



All Saints Roman Catholic High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119797
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280664
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Jim Bennetts

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Haslingden Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Rawtenstall
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Rosendale, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 213693
Number on roll	519	Fax number	01706 213693
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Kilgallon
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr M J Brennan

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 280664
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This Roman Catholic school serves a collection of small towns in the Rossendale valley. There are 519 pupils in the school at present. Numbers have fallen from 590 in 2003 and are expected to fall further to 450 over the next few years because there are fewer pupils coming through Catholic primary schools in the area. This has resulted in budget constraints and falling staffing levels. The presence of a selective grammar school and a Catholic girls' school nearby affects the intake. Almost all pupils are white British, the proportion eligible for free meals is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to the national figure, but there is a higher than usual incidence of pupils with medical conditions associated with learning disorders. The school has more boys than girls. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal secondary starting and leaving points.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school evaluates its effectiveness as good; inspectors judge it to be satisfactory. Standards by Year 9 and in GCSE have improved greatly over the last two years. In many subjects GCSE results were markedly better in 2005 than in 2004. However, there is substantial underachievement at GCSE for boys, particularly the less able. Therefore, overall standards at present are sound rather than good. There have been helpful modifications of the curriculum in Key Stage 4 to make better provision for those who are not willing learners or who might respond better to a vocational approach. However, statutory requirements for citizenship and ICT are not fully met. Though most of the teaching seen was good and occasionally outstanding, a significant minority of lessons seen were no more than satisfactory and, in rare instances, barely so. There is variation in the level of challenge as pupils move from subject to subject. Whilst some teachers give good opportunities for learning through independent writing, others put too much emphasis on copying notes. Marking ranges from thorough to perfunctory. A recently introduced assessment system helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and how to improve further, but this is not yet consistently applied. Senior and middle managers do not control the quality of teaching sufficiently. The school has coped well with the difficulties of a budget deficit and reduced staffing due to falling rolls. Meanwhile, standards have risen considerably. The school gives sound value for money. Recent improvement is due mainly to the headteacher's shrewd leadership and the vigilance and good counsel of the governing body. The school is well placed to make further improvement.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

The school should improve:

- the achievement of boys in Key Stage 4, particularly the less able;
- senior and middle managers' quality control of teaching, to ensure that levels of challenge are consistently high, that classroom activities are always suitably engaging, and that pupils are always clear about the standard of their work and how they might improve;
- the curriculum, by making provision for citizenship and full coverage of the ICT requirements for Key Stage 4.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that standards are satisfactory overall and have improved considerably in recent years. By Year 9 standards in national tests are at least as good as those found nationally; GCSE results are similar to those in an average school. Though GCSE outcomes in 2005 were lower than targets agreed with the local authority, they were in line with what the pupils could reasonably be expected to

achieve, given their starting points. Amongst pupils entering the school, there are fewer very able children than are usually found in a comprehensive school and slightly more who are less able. Pupils' average scores in national tests at the end of primary school vary from year to year but overall are slightly below average. Boys do almost as well as girls in Year 9. The strength of results at this age reflects the effective work in English and science that has been sustained over recent years across the school's full age range. At GCSE, standards in the recent past were very uneven between subjects. The great majority of subjects now have sound results and there are several subjects, such as English, design and technology, history and PE, where results are very good. There has been considerable improvement in French and RE.

Girls do well at GCSE. Boys do almost as well as girls in national tests at age 14, but many underachieve at GCSE. Less than half achieved five good grades whilst two thirds of girls did so. Achievement is particularly weak for less able boys. The school has recently introduced effective systems to monitor and log pupils' progress as they approach GCSE. This has facilitated well focused intervention, which has levered up standards generally; it has not yet impacted sufficiently on a hard core of boys' underachievement. Alternative curriculum arrangements have been established in Year 10 and early indications are that this is effective. In some instances, boys' resistance to learning is related to well evidenced learning disabilities, which in turn have a negative effect on others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, though the school judged them to be good. Most pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning, and meet their teachers' expectations. They enjoy their experience of school and work hard to achieve the targets set for them, though, in some subjects, these are not always clear. A minority of pupils are less well behaved and the school has devised appropriate sanctions to deal with their misbehaviour. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as head boy and head girl, prefects, mentors, house captains, or as representatives serving on the school council. The pupils are proud of the council's effectiveness in bringing about changes, for example, the securing of safety railings and the introduction of a revised school uniform, in the design of which, they had a considerable voice. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is sound; the school's distinctive Catholic ethos and language college status both bring a special dimension to their spiritual and cultural experience. Pupils feel very safe at school and are confident that any incidents of bullying or racial harassment would be dealt with effectively. They have someone to turn to for help with personal problems. Pupils' peer relationships and those with their teachers are good.

Pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy and safe life-style. They choose from a range of healthy foods and have ample opportunity for healthy exercise through PE and extra curricular activities. Pupils generally become mature, independent and self-confident young people as they progress through the school and are suitably prepared for their future education, employment, family life and contribution to the

wider community. Attendance, however, is below the national average. The school has introduced measures to deal with the few persistent non-attenders.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school judges its teaching to be good. However, whilst most of lessons seen during the inspection were good, and some even excellent, the range of inspection evidence, including scrutiny of books and examination data, confirms that, overall, teaching is satisfactory and is better in some areas than others. Strengths and weaknesses largely coincide with the varying standards and progress in different subject areas. The better teaching is effective because of teachers' high expectations, strong subject knowledge, and skilful planning which matches work well to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, the better lessons are lively, stimulating and challenging. In these lessons pupils rapidly acquire new knowledge and skills. In less effective though satisfactory lessons, the pace is slower, work set is less well suited to pupils' ability levels and aptitudes, and teachers tend to talk for too long. Pupils have to wait too long to get underway with reading, writing and solving problems for themselves.

