



# Sacred Heart Catholic High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104961  
**LEA** Sefton  
**Inspection number** 277268  
**Inspection dates** 11 May 2006 to 12 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms Gina White HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Liverpool Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Crosby
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		Liverpool, Merseyside L23 5TF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 931 2971
<b>Number on roll</b>	1389	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 924 8715
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Very Furnival
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 March 2003	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Summerfield

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	11 May 2006 - 12 May 2006	277268

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Sacred Heart Catholic College is larger than most comprehensive schools and operates on two separate sites in Crosby. The school is popular and over-subscribed. Nearly all students are of white British heritage with very few students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Most students are baptised Catholics. The school has low levels of students entitled to free school meals. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average.

The school works in partnership with nearby schools to extend the range of courses available to sixth form students. The school gained specialist school status as a mathematics and computing college in September 2004.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Sacred Heart is a good college with some outstanding features. Personal development, care and support for the students' well-being are excellent. These special features underpin the college's Catholic ethos and are firmly supported and highly valued by parents. This judgement matches that made by the college. Staff commitment and the students' enthusiasm and pride in their college are testament to the good leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff. Standards and achievement are good. Teaching and learning on the whole is good: much of it is outstanding but in weaker lessons, planning, marking and information to help students improve their work varies too much and is not as effective as it could be. The quality of the curriculum is good and enriched by an outstanding range of visits and activities. The college's specialist mathematics and computing status is well reflected in this extended provision. Evaluation and planning for school improvement is good but it is not always sufficiently clear how the actions will make a difference to students and how the college will measure the impact. The college has embedded and consolidated strengths in care and support and achieved specialist status since the last inspection. Partnership with parents, schools and specialist support services are excellent. The college has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the college that the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is good. Leadership and management are good and the sixth form has expanded significantly in the last three years. Students make good progress given their individual starting points on entry to the sixth form. Standards achieved are well above average and show an improving trend over the last three years. Outstanding care and guidance and good quality teaching and assessment ensure that students feel well supported so they are able to move on to the next stage of their education. Students of all abilities are confident and mature and show high levels of care and support for younger students in the school and for members of the community. The curriculum is good and cost effective. It has been enhanced by a limited range of highly successful vocational courses. The college recognises a need to develop further the good collaborative arrangements in order to increase the range of courses and qualifications to better meet students' interests and needs.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make more effective use of the school's shared criteria for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.
- Develop a consistent approach to lesson planning and the marking of students' work.
- Make clear consistently in school plans how the actions will make a difference to students and how the school will measure the impact.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good in the school and in the sixth form.

Most students enter Year 7 with above average attainment, although there are a significant minority of students with just below average standards.

In 2005 most students met challenging targets, and attainment in national tests at the end of Year 9 was above average. Students made good progress in science and English but some did less well in mathematics. Following a thorough analysis of the data and test papers, the school has identified the reasons for underperformance in mathematics, and a programme to better support the needs of a small group of lower attaining students is underway.

A trend of improving performance and above average standards is solidly established at Key Stage 4. GCSE results in 2005 were well above the national average. This represents above average progress when compared with students' starting points. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Students achieved well in many subjects and particularly the school's specialist subjects of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Almost all students achieve qualifications and a high proportion of Year 11 students continue in education and training.

Standards in the sixth form are well above average and are boosted by very high attainment and achievement by students in a small number of advanced level vocational subjects. Most students undertaking AS and A Level courses achieve at least adequately, and some make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students enjoy and are proud of their college. Their behaviour and enthusiastic attitude to learning are excellent and attendance in all year groups is good. Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent due to a very well structured personal, social and health education programme. Students make an excellent contribution to the community: excellent opportunities to work with groups including the elderly, asylum seekers and links with organisations across the world help to promote communication skills, tolerance and respect. Work through the school council has enabled students to contribute to improving the school environment and participate in healthier eating and lifestyles. A strong and improving feature of the college is the way in which it prepares young people for their future education and employment, as illustrated by recent developments in citizenship and enterprise education. Consequently, high proportions of students continue their education through further training, higher education, and employment.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Students learn well because of good teaching. There are many examples of outstanding practice and few elements of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers are confident and secure in their subject knowledge; they are enthusiastic and they establish very good relationships with students.

In outstanding lessons students are enthusiastic and respond well to the high level of challenge and support provided by their teachers. Where outstanding learning takes place, students experience a wide range of well planned activities: they are challenged and encouraged to discuss and share their ideas and this helps them to extend their knowledge and skills. In the few weaker lessons activities were poorly planned. Such lessons provided too few opportunities to engage and involve students: for example, teachers' questioning techniques were limited and did not stretch the more-able or involve quieter students. As a result, the teacher did not get enough feedback from students to know whether they understood the concepts or where they were struggling.

