

St George's Catholic School

Lanark Road, Maida Vale , London, W9 1RB

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The executive headteacher, governors and other school leaders have the highest of expectations for all students. They are determined to support them in every way possible so that all can achieve extremely well.
- The strong Catholic ethos is at the heart of everything the school does. This contributes to the strong sense of community, moral purpose and care and respect for each individual.
- The curriculum provides a good range of options to meet the different needs of the students. An exceptionally wide range of extra classes help students to develop their skills and interests. Activities that take place beyond the school day contribute to students' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Students are respectful and courteous to each other and to adults. No learning time is wasted in managing poor behaviour.
- Students take pride in their work and in their school. They enjoy school and attend regularly. They feel very safe at all times.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers challenge and motivate students. They insist they should always push themselves to continue to improve.
- From low starting points students make outstanding progress. The standards they achieve in their GCSE examinations are well above average. Unvalidated results in 2014 show that the percentage achieving five or more good passes, including English and mathematics, rose significantly.
- Students of all abilities and from different backgrounds including those who are disadvantaged, make rapid progress in many subjects. These include English and mathematics.
- The sixth form is very new because until September 2014 sixth formers were on the roll of St Thomas More Catholic School. Many aspects of the provision at St George's, including leadership, guidance and teaching are very strong. Students are making very good progress on their courses.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 part lessons, eight jointly with senior staff.
- Inspectors observed behaviour around the school and in the playground, attended assembly, visited the library and scrutinised students' work.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of the senior leadership team, groups of staff and a group of governors including the Chair and Vice-Chair. Discussion took place with the executive headteacher in his role as a representative from the academy trust. A telephone conversation was held with an independent consultant who provides advice and support to leaders at the school. Discussions took place with a number of groups of students.
- The team scrutinised school documents including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school management plan and departmental improvement plans and governing body minutes. Inspectors also scrutinised statistical information about students' achievement, attendance, behaviour and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered the 70 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also analysed 72 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Ann Short, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patricia Barford	Additional Inspector
Neil McDonough	Additional Inspector
Roger Garrett	Additional Inspector
Raminder Arora	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to academy status on March 2013 as part of a multi-academy trust with St Thomas More Catholic School. When its predecessor school, also called St George's Catholic School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2010 it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- From September 2011 students from St George's School were taught at the school in the sixth form. They were on the roll of St Thomas More Catholic School and so their results belonged to that school.
- The school successfully applied to the DfE for permission to open its own sixth form from September 2014. The 140 students in the sixth form are now on the roll of St George's and led and managed by the school governors.
- Well over half of the students are supported by the additional government funding. This is provided for students known to be eligible for free school or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average. A small proportion of these are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is much higher than average.
- A high proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are from White British background, any other White background and African heritages.
- About 20 students are supported through the Year 7 catch-up funding which is for students who did not attain Level 4 in English or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The proportion of students joining or leaving the school at other than the normal time is higher than average.
- A very small number of students in Year 10 attend work-related courses at the College of North West London for part of the week.
- The executive headteacher is a national leader of education (NLE). He is also executive headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic School and acting headteacher of Bishop Douglass School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of the most able students so that even more make rapid progress in all subjects.
- Strengthen the consistency across all sixth form subjects in the expectations that teachers have of students' work and in the quality of teachers' marking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher's clarity of vision, relentless drive for improvement and commitment to equality of opportunity for all, is clearly communicated to staff and students alike. Senior leaders share his very high expectations and work together collaboratively to ensure the best possible outcomes for all of the students.
- A determined focus on developing consistently excellent practice across the school has improved teaching so that it is outstanding. Subject leaders play an important part in this, rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching in their departments. They help to provide a wide programme of training opportunities and support. Teachers share ideas and learn from each other. External consultants and coaches work with individual teachers to help them to improve their teaching skills.
- Teachers are set challenging targets which are closely related to the progress students make. There is a clear system which links successful teaching with salary progression.
- The school's own assessment of how well it is doing, is accurate. Leaders check their judgements through regular external reviews. They know where improvements need to be made. The school and departmental development plans are focused on the right priorities.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students well and is kept under regular review. More students than before now study academic courses, but there are also a range of work-related courses from which students can choose.
- The leadership of literacy is very strong. Many examples of excellent support for literacy were seen. There is a clear responsibility for all teachers to develop the literacy skills of the students across all subjects.
