



# St Edward's College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 131320  
**LEA** Liverpool  
**Inspection number** 282197  
**Inspection dates** 15 November 2005 to 16 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Garry Jones HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	North Drive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Sandfield Park
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		Liverpool, Merseyside L12 1LF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 281 1999
<b>Number on roll</b>	1159	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 281 1909
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr P Quinn
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Waszek

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11 to 18	15 November 2005 - 16 November 2005	282197

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and four additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Edward's College is a slightly larger than average, 11-18, Roman Catholic, voluntary aided, comprehensive school in Liverpool. It is the Choir school of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King. It serves the city of Liverpool but draws pupils from an extremely wide catchment area. The immediate area of the school has below average levels of socio-economic deprivation and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The pupils are predominantly white British and the number of pupils from other ethnic groups is low. The school is an established specialist college for languages and for the performing arts and this has led to extensive links with the wider community.

## 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 college which provides very good value for money.

The standards and achievement of pupils are outstanding. This reflects the exceptional ethos of achievement which is well established within the college. The high quality of teaching also ensures that pupils achieve exceptionally high standards and make excellent progress. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of students well. Despite this the college recognises the need to continually review its curriculum to ensure it meets all pupils' needs. The wide range of languages provided reflects the specialist status of the college and is an excellent feature, as is the extensive provision for music. The commitment of the college to supporting the wider community is impressive. The wide range of extra curricular opportunities available to pupils is exemplary and supports their personal development well. Outstanding care and guidance are provided for all pupils which allows them to flourish in a calm, ordered and stimulating environment. The strong positive catholic ethos supports pupils within a community of faith. The pupils thoroughly enjoy their education and make excellent progress in their personal and social development. This is reflected in their exemplary behaviour, regular attendance and positive attitudes to their work. The success of the school is linked to the excellent leadership of the principal and the senior leadership team. This group and the staff work in close collaboration with the governing body to establish clear priorities for the future development of the college. The governing body is a powerful and experienced group that holds the college to account effectively. The college regularly completes thorough self evaluation and knows its strengths and weaknesses well. However, the grades awarded were too conservative and were raised by the inspection team from good to outstanding. There is a proven record of improvement and the school has clear capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

The college judges its sixth form to be good. In the view of inspectors it is outstanding and gives very good value for money. Students enter the sixth form with above average attainment and make excellent progress to leave with very high qualifications. This is the result of the demanding teaching they receive and their own hard work and commitment. Very few students leave the sixth form once they have started and nearly all go on to higher education, including significant numbers to prestigious universities. The college goes to great lengths to care for and guide its students and offers them a curriculum which meets their needs well. Links with other schools are developing to increase the range of options available and to support provision in other schools. Leadership and management are very strong and there is a clear focus on improvement strategies to raise standards even higher. Students speak highly of the sixth form and are right to appreciate the opportunities it gives them.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

Ensure that assessment data is used consistently to raise achievement further by disseminating the best practice to all departments.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

The overall standards of attainment and rates of progress are outstanding.

The attainment of pupils on entry to the college is consistently well above average. The vast majority of pupils enter the school in Year 7 having achieved higher than the expected standards in the National Curriculum end of key stage tests and many pupils achieve the highest possible grades.

During Key Stage 3 good rates of progress are achieved and the value added is significantly above the national average. Progress improved significantly in 2004. Standards in each of the core subjects were significantly above average in 2004 and a higher proportion of pupils achieved the highest grades than was found nationally, especially in mathematics.

By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have made excellent progress. The attainment of pupils is significantly higher than is found nationally and the proportion of pupils gaining 5+ A\*-C grades at GCSE has risen steadily since 2000 to reach 94% in 2004. Every student achieved a qualification and 99% achieve 5 or more grades at GCSE. The college met all of its attainment targets in 2004 and has set even more challenging targets for the future.

The small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and they respond well to the friendly atmosphere within the college. They are keen to learn and work hard, taking pride in their work. It is clear from lessons and discussions with pupils that they enjoy opportunities to learn independently and this is enhanced by a wide range of clubs at lunch time and after school. Pupils report feeling safe in the college and that bullying is very rare. An exceptional range of extra-curricular activities and effective personal, social and citizenship education help promote pupils' personal development. The school goes to great lengths to ensure pupils are taught how to develop a healthy and safe life style.

As a community of faith the school pays very close attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is a strength of the school. An outstanding example of a spiritual occasion was a remembrance assembly held during the inspection.

Pupils of all ages explained that they offer ideas about many aspect of school life because they know that their views will be taken seriously. There is a high level of

involvement in the school and wider community, examples include the college council, involvement in charitable work, musical performances and pupils leading activities such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) family fast Day.

Attendance is well above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding overall. Staff have a high level of subject knowledge and well-honed class management skills. Their positive relationships with pupils underpin high quality work in class and impressive external examination results.

