



# St Cecilia's Roman Catholic Technology College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119800  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280665  
**Inspection dates** 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Judith Straw

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Chapel Hill
<b>School category</b>	Community		Longridge
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Preston, Lancashire
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 783074
<b>Number on roll</b>	465	<b>Fax number</b>	01772 786200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr Robert Snape
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 December 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280665
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Cecilia's is a smaller than average Roman Catholic High School for boys and girls with 465 pupils on roll. Almost all of the pupils are from white British backgrounds, with two pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils come from a full range of social and economic backgrounds but about a quarter are from socially deprived areas. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Pupils start at the school with levels of attainment which are just above average. The school became a specialist technology college in September 2004. It has the Investors in People award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Cecilia's is a good school founded upon Christian principles. It helps pupils to grow academically, physically and emotionally and parents are very happy with the education provided. Past pupils say that they would not have succeeded as well had it not been for the support they received here. Almost all areas of practice are good and some are very good. All groups of pupils achieve well and reach well above average standards by the age of 16. Teaching is good overall, although some areas of assessment are inconsistent. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and play a key part in their good achievement. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to learning. Rare instances of bad behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively by teachers. Pupils' work and general progress are checked very systematically so that each pupil can achieve their best. Special mentoring is provided for pupils who are underperforming. The curriculum and the wide range of enrichment activities successfully meet the needs of all pupils. There have been recent improvements to the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 but at present there is no suitable provision for examination courses for lower attaining pupils. The school is well led and managed, and gives good value for money. Self-evaluation is good and there is good capacity to improve.

not applicable

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all subject teachers tell pupils clearly what they need to do to improve.
- Provide suitable examination courses for lower attaining pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. They enter the school with standards just above the national average and in the national tests at the age of 14 and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examinations at the age of 16 in 2005 they attained well above the average.

Steadily improving results in GCSE have been above average for five years, apart from 2004 when there was an expected dip so that results were in line with average. Results for five or more passes at Grades A\* to C were the best for five years in 2005. Results for pupils at 14 and 16 exceeded school targets in 2005 and have been in line with those of similar schools. The percentage of pupils with A\* and A grades is rising. Subjects with results well above average in 2005 were art and design, English, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), design technology, music and physical education. Other subjects achieved results in line with national averages. All groups achieve well. There is no significant difference in achievement between girls and boys, pupils of different prior attainment or pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their very good behaviour and very good attitudes to learning are reflected in their enjoyment of the school and above average attendance. The pupils say that they are proud of their school; they understand that the school has high expectations of them, and they work confidently towards challenging targets. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, by serving on the school council. Most pupils feel that their views are taken into account. The inspectors agreed with this view. For example, pupils were closely involved in decisions about the content and variety of the very healthy school lunches.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good. Pupils are confident that incidents of bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively. They show respect for each other and their teachers. Good vocational courses, careers guidance and work experience all help pupils to gain the knowledge and skills needed for the world of work. The school encourages pupils to eat healthily and participate in sports activities. Drugs and sex education programmes also provide them with valuable advice. Pupils gain independence and self-confidence as they progress through the school and they are prepared well for the future in family life, employment and the wider community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have extensive subject knowledge and plan thoroughly. They make good use of the information they gather from assessments to plan future lessons and to monitor how well pupils progress. As a result the work they set pupils is challenging and the pace of learning is rapid. Pupils confidently work independently, collaborate effectively when working in groups, and enjoy their lessons. Because of the good relationships in the school and the fact that pupils are known as individuals by all the staff, they work and achieve well. In the best lessons, pupils are helped to understand how their work is assessed and it is made clear what they must do to improve. In those lessons pupils assess their own and each other's work and discuss at the end of lessons what they have learnt. This helps to fix in their minds what they have understood or learnt to do. However, such good practice is not consistent and there were lessons where pupils were unsure how well they were doing and few opportunities were provided for them to think about and discuss their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's good curriculum fulfils all requirements and meets the needs of learners closely. Very good arrangements are made for pupils when they enter the school. Good links with the primary schools, a curriculum that builds on pupils' earlier experiences, and an organisation that helps pupils settle in mixed ability groups before they are organised by ability all create the foundation for the pupils' good progress. All pupils have the opportunity to learn two languages. The school works hard to provide a wide range of different opportunities for pupils with special gifts or talents. For example, because some pupils wish to study GCSE astronomy the school arranges an optional course after school. Some pupils take GCSE examinations in modern languages and mathematics at the end of Year 10. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils follow at least one vocational course and a technology course. A range of effective provision means pupils study off-site doing extended work experience. The headteacher is currently leading a group of local schools in looking for better ways of providing national vocational qualification courses for all local pupils. There are some good examples of work-related learning activities in the curriculum and opportunities to take part in enterprise activities. Very effective collaboration with outside agencies helps pupils in their preparation for life after they leave school. Pupils are offered a wide range of activities and visits outside lessons, including music, sport, robotics and art.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's care for its pupils is outstanding. Excellent attention is paid to both health and safety procedures and risk assessments, which are all regularly evaluated. All staff understand child protection procedures. Pupils say that they feel safe and can turn to an adult in confidence if they need help or advice.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for those at an early stage of learning English, and for children in care is very good. Strong links with parents are maintained through written reports and parents' evenings. The school's total commitment to providing equally for the well-being of all its pupils is outstanding. The pastoral system is a strength of the school. The extensive use of assessment data and the regular monitoring of all aspects of the pupils' work enable their progress to be rigorously checked, resulting in good achievement. Year 11 pupils greatly appreciate the mentoring offered after the mock examinations.