- The strong support of parents and carers for the school is clear from the highly positive response to Parent View. Attendance at information evenings for parents is high. Communication with parents is very good. There are regular newsletters, texting of information and areas which parents can view on the website such as 'Show My Homework'.
- The school has developed a wide range of innovative strategies to support the achievement of disadvantaged students, who are eligible for additional government funding. Free breakfast and evening meals are provided for students arriving early or staying late so that they can concentrate on their work. There is an exceptionally wide range of intervention strategies including summer school, Saturday school and one-to-one tuition. As a result, of this support, these students make outstanding progress.
- The Catholic ethos is central to the life of the school. Prayers and reflection are a regular part of the school day. The school takes care to promote tolerance and respect for other religions and for those who have none. It fosters good relations and tackles discrimination. Students are given opportunities to learn about citizenship and issues relating to life in modern Britain. They have a highly developed moral sense which contributes to their outstanding behaviour. A wide variety of additional activities, trips and visits also contribute to their outstanding social moral spiritual and cultural development.
- The school works closely with the partner school in the Trust and with other schools including two primary schools. The Trust has provided strong support for the development of teaching and learning and for the development of the sixth form.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have the highest of expectations for the achievement and well-being of the students. They ensure that they have the precise information they need to provide effective support and challenge to the leadership. They commission external consultants to conduct examination analyses, reviews of teaching and departmental reviews. This helps them to have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and understand what is done to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. They understand how setting targets for teachers contributes to the improvement of the school and the links with staff salaries. They visit the school and receive regular, informative presentations from school staff. They ask probing questions about achievement, how it compares with schools nationally and the quality of teaching in different subjects. They attend training, including training to assist with the understanding and analysis of information about student achievement. They know the strengths and areas for development in the school.
 - Governors monitor the effective use of resources including additional funds provided to support particular groups of students. They monitor the impact on students' progress to ensure that funds are being well spent. They ensure safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied.
 - The governing body reports regularly to the board of the Trust, which carefully checks the performance of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Students want to learn and enjoy their learning.
- No time is wasted in lessons in managing behaviour because students know what is expected of them. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied by all staff. Students report that there is no disruption to their learning from poor behaviour. Staff and parents agree that behaviour is good.
- There are now very few exclusions from school. Any student who is having difficulty in managing their behaviour is effectively supported so that they can achieve well.
- Students are polite and respectful of each other and of adults. They move around the building between lessons sensibly and quietly. Corridors are orderly and safe despite the cramped accommodation.
- Success is celebrated and students are praised for good behaviour and achievement. There is an online system for recording praise. Students wear their gold star badges for excellence with great pride.
- Attendance has improved significantly in recent years and is well above the national expectations. Students arrive at school and to lessons on time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students report that they feel very safe in school. They comment that teachers are always around to help. They are especially appreciative that teachers are always outside the school at the end of the day to make sure that they get home safely.
- The school provides calm and safe places for students to work before and after school and on Saturdays. Many students arrive early and stay late.
- Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations including when they are online or using their smartphones.
- Students have good awareness of different kinds of bullying, such as cyber, racist or homophobic bullying. There is very little bullying and if it does happen it is dealt with immediately. They report that there is no homophobic or racist name calling.
- Year 7 students are helped to feel safe and secure by Year 10 mentors who provide support and advice. Sixth form students help to supervise the playground at breaktime.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- As a result of outstanding teaching over time, students make excellent progress.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and very high expectations of what students can achieve. They plan lessons carefully so that all students are engaged and motivated and learn quickly.
- All teachers promote the literacy skills of the students. They encourage them to discuss their ideas, provide clear structures to help them to write and ensure correct spelling and use of subject specific vocabulary. Additional adults in the classroom provide effective additional support for those who would benefit from this. Students are encouraged to read widely. The numeracy skills of students are developed not just in mathematics, but through other subjects.
- Students report that they feel challenged but supported. One student commented, 'we like the way teachers push us to succeed.' Relationships between teachers and students are outstanding so that students feel confident to take risks. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson, students asked each other searching questions and took turns to teach the class. In a Year 7 Spanish lesson, all made outstanding progress because the teacher insisted that all were using the language accurately as they participated with great enthusiasm in different activities.
- Teaching has in past years occasionally not challenged all of the most able students to make the exceptional progress that other groups of students make. These students are now very well challenged both in lessons and through extra classes. There are regular extra lessons for them before and after school.
- Teachers know their students very well. They use a variety of questioning techniques to develop thinking and check understanding. In a Year 8 history lesson, the teacher had planned a range of questions for different students so that every student had to think more deeply.
- Teachers mark work regularly and well, usually with clear information about what students do well and what they should do to improve their work. Many students use this advice well to help them to make rapid progress. Occasionally, some students do not respond to the marking as well as they should.

