



Saint John Houghton Catholic School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113000
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279076
Inspection dates 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006
Reporting inspector Dr. Kenneth Thomas LI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Abbot Road
School category	Voluntary aided		DE7 4HX
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 932 2896
Number on roll	610	Fax number	0115 944 5168
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. John Stocks
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. Bernard Monaghan

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	Inspection number 279076
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Saint John Houghton Catholic School is a mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school. With 610 pupils on roll, the school is smaller than most other secondary schools. Pupils start at the school with attainment which, although covering the full attainment range, is above average overall. The large majority of pupils are of White British ethnic origin. A few pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities. The proportion with statements for their needs is average. Pupil mobility is about the same as in most other schools. The school, which is heavily oversubscribed, gained specialist Science College status in September 2005.

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 findings show that the school is providing consistently good education across all the major aspects of its work. This closely matches the school's own evaluation of its performance. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the school's high expectations and clear values. This creates an excellent climate for learning. The school provides good value for money. Pupils make good progress and overall standards are well above average at the end of Year 11. Teaching is generally good and often outstanding. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Because their behaviour in lessons is exceptionally good, teachers are able to concentrate on extending pupils' knowledge and understanding. Excellent care, support and guidance, together with the very effective tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress, make a significant contribution to standards and achievement. Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, with effective support from other senior staff, provides a clear vision for the future development of the school. Exceptional progress has been made since the last inspection. All of the key issues have been tackled successfully. There has been a significant rise in standards and specialist Science College status has been achieved. Areas for further improvement, including the need to raise standards in art and design and technology, and to extend the range of vocational courses in Key Stage 4, are accurately identified. The school's improvement plan is strongly focused on improving learning and continuing to raise standards. Building on the good and excellent practice which already exists, the school has the potential to be outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in art and design and technology at the end of Year 11 - Increase the range of vocational courses in Key Stage 4

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of pupils is good. Standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. When attainment on entry is taken into account, these standards represent good progress by the end of Year 9 by all groups of pupils. Performance in the GCSE examinations taken at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved substantially since the last inspection and is significantly above average in most respects. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in any five or more subjects is well above average and remains so when English and mathematics are included. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades is also well above average in most subjects. These results reflect the good progress pupils make from the time they enter the school, particularly in mathematics and science. However, higher grade results in art and design and technology do not match those in other subjects. The school has been successful in raising the attainment of boys and although girls still outperform boys, the difference is slightly less than that observed nationally. Because the school sets and achieves challenging targets for

pupils based on an accurate but aspirational analysis of their potential, there are no significant differences in the progress of different groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development of pupils is outstanding. They learn in a highly supportive atmosphere, where they feel secure and valued as individuals. This is very much part of the school ethos and springs from its Catholic faith. Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the strong sense of community. Younger pupils speak warmly of the way in which they are made to feel welcome and soon develop a feeling of belonging. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the variety of opportunities they are given to learn and make progress. They have very positive attitudes to learning and this is seen in their attendance, which is well above average. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and in general around the school. They are keen to take responsibility and develop a good understanding of their social obligations. This is seen, for example, in their enthusiasm to extend their participation in school life through the school council. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Daily acts of collective worship are carefully planned, central to the ethos of the school and play a major part in the pupils' personal development. Pupils demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the needs of others and transfer these feelings into actions as shown in the raising of funds for charitable causes. The school is making good efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and pupils are encouraged to stay safe. A well planned course in personal, social, health and citizenship education gives pupils knowledge, understanding and skills that they will be able to use in their working life. This is an example of the broad role the school strives to play in equipping pupils for future employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Inspectors' judgement of teaching closely matches the conclusions reached by the school leadership team in their own monitoring of lessons and are confirmed by the standards attained and the good progress made by pupils. High expectations, stemming from the school's strong Catholic ethos, are consistent features in lessons. Because pupils readily conform to these expectations, behaviour is exceptionally good and in most lessons rapid progress is made. In the best lessons teachers employ a range of learning strategies to challenge and engage pupils' interest. On occasion, pupils are excited by inspirational teaching as seen during the inspection in mathematics, French and music. In an excellent Year 8 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils clearly enjoyed the variety of innovative activities used by the teacher and made rapid progress in solving complex mathematical equations as a result. In most lessons, teachers use skilful questioning that encourages all pupils to think and be involved. In the satisfactory lessons, there is less challenge,

