, improved their use of technical language and symbols. This was because the teachers' and assistants' questioning maintained their interest throughout the lesson.
- In some lessons progress is not as rapid as students complete routine tasks which do not

encourage them to reflect or investigate further. Discussions are limited so students are not required to tackle more challenging problems.

- In Years 7 and 8, oral and written feedback is consistently good across a wide range of subjects. Students are encouraged to 'now consider this'. This provides them with further opportunities to develop and extend their learning or to consolidate skills which are not yet secure. Students can then respond to the marking and this promotes good progress. Marking is more inconsistent at Key Stage 4. It is not regular in some classes, lacks detail, and does not provide sufficient guidance on the students' next steps in learning. Opportunities are missed for students to respond to the teachers' guidance.
- The school makes effective use of the virtual learning website so that any student who is absent for an extended period can catch up with work at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. They have good relationships with each other and work productively in groups when asked. Staff have high expectations of their behaviour and students are respectful towards all adults.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in a few lessons where teaching is less strong, their attention lapses and slows their progress.
- Students say that the school provides a safe and welcoming environment so that no form of bullying is acceptable. They demonstrate a good awareness of the use and misuse of social networking, and ensure that cyber bullying is avoided. They show a good understanding of other forms of bullying. Year 11 students mentor younger students and this helps to improve their behaviour and raise their aspirations.
- Students appreciate the introduction of the transformation centre which allows them time out from their lessons in moments of stress to reflect on their behaviour. Effective support from adults with specialist knowledge and experience ensures that any stay in the centre is short term. This facility has resulted in a rapid decrease in incidents of unacceptable behaviour, as shown, for example, in school records of exclusion rates.
- Students who are given support off-site for short periods show good improvements in their behaviour as a result of specialist guidance. They are then effectively reintegrated into the school.
- The school has increased its focus on reducing the numbers of students who are regularly absent, though there are still too many. The new attendance officer works closely with families, and is in regular contact with them. As a result of this work attendance is improving and is average.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has maintained improvements since the last inspection in spite of significant changes in staff at both senior and middle leadership level. Strong leadership from the headteacher who is ably supported by the newly appointed leadership team ensures that achievement is good and improving.
- Teaching is improving as a result of a robust process of checking each subject area by senior and middle leaders. Weaknesses are quickly identified and teachers are given well-targeted support. For example, newly qualified teachers undertake effective training to meet their needs, and are given regular opportunities to work with more experienced colleagues.
- Teachers are held accountable for the performance of the students. Arrangements for monitoring teachers are robust and closely linked to salary progression.

- The school makes the most of its links with the adjacent primary school and sixth form centre. Arrangements at key points of transition are effective, and students are given well-targeted guidance about their career paths.
 - The school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity is reflected in its early entry for students who are ready for the next challenge. Care and consideration are given to the different pathways that the students follow. This ensures that achievement is rising for all groups of students including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
 - The subjects and themes are broadened by many opportunities for students to develop their visual arts skills as part of the school's specialist subject provision. Students chosen as arts scholars are then part-funded to make international visits to cities like Barcelona and Rome to further their learning. Several subjects such as art, drama and religious education, alongside assemblies, public performances, visits and after-school clubs, all contribute strongly to the students' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As one student said, 'My dad loves the school – he says the students are inspired.'
 - The school has a productive relationship with the local authority and commissions services as needs arise. It is well supported by the diocese, and regular checks enable the school's self-evaluation to be accurate and based on the correct priorities.
 - The school works well with parents to support their children's learning. School evidence shows that parents have few, if any, concerns.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body offers many years of experience and expertise in leading the governing body. Governors play a full part in checking all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching. They ask challenging questions and their good knowledge of the school's performance helps to hold senior leaders to account. They know how funds are spent on supporting students, such as the pupil premium, and how this is having positive effects on their achievement. They have carefully managed the finances during a time which has seen a significant drop in student numbers. They take part in ensuring that staff are correctly rewarded for good performance. They work well in partnership with the Catholic Diocese and the local authority. They make the most of training opportunities offered by both partners. They have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses as reflected in their audit and strategic plan. They help to ensure that all statutory requirements, including those related to safeguarding, are in place.
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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	100503
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	412818

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	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	549
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John O'Donnell
Headteacher	Christina Leach
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2010
Telephone number	020 89697111
Fax number	020 89695119
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