



St Angela's Ursuline Convent School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102786
LEA Newham LEA
Inspection number 276770
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector David Bain AI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	St George's Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Forest Gate
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		London E7 8HU
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	020 8472 6022
Number on roll	1352	Fax number	020 8475 0245
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Charles Mara
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Delia Smith

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 7 December 2005 - 8 December 2005	Inspection number 276770
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Angela's is a very popular Catholic comprehensive school for girls in Newham. It has had Technology College status since 1995. It is of larger than average size, with a very large sixth form. The sixth form combines with that of the neighbouring boys' Catholic school and recruits a significant number of students from elsewhere; it totals 675 students. The majority of students in the school are Catholic, but whilst most others are Christian, there are some from other faiths. Well over four-fifths of students are from minority ethnic groups, with the largest group, about a third, from Black African backgrounds. A large number of languages are spoken by students, but few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. About a fifth of students are eligible for free school meals. This is above average. Most come from an area where the level of deprivation is very high. Students start school at age eleven with skills and knowledge that are broadly at the levels expected nationally for this age group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Angela's is an outstanding school. This agrees with the judgement of the school's leadership team, whose unrelenting focus on improving the quality of provision and raising standards informs all decision making. They have an astute understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development as a result of excellent self-evaluation, including rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The headteacher is an excellent role model. She is known well by students and is highly respected. Management, at all levels, has successfully inspired and enabled staff and students to realise the school's vision in practice. The governing body is extremely supportive and knows the school very well. The students are an enormous strength of the school. They have extremely positive attitudes and thoroughly enjoy being in school. They know they are there to learn and wish to do so, but also want to have fun. Their personal development is excellent because of the outstanding quality of the care, support and guidance they receive and the rich range of the curriculum and other activities. A parent said in the inspection questionnaire, 'the school goes far beyond its educational remit to try to help children'. Students' achievement is outstanding and continues to improve. Standards are well above average. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding overall. Students rarely experience teaching that is less than good, because lesson planning is exemplary. Teachers engage students in a range of activities, the best of which are lively and encourage discussion, collaboration and the development of independent learning skills. There has been outstanding improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen significantly, as has the quality of provision overall. As a Technology College, excellent use is made of technology across the curriculum. The school has demonstrated an excellent capacity to improve. It uses its resources very effectively and provides outstanding value for money. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school. Students are very proud of their and the school's achievements.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the sixth form is outstanding. It is very large, which enables it to provide an extensive curriculum and many excellent opportunities, which support students' personal development. Students display an exceptionally mature outlook and speak highly of the support they receive. Skilled leadership and management and extensive use of self-evaluation has supported significant improvements in recent years. Students achieve well, but there remain some variations in standards between subjects. A very high proportion of students gain entry to higher education, with increasing numbers acquiring places at highly sought after institutions.

What the school should do to improve further

* Continue to raise standards in the sixth form so that an even higher proportion of the top grades are achieved in all subjects, including vocational courses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' achievements are outstanding in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form. The school sets challenging targets. Rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of provision and tracking students' progress result in most targets being met. Students start Year 7 with standards which are broadly average. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above average. Students make excellent progress, particularly in mathematics. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection, when standards in mathematics were below average. Students' achievement by the end of Year 11 is exceptional. Examination results in 2005 were amongst the top five per cent of schools nationally. The school correctly identifies performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as the 'cornerstone of its success'. Over four-fifths of students attain higher grades in all these subjects. Similar results are attained in most other subjects. Standards in the sixth form are above average overall, when compared to all students nationally, but broadly average when compared to all female students. The proportions of students who pass A-levels and those which attain higher grades, A or B, are above average, but the proportion of higher grades attained in vocational courses is below average. However, this represents good achievement overall, as a higher than average proportion of students stay into the sixth form and retention rates are very high. Standards in the sixth form have risen significantly in recent years, although there remains some variation between subjects in the proportion of higher grades attained. At all ages, there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of students, whatever their backgrounds. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make at least as good progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development of students is outstanding. The school is rich in the diversity of language and culture that students, parents and staff bring. A strong Christian ethos permeates the life of the school and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development thrives within this community. Students enjoy school shown in their high attendance, admirable standards and notable achievements. They say, 'Teachers make lessons interesting; there are lots of things to do'. Behaviour is outstanding. Students are friendly, courteous, get on well with each other and their teachers, and create a happy environment. Consequently their learning flourishes. Students are sure that their school is a safe place and are confident about discussing sensitive problems with staff. They are well aware of the need to adopt a healthy life-style, because the school places great importance on it. Drinking water is available at all times; they enjoy sport and take advantage of a host of clubs and physical activities. In many fund raising activities for national and local charities, students gain clear understanding of those less fortunate than themselves. Sixth form students are involved in national campaigns through their Justice and Peace Group spreading the message to Make Poverty History. They organise