Assessment procedures are effective but the quality of marking is inconsistent. At best, it provides high quality and detailed guidance. Some students' work was not marked for a period of weeks and there was insufficient guidance for improvement.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school uses its specialist status well to provide a good curriculum for all students. Considerable investment in new technology ensures that all students can now follow a course in ICT. Provision for academic courses for 14 to 19 year olds is good; for example, many students study two foreign languages and a good range of AS and A level courses is on offer in the sixth form. In comparison, the opportunities to study vocational courses are limited, although plans to further develop this aspect exist. Cooperation between the school and other providers to ensure access for individual students to continue with courses, or to study an alternative curriculum more suited to their needs, is good. Good provision is made for students identified as 'gifted or talented' through extension programmes and membership of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. Able students are similarly well catered for: they have additional opportunities to study three separate sciences and are entered early for GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10.

An outstandingly wide range of sporting activities, lunchtime and after-school clubs and visits enrich the curriculum. Many students participate in them and they are highly valued and enjoyed.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The quality of care provided by the school is outstanding. The Christian ethos permeates all activities of the school in promoting and supporting the well-being of every individual and there is ample evidence of the commitment of staff to those in their care. Child protection procedures are clearly expressed and understood by all staff and arrangements for safeguarding students are firmly established. Students feel very safe and speak with confidence of the support that is available if they need it. Students take good care of each other. Formalised mentoring programmes use the knowledge and guidance of sixth formers exceptionally well to support younger students' academic and personal needs. Partnership with primary schools is good and well established and this helps to ensure a smooth transition when new students join the college. The few students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable flourish: individual support and encouragement enables them to make good progress and achieve well. Parents of these students are fully involved by the college. Good partnership links with external agencies are used well to encourage and support parents in developing a greater awareness of the needs of their children.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has increased in number: it works effectively because new responsibilities are well matched to senior managers' areas of expertise. Excellent support and care for students' well-being are firmly underpinned by the shared commitment and dedication of all staff and governors in pursuing the college's key aim, 'Caring and Achieving Excellence in a Christian Community'. Systems and programmes for performance management and staff development are well established. Staff commend the leadership's provision for their needs and a strong sense of teamwork and shared commitment permeates the school.

Well founded decisions to engage with national strategies and good partnership links with other schools are helping to further improve the curriculum. The school has an improving track record and met most of its targets in 2005. Sharper analysis of data since September 2005 has enabled leaders and managers to better identify shortfalls in performance by some younger groups of learners and in particular subjects. However, such refinements to current systems for identifying students' progress are not yet firmly established: middle managers are currently undergoing training to enable them to use the data more precisely.

The college has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. An established annual cycle of monitoring and evaluating the work of departments and pastoral arrangements by middle managers informs college-wide improvement planning. However not all plans consistently identify how progress towards planned improvements will be measured. There is a strong commitment to improve standards of practice to those of the very best. For example, in order to ensure that strengths are identified

and weaknesses tackled, the school has established shared criteria for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning but these have yet to be applied consistently across the school.

The governing body is led by a knowledgeable and caring chair. Governors are well informed, supportive, and effective in their work.



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
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	1	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you for the help you provided to the inspection team when we visited your school on 11 and 12 May. A large number of your parents and carers responded to a confidential survey and this was very helpful.

We decided that the college is good with some excellent features. The college is well led and managed and it has many strengths.

- The way the college guides, supports and cares for you is outstanding.
- Your behaviour, enthusiastic attitudes to learning, and the sixth formers' care and support for younger students is excellent. Your contribution to the local and international community is outstanding. You clearly enjoy and are rightly proud of Sacred Heart College.
- Teaching and learning is good: much of it is outstanding, but in some lessons not enough account is taken of what you already know and you are not challenged or involved in the lesson as much as you could be. The quality of marking and feedback to you about how you can develop and improve your work varies too much and is not as effective as it could be.
- The quality of the curriculum is good; particularly the specialist mathematics and ICT extra activities and those for gifted and talented students. We agree with you and your parents that school is providing much enrichment with visits and activities outside school hours. The college is going to increase the opportunities for you to study a range of vocational courses.

We have asked the college to make sure that all teachers adopt a consistent approach to lesson-planning and marking your work. This will make all lessons as good as the best are now. We have asked the leaders and managers in the college to show consistently how the improvements they propose will make a difference to you and to explain more precisely how they will measure the impact. This will improve the school's planning for improvement.