pupils are not actively involved and therefore make less progress. The school's assessment policy and practice are much improved from the last inspection and are now thorough. Assessment information is used very effectively to monitor pupils' progress and identify underperformance. The quality of marking is generally good and pupils say that this provides them with a clear understanding of the standard of their work and what they must do in order to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It promotes achievement well and meets statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In keeping with the school's specialist status, enhanced provision for science and mathematics is extending pupils' learning opportunities. The Key Stage 3 curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, and helps them to make good progress. It covers the full range of required subjects. The school has extended the range of options available in Key Stage 4. These options include an engineering course that is offered in collaboration with another local school. However, the school correctly sees the need to broaden the range of its vocational courses to better meet the needs of all learners. Provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good across all year groups. There is a well constructed personal, social and health education course which contributes successfully to pupils' understanding of responsible citizenship. The curriculum is complemented by a wide range of enrichment activities. Pupils of all abilities take advantage of the various sporting activities, educational visits and residential courses offered, and many participate in music and drama groups. Good links with local businesses support work experience in which all Year 10 pupils participate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Because all staff are firmly committed to enabling all pupils to achieve their individual potential, pupils are supported very effectively in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified quickly and individual learning programmes are set up to enable them to achieve well. Through the parental questionnaires, parents praised highly the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties or physical disabilities. Provision for students identified as gifted or talented is developing well and the school is now beginning to share good practice between subjects. The health and safety of pupils has a high priority within the school. Health and safety procedures are clear and fully in place, and all staff know and understand the arrangements for child protection. All other steps have been implemented to ensure the safety of pupils. Staff work effectively with external agencies to support any pupils who may be at risk. The pastoral system is effective in enabling pupils to be open in the sharing of any concerns. Pupils particularly value the role of the school chaplain in this respect. The monitoring and mentoring of pupils' progress

is very effective. There is effective communication between the school and parents. Regular progress reports inform parents of the levels their children are working at in relation to their targets. This helps parents to become partners in their children's learning. There is effective careers advice and planning for the future.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school evaluates leadership and management as good, but inspectors judge it outstanding. This is because the headteacher and senior staff have established an excellent climate for learning and set high expectations. The process of review and planning for improvement is precise and strongly focused on its specialist status and continuing to raise standards. Because the school's self evaluation is generally accurate, the school knows its strengths and identifies the right areas for improvement. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school, particularly the quality of teaching and learning, are now well established amongst senior staff. This has had a significant impact on the rise in standards since the last inspection, as has the strengthening of middle management. The school acknowledges and caters for the full range of pupils' needs and recent parental and pupil surveys show a high level of support for the school. The leadership of the school is highly regarded by parents. Existing good links with local schools, colleges, businesses and the community are being strengthened through the school's specialist activities. Resources are managed well and value for money is good. Governance of the school has strengthened since the last inspection and is now good. Governors now play a more strategic role in guiding and supporting the school's work and provide challenge for further improvement. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the standards achieved and progress made by pupils. The school has excellent potential for further improvement.

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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	1	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	2	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	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?	1	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	1	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

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your politeness and co-operation during our visit. We greatly appreciated your comments and opinions and were very impressed with your enthusiasm and attitude to school. The inspection found that your school was consistently good. You are encouraged to learn and aim for high targets. Results of tests in Year 9 and examinations in Year 11 are above the national average. Your excellent behaviour in lessons is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why you make such good progress from the time you join the school. There is a very friendly and positive atmosphere in the school and very good relationships between yourselves and the staff. Teachers review your progress carefully and give you excellent support when necessary. The school provides a good range of courses which give you choices to suit most interests. The advice you get on making choices and on careers is also very good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for you to be involved in and many of you enjoy these. You have good opportunities to find out about the world of work. However we think your school can be even better still. We have asked your headteacher to ensure that the GCSE results in art and design and technology are as good as those in other subjects and to increase the range of vocational courses that are available for you in Years 10 and 11. We were very pleased to see that so many of you are keen to make the most of the opportunities the school is providing for you. We wish you continued success in the future.