workshops throughout the school where ideas are exchanged. This initiative has been recognised by the National Youth Parliament as a worthwhile model for other schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Robust, effective training and induction ensure that all teachers can identify strengths and weaknesses in lessons. Teachers make it clear to students what they will be learning in lessons and to help them understand how to improve. Students' work is thoroughly assessed and the quality of marking, a weakness in the previous inspection, is much improved. Comments are relevant and students make good use of them to improve their work. The best lessons are well paced, stimulating and challenging and have a range of activities and opportunities for students to learn in a variety of ways, such as in pairs or groups. Teachers have expert subject knowledge and use this to make lessons come alive, exciting and relevant for all students. Lesson planning is exceptionally thorough. This means that all students are given work that challenges and interests them. They respond well and are determined to do their best. However, in a few lessons, teachers talk for too long, giving little time for students to answer questions or think for themselves. Learning in many lessons is outstanding. In a Year 13 psychology lesson, for example, students worked exceptionally hard because of the way the lesson was structured, ensuring all were involved. They undertook a variety of group tasks, including a 'psychology version' of a round from a popular television sports quiz. Discussion was lively, as students challenged each other, resulting in excellent progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for students both in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form. It is broad and balanced, meeting all statutory requirements. Students, especially the more able, can take some subjects at GCSE a year earlier than usual. A comprehensive programme of study support for students preparing for examinations is provided. This helps them to succeed by building their confidence. Health education is excellent as is provision made for citizenship. The programme includes teaching students how to learn and prepares them for further study and employment when they leave school. There are a range of extra curricular activities and visits, including sport and the arts; these provide very good opportunities for students to extend their enjoyment and understanding of the curriculum. Clubs are well attended and the school enjoys success in many competitions. The team bonding activities undertaken by students at the start of Year 12 are very much enjoyed and help students get to know each other. The school constantly evaluates and monitors the effectiveness of curricular provision to ensure that it always meets the needs of all students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school gives outstanding care to all its students, which contributes to their enjoyment, resulting in their high standards and many achievements. They are appreciative of the support and guidance they receive. As a student wrote; 'thank you for giving me the confidence to get through Year11'. Students have a real sense that the school cares and wants them to achieve the best they can. They have a genuine understanding of where they are and how they can improve. They understand the importance of continual progress and place great value on the ways in which teachers support them. The very well structured pastoral programme ensures that students new to the school settle quickly and easily. In addition, those who enter during the year benefit from a learning mentor. Parents positively comment about the support and guidance provided. 'Our sincere thanks for all the support that our child has received from first to final days at St. Angela's' a card notes. Students are effectively helped to identify subjects and courses that match their interests and aptitudes. They are supported very well in preparation for studies beyond school and for future employment. Healthy lifestyles are strongly promoted. Safety checks are regular, proper attention is given to risk assessments and child protection is robust. Students feel safe and secure and have a deep sense of pride in the school. Close liaison occurs with the police to address difficulties outside school. The support for more vulnerable students is very strong, with the extensive use of a variety of counsellors and specialist agencies. These students move forward at the same rate as others because of careful checks on their progress. There is also excellent support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, through the strong learning support and mentoring programme. The school's Chaplain and nurse also provide effective support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's aspiration for every child to succeed is very successfully transmitted to middle managers, teachers and students. Her ambitious vision is driven through with both rigour and passion. There is an unswerving focus on raising standards and achievement. This unites staff and students in a common purpose that creates an atmosphere of real engagement with learning. Middle managers share the same aspirations for students as the senior team. They work very hard to focus on strategies that improve teaching and learning. There is outstanding practice in both the evaluation of teaching and the analysis of data. Observations of teaching happen on a very regular basis. Examination data is rigorously analysed to identify areas for improvement. Students are set clear targets and are given good advice by staff on how to reach them. Governors are very effective in their role as 'critical friends'. They have recently developed an effective system of linking governors to specific subject departments. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Resources are used very effectively to ensure both excellent standards and value for money. There has been a high turnover of staff in the past two years. However, this is largely due to the outstanding professional development

that allows staff to grow in confidence and ambition. Middle managers, including those who are inexperienced, are able to flourish with the expert mentoring and advice that they receive. The systems of support, both formal and informal, are excellent. The school has the clear capacity to sustain current improvements and deliver its ambitious plans for the future.

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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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
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?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
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

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection and making us feel welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you. I am sure you will not be surprised to learn that we decided yours is an outstanding school.

* We believe you, the students, are an enormous strength of the school; your attitudes, behaviour and attendance are excellent* leadership in the school is outstanding; you respect the headteacher; she and other staff are always looking for ways to improve the school and take notice of your views in doing so* you thoroughly enjoy being in school, feel safe in it and know you will do well because the school's care and support for you is extremely effective* your achievements in Years 7 to 11 are outstanding; you achieve standards that are well above average; in the sixth form, you achieve well but you achieve less of the higher grades in some subjects* we saw some outstanding teaching; you rarely experience teaching that is less than good; teachers plan very effectively to meet your needs and provide you with a variety of activities within lessons; in the best lessons, you are lively and are encouraged to work together* the school has made outstanding improvement since it was last inspected* the vast majority of you and your parents are very happy with the school and all it offers; many of you take part in the many activities provided after school * you are rightly proud of your school and of your own achievements.

We have asked the school to:* continue to raise standards in the sixth form so that a high proportion of the top grades are achieved in all subjects.