



The McAuley Catholic High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106810
LEA Doncaster
Inspection number 277633
Inspection dates 2 March 2006 to 3 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Joan McKenna CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Cantley Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Doncaster
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		South Yorkshire DN3 3QF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01302 537396
Number on roll	1742	Fax number	01302 537891
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev J McNemee
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Mary Lawrence

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	2 March 2006 - 3 March 2006	277633

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school and its sixth form are much larger than average. Students come from a large geographical area and from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is lower than usual, as is the number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are small numbers of students from a large number of different minority ethnic groups; almost all speak English fluently. The school has specialist status for the performing arts.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides extremely well for its students. Excellent care and support for the personal development of students of all ages result in them feeling very secure, well cared for and happy. The Catholic ethos creates a climate of harmony and respect within which students flourish as individuals and as members of the school community. Their very positive attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their success as learners. The curriculum meets their needs extremely well, with the impact of the performing arts status of the school contributing strongly to its enrichment. Teaching is good. As a result of these features, students achieve very well. Standards on entry are only slightly above average, but by the end of each key stage standards are significantly above the national average. Students' very good achievement in all three core subjects is a significant strength.

Leadership and management, particularly those of the headteacher, are outstanding and are responsible for this being a constantly improving school. Strengths and areas requiring development are very well known; inspectors agree with most of the judgements the school makes about itself, although find a few to be modest. Good action is being taken to tackle the main area for improvement: assessment of students in the main school; systems are not yet providing easily accessible information and students are therefore not receiving maximum feedback on how to improve their work. The school is held in high regard by parents and it works in excellent partnership with other organisations. Value for money is good. The school has improved well since the last inspection and has all of the ingredients and determination necessary to become even more successful.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school judges the effectiveness of the sixth form to be good; inspectors judge it to be outstanding. Students' personal development is extremely good; their attitudes are mature and responsible, and they speak confidently of their enjoyment of the sixth form. The curriculum is excellent, with a very wide range of academic and vocational courses and valuable enrichment activities. The quality of teaching and learning is good so that students make good progress and reach standards that are well above the national average. Teachers place particular emphasis on enabling students to learn for themselves and there is a strong sense of shared purpose. Assessment in the sixth form is good. Monitoring of students' progress is very good and mentors work successfully with students to overcome any underachievement. The leadership of the sixth form is excellent. There is a clear vision of how the strong provision can be improved even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that systems for assessing students' work and tracking their progress provide easily accessible information which is fully analysed and used more to

guide students on how to improve their work; and involve students more in assessing their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students achieve very well. Attainment on entry to the school is a little above average. Because of the very good provision made by the school and students' exceptional attitudes towards their work, the overall standards reached by students of all ages are high. Results in national test and examinations at the end of each key stage at ages 14, 16 and 18 are significantly and consistently above the national average. Importantly, students achieve very well in the core subjects of English and science and outstandingly so in mathematics. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results in most subjects are significantly above the national figures, although this is not always the case at the very highest grades. Likewise, while A level results both overall and in most subjects are well above the national figures, not all are equally high. However senior leaders are well aware of the many subjects which are strong and the few, such as psychology and sociology in the sixth form, where further development is required. When an issue is identified, such as the occasional slight dip in results in an area, swift action is taken that results in improvement. The current Year 11 students are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. All groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress and there is no significant underachievement within the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students are very proud of their school. They recognise that they are receiving a high quality education and value the efforts made on their behalf. They have exceptionally good attitudes towards their studies and participate in activities with great concentration, maturity and a determination to do well. Relationships between students and adults are very positive. As one student said, 'teachers are brilliant'. The climate within the school is supportive while being business-like. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is very good. Pupils feel safe and very well cared for. They know how to keep healthy through exercise and diet. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The ethos of the school, underpinned by strong Christian values, results in them having a secure sense of themselves and their place in the world, as well their responsibilities towards others. Students make a valuable and growing contribution to the life of the school, for example, through participation in various councils and through mentoring other students. The school gives its students an impressive range of skills that are important for later life both as members of a community and in the workplace. Students greatly enjoy school life. Their attendance is very high.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have detailed knowledge of their subjects and use this to cover topics very thoroughly. They also have a detailed understanding of examination requirements and so they are able to help students be clear about what is required of them to do well. Teachers have high expectations of both effort and behaviour, and students respond very positively, working purposefully and with confidence. One student said 'teachers boost your confidence and help in any way they can'. Teaching in the performing arts promotes students' self confidence as learners. A notable strength of students' learning is their very high levels of concentration and application. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies that engage and involve students well, resulting in them enjoying and being active in their learning. Occasionally, however, teachers lead lessons too strongly and do not promote students' ability to be independent learners. This is less the case in the sixth form, where students are given good opportunities to take responsibility for their work, while receiving excellent individual support in lessons to help ensure that they make good progress.