Links with the community and other schools are very good; they contribute to smooth transition at times of transfer, particularly into Year 7 and then after Year 11 into continuing education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Pupils achieve well and become confident, self-respecting and sensitive to the needs of others because of the care taken over their personal as well as their academic development. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has a clear vision for the school's future direction. She is supported well by able and committed colleagues. The technology college status has brought benefits to the curriculum through its investment in technology as a tool for learning. Because the school has good self-assessment procedures in place, it knows how well it is doing and what it must do to raise standards further. The school's development plan is used as a working document to guide and monitor that drive for improvement. Everyone is committed to equality of opportunity and the inclusion of all pupils in what the school has to offer. Christian values underpin all that the school achieves. Governors are closely involved in the work of the school and fulfil their role as critical friends. Good arrangements support pupils in their transition between schools and prepare them for work. The school is well staffed and has a good range of high quality resources to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning very effectively. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection and the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### 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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	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

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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	1	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<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	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

<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**

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16 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed our visit and were impressed with your positive attitudes, good behaviour and the sensible way in which you talked to us. We were also impressed by the fact that former pupils took the trouble to come and see us.

We think that St Cecilia's is a good school. You are working hard and the test results in Year 9 and GCSE results in 2005 were the best ever achieved by the school. You are right to be proud of your school.

Teaching and learning are good. You enjoy your lessons and concentrate in class. You respond well to the challenging lessons the teachers set for you. You work well on your own and in groups. You obviously enjoy taking part in many activities outside lessons, including raising money for charity, making music, participating in sports and visiting places of interest.

Yours is a safe and happy school with a strong Christian ethos. You show concern and respect for others and obviously appreciate the fact that each of you is important and treated as an individual. Most of the time your behaviour is very good. You are well looked after and fully supported in your academic work to make sure you achieve the best you can.

Mrs Diffley and her senior teachers are doing a good job in leading and managing the school. They understand the school very well and know what needs doing to make it even better. You contribute well to the school council, and Mrs Diffley and the school staff make good use of your views about what can be improved.

In order to make further improvements we have asked your school to provide more help in lessons so that you know how well you are doing in each subject and to look for national vocational qualification courses for those of you who prefer them to GCSE courses.

We thank you for your contribution to the inspection and wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Judith Straw

Lead inspector

Annex B