Teachers plan lessons effectively, setting clear, and challenging learning objectives which they usually discuss and summarise with pupils. The best lessons are carefully planned with clear presentations, followed by intensive, carefully supported independent, paired or group work. Pupils and students have impressive powers of concentration, so time in these demanding lessons is used intensively. Learners respond with enthusiasm to stimulating teaching and exciting tasks requiring independent or collaborative effort. They make valuable contributions and sensibly seek assistance where required. Where lessons are formally conducted, with prolonged teacher input, the lively responses and buoyant attitudes of pupils often add sparkle and variety to the learning.

Learning is particularly supported by continuous assessment, where progress is tracked and many teachers set pupils precise individual targets. Teachers are increasingly realising the importance of this valuable aid to achievement. However, some teachers confine their use of targets to preparing for external examination work. Pupils and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated and monitored, so they make good progress.

Many teachers make very effective use of computers and interactive whiteboards; and all use conventional resources to good effect. Teachers make substantial and valuable use of homework to extend learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. The college meets the needs of all pupils well by providing a very broad but balanced curriculum. The specialist status of the college results in an emphasis on languages with pupils studying two languages in Key Stage 3 and some gifted linguists studying three. While the performing arts specialism is reflected in the inclusion of dance and drama in the curriculum. There is a broad range of subjects available to pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils have good access to work related education and there are many opportunities in Year 10 and 11 to explore work opportunities for the future. There is a wide range of advanced level GCE courses

available in the sixth form including some applied courses. Sixth form students also study short enrichment courses which include information and communication technology and a language such as Arabic, Portuguese or Mandarin. The college is collaborating with local high schools to enable sixth form pupils to access a range of subjects tailored to their individual needs, for example, in business studies or food technology. In turn students from local high schools can access courses at the college in languages and music.

There is an extensive range of extra curricular activities which include a particular focus on music. These take place before school, at lunchtimes, after school and at weekends, and include activities such as rugby, chorister training, public speaking and drama. The activities are highly praised by pupils; they enjoy them and their achievements are boosted by their participation. In addition pupils have many opportunities to make residential trips to many areas of the world.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support of the pupils are outstanding. Every individual is treated with respect and dignity; in this school every pupil matters. Staff know pupils very well. The school counsellor provides help for those pupils who have personal or family problems arising from every day life in college or at home. This together with the pastoral system ensures that there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to access a trusted adult if they wish. Pupils feel that the school provides a safe and supportive environment for learning. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are firmly established and understood by staff.

Arrangements for new pupils moving from primary school to Year 7 ensure they are well prepared for the change. Pupils speak highly of the induction process. Older pupils receive appropriate advice when choosing options and making career choices. Learning support assistants are used very effectively to support vulnerable pupils, those with additional learning difficulties and those in public care and their progress is tracked. The school actively promotes social inclusion and positively combats bullying; this is very well supported through discussions with pupils. Links with parents, carers and outside agencies, such as Connexions and the education welfare service are very effective. Pupils' achievements are celebrated thoughtfully and there are regular parents' evenings and meetings. Pupils' views are gathered and acted upon. They are well represented through the College Council. Attendance is well above national averages. However, there are instances of pupils absent from school whose parents do not inform the school of the reason for their absence on the first day of absence. The school is aware of this and is addressing the issue.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The principal and his leadership team work closely with the governing body and senior staff to establish clear priorities for the continued development of the college.

There is a strong commitment from all staff to the Christian ethos and to further improve the quality of provision in the college and all staff give willingly of their time to support its aims.

The college has well established processes in place to review the performance of faculties and to support their planning for improvement. This twice yearly review informs the college leadership team when identifying whole college priorities for improvement. This process results in a detailed improvement plan but this is undergoing review to provide a more concise plan for overall improvement. However, the college has yet to establish sufficiently precise success criteria to fully evaluate the impact of all initiatives. There are detailed systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching within the college. This links closely to a well established performance management system and reflects a clear commitment to further improve the quality of teaching in the college. There is a well developed programme of staff development in place.

The self evaluation of the college is a comprehensive review which accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses. The college has surveyed the views of pupils, parents and staff to inform the process. However, judgements were too conservative and the inspection team raised the grades for all sections from good to outstanding.

The governing body is outstanding under the leadership of an experienced chair who is well informed of the strengths and areas for development of the college. There is a well established system of committees which carries out a detailed review of progress and provides extensive and well informed challenge to the leadership of the school to improve further.

The school is extremely well financed with significant additional funding through parental support and fund raising activities. This is used effectively to provide an extremely high level of facilities and the school provides very good value for money.



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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>	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	2	2
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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1	
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	2	

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	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	1	
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	1	
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

<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**

Thank you for welcoming us to your college. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work and interests and to listen to your views on your college. We judged your college to be outstanding and recognise that you help to make it successful.

What we liked most about your college

- Your excellent behaviour and positive approach in lessons.
- The outstanding progress you make in learning and the very high standards you achieve.
- The excellent leadership of the principal and his colleagues.
- The high quality of almost all the teaching.
- The outstanding care, guidance and support provided for you.
- The range of courses that you can study including the six languages.
- The exceptionally wide range of activities at lunchtime, after school and at other times.
- The high quality of music in the college.

What we have asked your college to do now

- Ensure that all your teachers use information on your performance effectively to help you to improve your achievement even further.

Keep up your excellent behaviour and your enthusiasm for learning.