Students' learning is assessed regularly, and they are informed of their progress and set targets to aim for. Systems for this do not make the information easy to use for monitoring purposes, however. Some marking of students' work is good, but not all gives them enough information about their strengths and weaknesses and how to improve. In addition students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop the ability to assess and reflect upon the quality of their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is constantly being improved, so that now, in addition to a very wide range of traditional academic subjects, students aged 14 to 19 can follow interesting and innovative vocational courses. Three quarters of students leaving Year 11 enter the sixth form, and more join from elsewhere -evidence that provision is popular and that students' needs are being well met. Students enjoy a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, including residential opportunities, visits and sport, although provision for sixth form students to take part in physical education activities is limited. The impact of the school's specialist school status in performing arts is reflected in the many music and drama activities. In the ambitious forthcoming production of *My Fair Lady*, pupils are putting into practice skills developed within the curriculum very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes very good care of students. Systems ensure that all are well known by key staff so that support can be tailored to their specific needs. Students confirm that they are very well supported by staff both generally and if they experience difficulties, with the school chaplain playing a valuable role. The care and support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of high quality. The work undertaken in the Inclusion Centre helps to improve the behaviour and attitudes of some students and successfully prevents exclusions. The school works well with outside agencies where required to ensure that students' needs are met. Child protection and risk assessment procedures for promoting the health and safety of pupils are in place. Pupils entering in Year 7 are helped to settle in quickly; important in such a large school. Specific guidance for students at key times, such as course choice for GCSEs and A levels, is exemplary. Students receive guidance on how well they are progressing academically and how to improve their work, and this is helping them to achieve high standards, but the school recognises that this area nevertheless needs to be further developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school's Catholic ethos is central to the outstanding way it is led by the headteacher. She values individuals highly, while taking a rigorous approach to management. As a result, staff work together harmoniously, within a structure that ensures that all carry out their duties conscientiously. Coherent systems for monitoring the school's work mean that the headteacher and senior managers see clearly what works and what needs to be improved. Consequently, the leadership is quick to provide support and challenge when needed. Newly qualified teachers say the help they get 'couldn't be better', and a middle leader said that she was 'being given great opportunities to flourish'. The commitment and clarity of purpose communicates itself to students and contributes to their very good attitudes and achievement. Parents are consulted and kept fully informed of developments; the questionnaires returned during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the school and all it does for their children. Students are rightly proud of the school and contribute ideas and opinions through their very good relationships with staff. The governing body has a detailed grasp of the school's strengths but is not complacent. Governors share the leadership's intent to develop further; for example, by extending the vocational curriculum and improving assessment arrangements. In the light of the outstanding leadership the school's capacity to improve further is very strong.

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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	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?	2	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	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

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?	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	2	
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	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

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to thank you for the courtesy you showed us and for talking to us about your work and your views of school.

What we liked most about your school

- We find your school, and the sixth form, to be outstanding. You receive a very high quality of education which enables you to be successful in your learning.
- Your attitudes towards your work and your behaviour and attendance are exceptionally good.
- Your spiritual development is excellent. You respect yourselves and others.
- You are very well cared for and supported by staff.
- An extremely good curriculum that meets your needs very well is provided for you, and there are good opportunities to develop your interests and talents outside of lessons.
- Teaching is good and results in you gaining good understanding of the subjects and courses you are studying.
- You achieve very well and the results you gain are well above national averages overall.
- Your school is extremely well led and managed by the headteacher and other leaders.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Improve the arrangements for assessing your work and monitoring your progress, so that you receive very detailed information about how you can improve your work, and to involve you more in assessing your own work.

We wish you well in the future.