Across the school, the quality of marking and the use of assessment to plan lessons, set targets and monitor the pupils' progress are too variable. Marking in English is a model of good practice, but in some subjects, pupils do not get to know how to improve their work. Similarly, the quality of the content and the timing of homework set for the pupils are inconsistent across the school. It can vary from fairly mundane tasks such as the copying up of notes, to extensive research, for example, in art and history.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that curriculum provision is satisfactory. The programme in Years 7 to 9 provides a reasonably broad and balanced experience and includes suitable support for those pupils with learning difficulties. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is evolving to meet pupils' needs better. Good and successful features are the vocational opportunities and the alternative courses to GCSE, which provide a more appropriate experience for many pupils, including the least motivated learners. Good collaboration with local schools and colleges is leading to courses that serve pupils' ambitions well; most pupils find courses that interest them and suit their needs. Recent curriculum review, together with the positive relationship with the local college, is resulting in a flexible and responsive programme that is satisfying pupils' diverse interests, and is intended to support improved achievement particularly among boys at this stage.

The personal development programme ensures that health and safety education is satisfactory. Most statutory requirements for the curriculum are in place, but provision for citizenship is inadequate, and as at the last inspection, requirements for ICT in

Years 10 and 11 are not fully met. Plans to improve provision for citizenship are well advanced and form part of the school's current review of its pastoral provision. A reasonable range of extra-curricular activities is provided, notably in overseas visits linked with the school's specialist language college status, and these are enjoyed by both boys and girls

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school evaluated its care, guidance and support as good; however, inspectors judge that it is satisfactory. There is a good level of commitment to pupils' welfare. The procedures for child protection are secure and understood by staff, but new teachers have not had up to date training. All necessary health and safety requirements, including risk assessments, are firmly in place. Pupils say they feel safe and appreciate the steps the school has taken to deal with issues such as bullying. Effective partnerships with outside agencies help to provide good care and support for pupils with learning difficulties and vulnerable children. A notably successful initiative, in collaboration with other local high schools, is the Virtual School Rossendale project, providing support for pupils experiencing social and emotional difficulties. Good links with primary schools smooth the transfer of pupils into their new school. Pupils receive appropriate guidance about their subject choices in Years 10 and 11 and career opportunities. Academic guidance requires strengthening; although the school has set up systems for tracking progress, not all pupils know their targets, or how well they are progressing towards them. Plans are well advanced to revise the school's pastoral structure, and to improve the support for pupils' personal and academic progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Much has been achieved in the last few years: standards have been greatly improved, despite the constraints of a budget deficit and reductions in staffing due to falling pupil numbers. Yet more remains to be done. Judicious staff appointments and the introduction of more rigorous procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and directing the work of subject departments have led to higher standards. The curriculum now provides more relevant opportunities for less able and less willing learners. Workforce remodelling and the rationalisation of middle management has been well considered and effective. The headteacher's shrewd leadership has carried the school forward through difficult times.

Some issues remain from the previous inspection. The school, through its senior and middle managers, does not evaluate its effectiveness sufficiently thoroughly. Self evaluation documentation is thin in some areas. Heads of departments and senior managers do not effectively deal with the variable quality of teaching and marking. They have monitored teaching but not tackled where it falls short. The system for tracking pupils' progress and acting on such data is good, but only slowly being put

in place. Though parents are generally well satisfied with the school, and the school has recently carried out an exhaustive survey of parents' views, some say they would like the school to take more notice of their concerns.

It is unfortunate that a budget deficit was allowed to develop. However, the consequences of the deficit and further budget reductions associated with falling numbers of pupils in the school have been well managed by senior managers and governors. The governing body has acted decisively in requiring action to raise standards and in taking steps to ensure the efficiency of management at all levels. In view of the substantial recent improvement in standards and the effective management of transient financial and staffing difficulties, the school demonstrates strong capacity to improve further. Inspectors and the school consider leadership and management overall to be sound.

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

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21 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We learnt a lot by talking with you, watching your lessons and seeing samples of your work.

We were impressed by some of the things we found at the school, though there are a few that could be a little better. Some of the best features are:

standards have improved greatly over the last few years, particularly so with GCSE results

there are now several subjects where GCSE results are really good

girls do well at the school, so do some boys

new courses in Year 10 are going well

there are fewer children in Catholic schools in the Valley year by year, so fewer are coming to your school - this means less money and fewer teachers; the staff and governors have coped very well with this

the headteacher, his senior staff and the governors have done well in improving standards.

To make sure everything in the school is as good as it can be we recommend that:

the school does everything possible to make sure that all boys do as well as they can

courses in citizenship and ICT cover everything that is required by national guidelines

senior staff and heads of departments make sure that teaching is always as good as possible – that lessons are always interesting and challenging, and that you know how to improve your work.

We know that most of you enjoy school. We hope it gets even better. We wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts, Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B