- Students are given opportunities to assess their own work and the work of their classmates. They do this well because they are given clear advice about what to look for.
- Purposeful homework is set and marked regularly and contributes to the outstanding progress students make.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Many students enter the school with attainment which is below average. They make outstanding progress so that they achieve exceptionally well in their GCSE examinations. The proportion gaining five good quality GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is well above average. Unvalidated GCSE results show that this proportion rose significantly in 2014. This was even though attainment on entry for this year group was particularly low, with a smaller proportion than usual from the higher ability band.
- The proportions of students gaining the higher grades in English and in mathematics are well above average. Students make rapid progress by the end of Year 11 in mathematics and in English. The progress made by students currently in the school in both subjects is outstanding. Students also make exceptional progress in many other subjects, including English literature, science, modern foreign languages and humanities.
- The school has rigorous systems to check the progress of students and provides an exceptionally wide range of additional classes and revision sessions. This ensures that any student who is falling behind is given the right support they need to help them to get back on track to meet their challenging targets.
- Students identified as disadvantaged and eligible for additional government funding make outstanding progress. In 2013, these students achieved slightly better in English and in mathematics than their classmates. They achieved as well as other students nationally in English and half a grade higher in mathematics. Unvalidated results for 2014 show that they achieved as well as their classmates in these subjects, and better than all students nationally. Information held by the school demonstrates the rapid progress made by these students in all year groups as a result of the excellent support that they are given.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are given highly effective support both in the classroom and in one to one and small group activities. They make exceptional progress and achieve extremely well.
- Although a small group of White British students made less good progress than their classmates in 2013, effective support from the school ensured that this group of students made good progress in 2014.
- In 2013 most of the more able students made good progress in mathematics and English. The proportion achieving the top grades was lower in English than in mathematics. The proportion achieving the highest grades in English literature was above average in 2013 and very high in 2014. The most able students currently in the school are achieving highly in both English and mathematics and in their other subjects and making very good progress. There is now a determined focus on supporting these students to achieve the highest grades at GCSE.
- Many of the students supported by the Year 7 catch-up funding in English and in mathematics make very rapid progress so that they develop the skills they need to do well.
- There are excellent and innovative strategies in place so that students develop a love of reading. For example, younger students enjoyed a 'World Book Night' when they stayed in school overnight to read. The library is open beyond the school day and on Saturdays. It is a very popular place to go and an excellent resource for learning.
- Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education or for training and employment because they develop good skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. They receive very good advice about the choices they are able to make and are encouraged to have high aspirations.
- The school enters students early for GCSE examinations in English, mathematics and science. They ensure that any students who do not achieve as highly as they should are given another chance to take the examinations. They are reviewing their policy but intend to continue to enter students early to help them achieve as well as possible.
- The progress and attendance of the small number of Key Stage 4 students who attend courses at the College of North West London are carefully monitored so that they achieve very well.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is very new because until September 2014, these students were on the roll of St Thomas More School. It is good and improving rapidly because of outstanding leadership.
- Teaching is never less than consistently good and frequently outstanding. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to plan activities which ensure that students learn very well and develop their skills to a high level. Teachers give students the confidence to reflect on and to take responsibility for their own learning. Students are highly motivated and want to do well, so they make very good use of their own study time.
- Information held by the school about the current achievement of students, shows that they are making very good progress in their academic and work-related courses, in Years 12 and 13. Students who are retaking GCSE English and mathematics are also making good progress.
- Disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates.
- There remains some variability in the progress made by students in their different subjects. There is also some variability in the effectiveness of teachers' marking.
- Students receive very high quality care, guidance and support. They are guided onto suitable courses. Their progress is checked regularly and they are given well targeted additional support if they are falling behind. Students report that teachers really care about them and want them to succeed. The curriculum is flexible and reviewed regularly to meet the needs of students.
- There is a very comprehensive programme of careers advice and support for students as they move onto the next stage of their education, employment or training. They are encouraged to research a wide range of destinations, including apprenticeships and entry to Oxford and Cambridge universities and other Russell Group universities.
- Sixth formers behave well and participate fully in the life of the school. They support the younger students and act as role models for them, setting an example of outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning. They take part with enthusiasm in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- They understand well how to manage any risks to their health and well-being. They report that they feel very safe and thoroughly enjoy the peaceful, friendly and well-ordered learning environment. 'It's amazing', one student commented.

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	139369
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	449126

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	853
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Morton
Executive Headteacher	Martin Tissot
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 June 2010
Telephone number	020 7328 0904
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