



St Antony's Catholic College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106372
LEA Trafford
Inspection number 277544
Inspection dates 4 October 2005 to 5 October 2005
Reporting inspector Ms Josephine Nowacki HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Bradfield Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Urmston
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Manchester, Lancashire M41 9PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7484571
Number on roll	629	Fax number	0161 7484571
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Joe Carter
Date of previous inspection	13 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr Bill Byford

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 4 October 2005 - 5 October 2005	Inspection number 277544
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

St Antony's Catholic College is an 11 - 16 mixed secondary school, situated about two miles from Manchester. The pupil population has risen from 434 in 2001 to 688 in 2005: an increase of 58.5 per cent. A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, most notably Caribbean. The proportion of pupils who come from socially deprived backgrounds is slightly above the national average. There are very few pupils for whom English is not their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. The attainment on entry to the school is below the national average and there are very few pupils with higher attainment. The school achieved specialist status as a business and enterprise college from September 2003.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who provides a clear direction. Leaders and managers know the school well and have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. In all areas of the school there is an indisputable agenda for improvement to raise standards and achievement. Through effective management and considerable energy from all staff, the school has progressed from a position of falling pupil numbers to being popular and oversubscribed.

The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Pupils make good progress from below average attainment on entry to the school. The school's commitment to every pupil and its highly inclusive approach is demonstrated by the fact that virtually everyone achieved at least one pass at GCSE in 2005. Standards are broadly average by the end of year 11. However, pass rates are low in some subjects and the overall number of pupils achieving A*-C passes is below the national average. Good systems are in place for the assessment, tracking and monitoring the pupils' progress, although there is inconsistency in the way the system is implemented in subject areas. Attendance is below the national average.

Every child matters in this school where the Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of its work and ensures that everyone in the school's community is equally valued and supported. Pupils feel safe, well looked after and enjoy coming to school. An overwhelming majority of parents are very happy with the school and all that it offers.

The school has been effective in addressing weaknesses identified in the last inspection and demonstrates good capacity to improve. Levels of literacy, curriculum provision, information and communication technology (ICT) and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the setting and monitoring of pupils' progress have all improved. The school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

This good school knows what needs to be done to raise standards higher. In particular, it should concentrate on:

- Raising the number of high grade passes at GCSE.
- Improving attendance.
- Ensuring that pupil review systems are implemented consistently across all departments.
- Continuing to address weaknesses in some subject areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with below average levels of attainment: they make good progress, achieve well in all years and most meet their challenging targets. By the end of Year

9 standards are close to the national average. This positive picture is similar at Key Stage 4. Standards have risen over the last four years, but are still below the national average for A*-C passes. The proportion of pupils gaining 5 A*-G passes is very high and virtually all pupils achieve at least one A*-G pass. The number of pupils gaining high grade passes in English, drama, history and geography in 2004 and 2005 has been consistently high. Nevertheless, there is wide variation in results between subjects: convincing strategies are in place to address weaknesses.

Overall, all groups of learners make good progress at the end of Key Stage 3, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, looked after children and minority ethnic pupils. Boys and girls perform equally well in all core subjects. Girls with lower than average attainment on entry make particularly good progress. By the end of Key Stage 4 all pupils, make good progress, in spite of variations in subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy being at school. They appreciate the teaching and support they receive and the many additional activities provided. They respond keenly in lessons, taking an active part in their learning. Their behaviour is good, in lessons, and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory, affected by the high number of days missed by a few older pupils and by term time family holidays.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's Catholic ethos establishes values and beliefs, which strongly influence their learning and

lives. Pupils readily adopt the school's moral code and show respect for one another. The school council is influential in helping to improve provision for the school community.

Pupils are well informed about the need to follow a safe and healthy lifestyle. They endorse the steps taken by the school to encourage healthy eating and drinking. Many participate in the wide range of extra sporting activities on offer.

Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being. This is partly due to increased opportunities, which are available as a result of the school's specialist college status, and to the generally good progress they make in literacy and numeracy. Pupils say they enjoy their work-experience and value the good advice they receive on options, careers and further study.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall with some that is outstanding. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of course requirements. Lessons are lively and all learners are engaged by the well-planned activities. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, based on high expectations of their behaviour. Consequently, pupils of all abilities respond positively and acquire good study skills.

The school has focused strongly on improving teaching and learning. This is reflected in the common elements apparent in lessons and in the pupils' good progress. However, some inconsistencies occur in the setting of specific learning objectives and the checking of progress at the end of some lessons.

