



Convent of Jesus and Mary Language College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101561
LEA Brent LEA
Inspection number 276539
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Grace Marriott AI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Crownhill Road
School category	Voluntary aided		London
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		NW10 4EP
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	02089652986
Number on roll	1035	Fax number	02088380071
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Sister Dolores Lynn
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Geraldine Freear

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 19	3 May 2006 - 4 May 2006	276539

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Students come from a wide area of North West London. The proportion from ethnic minorities is high, and a third of students have English as an additional language. Many students come from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds. The headteacher is Executive Headteacher of the federation with Cardinal Hinsley School. The schools have a joint sixth form.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection team agree with the school's judgement that it provides a good education. Most students make good progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results, in terms of 5 or more A* to C passes, are better than most schools. Progress in Years 7 to 9 has been slower than in Years 10 and 11 but is now improving. Sixth form standards are in line with national norms. Students achieve well from a relatively low starting point.

The provision for spiritual and moral development is outstanding across the school, as is the quality of care and guidance. Social and cultural education are good and students are well prepared for the next stage of education or employment. Most students enjoy their education, attend and behave well and appreciate what the school offers. Some students would make better progress if they came to school more regularly. Teaching and learning are good. In the good lessons, lively teaching produces a good response from learners. When teaching is satisfactory, students are not as active in the lessons. The curriculum is well-tailored to the needs of individuals as well as groups of students.

The head teacher, governors and leadership team have a very clear view of the school's strengths and take effective action to deal with weaknesses. The effective monitoring and support of teaching is resulting in higher expectations and better progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in the sixth form and satisfactory progress overall. The rate of improvement has increased significantly in the last two years and its capacity for further improvements is good. The school gives good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form has grown in size and offers a good range of vocational and A level courses. Standards are comparable with national standards. Progress however, is good, particularly on vocational courses, considering that many students start courses with the minimum GCSE requirements. Teaching is good overall and independent learning is actively encouraged. Students know clearly what they have to do in order to improve. A wide range of enrichment activities enables the students to develop a variety of skills in addition to their chosen studies. For example, all students continue to study a modern foreign language. The school makes outstanding provision for care and guidance. Students' personal development is good and they are given good opportunities to take responsibility, such as helping younger students with their reading. The leadership of the sixth form is good. Improvement since the last inspection is good, as is the capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- use the school's current effective monitoring systems to increase the quantity of good teaching

- make parents and students more aware of the impact of good attendance on achievement

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges achievement as good and the inspection team agrees. Year 9 test results in 2005 were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Current Year 9 students are making better progress and are on track to achieve more challenging targets. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is good and results for 5+A* to C GCSE grades are above average. Different groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language make broadly similar progress, though this can vary from year to year. In 2005 a few more able students did not do as well at GCSE as they should have done. The school has taken effective action to remedy this. Progress in English is good and in mathematics it is satisfactory and improving. In the sixth form, results are in line with national standards, but because students are accepted on courses with the minimum GCSE requirements, this is good progress and achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges this aspect as outstanding. The inspection team judges it as good overall, but with outstanding provision for students' spiritual and moral development. Excellent assemblies provide opportunities for reflection. A wide variety of in school activities enhances understanding of wider cultural issues. Relationships are good and the school deals effectively with any bullying or racial harassment. Behaviour in classes and around school is good, with an effective system of rewards and sanctions. Attendance has improved and is satisfactory but the school has identified a number of pupils whose achievement is affected by their attendance. Students make a real contribution to decisions through the school council. Although a significant minority of parents do not believe that the school takes enough notice of surveys of students and parents, these have been used to influence decisions. Students are strongly encouraged to adopt a healthy and active life style. Their commitment to and work in the wider community is excellent and they also support a wide variety of charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence supports the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good. In the good lessons, a lively approach, clear objectives and high expectations mean that students respond well. Specific activities also help to identify learning needs. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students were using the interactive whiteboard

well to demonstrate their understanding of angles to the class. In some satisfactory lessons, students were not as actively involved, mainly because the level of challenge was not high enough.

The school has made improving teaching a high priority. More challenging targets and better assessment are helping to raise standards. Support for students with learning difficulties is more consistent and has helped improve their progress. The best marking gives students clear guidance on how to improve and the school is working on ensuring more consistency across subjects. In many lessons information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The inspection team agrees with the school judgement that overall the curriculum is good, but judges the sixth form curriculum as good not outstanding. The curriculum provides a good mix of academic and vocational courses. More vocational courses are planned in conjunction with a local college. As part of the language college provision, all students study two languages initially and take at least one language at GCSE. Students are given numerous opportunities for overseas visits.

Students have many opportunities to develop work related skills. Enterprise days involving the local community are valuable for the opportunities they provide to expand students' experience.. The personal, social and health education programme provides well for citizenship and health and safety education. Very good extension and enrichment activities which include opportunities to study community languages, add to students' enjoyment of learning The provision for ICT, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory and improving as a result of the action being taken.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The inspection team agree with the school's judgement that care, guidance and support for students are excellent. Health and safety, risk assessment and child protection procedures are firmly in place with all staff receiving regular training. Students with learning difficulties are well supported. Good systems record students' academic achievement and personal development. Targets are clear and regularly reviewed. This information is used well to support learning. The school has an excellent approach to ensuring that any student experiencing difficulties or at risk of underachieving, is identified and supported. Imaginative schemes are rigorously reviewed for effectiveness. Mentors work with individual students, and their parents, to help overcome barriers to success. Students receive good support and guidance in their choice of courses and careers. In addition, sixth form students have extensive opportunities to visit universities and places of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school and the inspection team agree that leadership and management are good. The head teacher's leadership is very good and she is well supported by a committed and effective leadership team. They have a shared vision for the school which is strongly focused on raising standards and improving teaching. Systematic lesson observation is used to identify strengths and weaknesses. The impact of this is clear in higher standards and better progress.

Departments are increasingly held to account and data is used well to inform planning. The best subject managers are clear about what needs to be done next to bring about improvement and those who are less clear about this receive appropriate support. The school evaluates itself rigorously and systematically, involving staff at all levels as well as external consultants. The provision for the professional development of staff is good. Links with outside agencies are good and feedback from the work done with primary schools is positive. The accommodation and facilities have been considerably improved. Students benefit from very good resources such as the interactive whiteboards in many classrooms. Financial management is very good.

Many governors have had an extended connection with the school and they know the school well and have a strong impact. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively and is in a strong position to provide support and challenge to the school. The head teacher and leadership team have shown that they are capable of improving the school and are well placed to continue to do so.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Students

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team who visited your school on 3rd and 4th May to let you know what we think about the school. Thank you for your help in talking to us about the work you do and what you think about the school. It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you. Your positive views and pride in the school are justified.

We think that the Convent of Jesus and Mary is giving you a good education. The teaching is good. Most of you work and behave well and make good progress. The way in which the school provides for your spiritual and moral education is excellent, as are the ways in which you are helped and supported if you have any difficulties. You also have many opportunities to take part in a wide variety of activities. The school is well led and managed.

However, even good schools can be improved and we think that in some lessons you could be challenged to work harder and achieve higher standards. Some of you would also do better at school if you attended more regularly.

Yours sincerely

Grace Marriott

Lead Inspector