Teachers and managers have improved how they set and monitor targets for pupils' progress. These targets are known to almost all pupils and encourage positive attitudes to learning. There is some variation between teachers in explaining how these can be met, and in the quality of feedback and marking. This reduces the effectiveness of pupils taking responsibility for their learning.

The learning needs of all groups of pupils, including the gifted and talented, are well catered for. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress as their needs are clearly identified, their learning is closely monitored, and there is good teamwork with teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is continually reviewed to ensure that the needs of all pupils are well served. There is an increasing vocational component in Key Stage 4: eight vocational subjects, some delivered jointly by the school and local further educational colleges, have been added alongside more traditional academic courses. This results in a broad and balanced curriculum and enables more pupils to achieve qualifications, develop personal skills and progress into further education or employment. Business and enterprise education is enhanced by the school's specialist status. Effective links have been forged with national and international businesses situated at the nearby business park and these provide realistic learning experiences for pupils. Weaknesses in ICT, which were identified in the last inspection, have been addressed: all pupils at Key Stage 3 have twice-weekly lessons in ICT. However, the potential for using ICT to support learning across the curriculum has yet to be fully exploited. Pupils have many opportunities to enhance their learning through a good range of extra curricular sporting and cultural activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care guidance and support are good. Child protection procedures are well established and appropriate. Proper attention is paid to health and safety procedures to ensure an orderly and safe community. Pupils say there are few incidents of bullying and that any are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are confident they always have someone to turn to if they are troubled.

The support given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and children in public care is good. Needs are effectively diagnosed at an early stage and individual progress is closely monitored. The school is strongly committed to ensuring the well-being of all its pupils. It is successful in keeping pupils engaged who are at risk of exclusion and is strengthening its strategies to improve attendance.

Links with the community and other schools and colleges are good. The support given to pupils entering the school in Year 7 is outstanding and they settle into their new school very quickly. Pupils receive good guidance before choosing options in Year 10 and before moving on in Year 11 to further education and employment.

Pupils know their targets but not always clearly what they need to do to improve. The school monitors their progress and moves quickly to provide additional support when needed. Effective links are established with parents through reports and parents' evenings.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The outstanding and visionary leadership of the headteacher has transformed a previously held culture of survival, into one of achievement, success for all, and expansion. The headteacher, governors and senior management team provide a clear direction for the school. They set high expectations and identify accurately areas for improvement. All staff share a common sense of purpose that is tightly focussed on raising standards, improving achievement, and building self esteem and personal development through a strong Catholic ethos. The school is overtly inclusive, and a spirit of tolerance, respect, and equality of opportunity for all is central to its philosophy: there has been only one exclusion in the last two years.

Performance management is well embedded into the culture of the school. Staff development opportunities, including arrangements for inducting new staff, are very good and well managed. New teachers are well supported. Senior managers have an open minded and self critical system for evaluating the school's performance, but the process is not fully embedded due to the number of new staff to the school. However, there is much good practice at departmental level and senior managers are aware of the need to share this across all areas of the school.

Resources are used effectively and there are good ICT facilities. Financial management is secure.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

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

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school. We appreciated the time many of you gave to talk with us and let us know your views.

These are our main findings from the inspection:

- St Antony's is a good school and we found that some aspects of the school are outstanding.
- The school is well led. The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard because they want you to do the very best you can. They have been very successful in helping you to improve your exam results and you are making good progress in Years 7 to 11. Some of you could work harder to achieve higher standards and we would encourage you to ask your teachers to help you to do this.
- Much of the teaching is good and some is better than this. Those of you who need extra support receive it. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and feel well supported by your teachers and other staff.
- Most of you know what your targets are, but some of you are not sure of how you need to improve your work to reach your targets.
- You value highly the support and guidance which staff give when you move from primary school to help you settle in quickly. Teachers are always helpful and you told us that you always know who to go to if you have a problem.
- There is a good range of courses for you to choose from in Years 10 and 11 and this helps all of you to succeed.
- Your attendance has improved and is now better than it was in the last inspection, but it is still only satisfactory. Clearly, some of you need to improve your attendance still further.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around school is generally good and you are keen to learn and do your best. You are polite and courteous and show respect for each other and to adults in the school.
- We agree with you that the school is a safe place and that you are encouraged to eat healthy food and play sport to keep you fit.

We have mentioned above a few areas where we think you could help to improve the quality of education at your school for yourself and for others. Below are some of the main points which the staff and governors are going to do:

- Improve exam results.
- Improve attendance.
- Ensure that you are all set targets and teachers clearly explain how much progress you are making and what you need to do to improve.

Finally, please can we thank you again for welcoming us into your school and being so friendly and polite. We wish you every success for the future.