



Sion-Manning RC School for Girls

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100503
Local Authority Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number 285820
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Nigel Fletcher HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	St Charles Square
School category	Voluntary aided		London
Age range of pupils	11–16		W10 6EL
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	020 8969 7111
Number on roll (school)	572	Fax number	020 8969 5119
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr J O'Donnell
		Headteacher	Mrs C Leach
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	6–7 March 2007	285820

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Sion-Manning is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided school for girls. It is smaller than most secondary schools mainly serving three local London boroughs. Two thirds of pupils are Roman Catholic. Other pupils mainly subscribe to the Christian faith, although a few are from other faiths. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average and much of the local area is identified as socially and economically deprived. The girls come from a range of ethnic groups with about 30% from a White British background. Although more than half come from homes where English is not the first language, few are at the early stages of learning English. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is below average compared with the country as a whole. Sion-Manning is an extended school with specialist status in visual arts, and is a hub for the Secondary Sports Partnership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sion-Manning school is satisfactory with some good features. The school is a racially harmonious community and is rich in the diversity of language and culture that students, parents and staff bring. The emphasis on positive attitudes towards good behaviour and healthy lifestyles has helped students develop a strong sense of responsibility for themselves and others and improve confidence and self-esteem.

Behaviour of students in lessons is satisfactory and good around the school. The girls feel safe and show respect to adults and each other. The school is developing effective strategies for dealing with the poor behaviour that a minority of students display. Attendance is good because the students enjoy being at the school and would recommend their school to others because of the learning environment. One parent commented, 'My daughter comes home every day happy and full of the new, exciting things happening at her school.'

Teaching is satisfactory overall but it varies in quality. The school is developing effective procedures to improve the consistency of teaching and learning, in particular with the development of an excellent student progress tracking system, but progress is being hindered by the high turnover of staff. Overall, the standards in national tests and examinations are in line with the national average, and students make satisfactory progress. Students have access to a good range of subjects and the extended school programme is very effective in supporting and enriching their studies. The specialist status in visual arts has had a good impact on learning across the school. Lessons provided specifically for students with learning difficulties and disabilities give them a good opportunity to make progress. However, the co-ordination of the provision and the accommodation available for this group of learners is poor.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the management teams are not yet fully established they are having a positive impact on improving performance in the school. Senior managers recognise the areas for development and have the capacity to improve. Links with parents are developing, with parents and carers becoming increasingly more involved in the students' academic and social development. There are productive links with the community. The students and the majority of parents or carers, have confidence that girls develop well at Sion-Manning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise attainment at all levels by improving the consistency of teaching so that all is as good as the best
- improve the way that the senior staff of the school work together in teams to ensure improvements are co-ordinated across the school
- improve the management of provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with the national average. The attainment of students when they enter the school in Year 7 is broadly similar to the national average. Overall, by the end of Year 11, students make the progress expected of them. Students in Year 9 reach standards in national tests which are just above average and the progress of all groups of students at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory.

By Key Stage 4 overall progress is satisfactory with the best progress being made in English and mathematics. School data show that standards at the higher grades of GCSE are at the national average in most subjects but higher in English and mathematics. In 2005 the proportion of students gaining five or more passes at A*-G was significantly below average, but school data for 2006 show this has improved and is now at the national average. All students achieve at least one entry level GCSE qualification at age 16.

In 2005 students with learning difficulties and disabilities made significantly less progress than expected due to shortcomings in the provision for them. However, they made satisfactory progress overall in 2006 and they are now progressing well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well being throughout the school are good with some outstanding features. Students enjoy school as shown by their high attendance and hunger for learning. The majority of students are polite and courteous and feel their views are valued. Some students and parents say that there is a small minority of students who disrupt learning. The school has introduced effective strategies for improving poor behaviour and supporting students with behavioural problems. In the short term this has led to an increase in fixed term exclusions.

Assemblies and specific events such as International week contribute to the students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students exhibit good social skills and Christian values are reflected in all aspects of school life making students' spiritual development an outstanding feature.

From when they start school students feel welcomed, safe and respected and are confident about discussing sensitive issues with staff. They have responded extremely well to the school's encouragement to follow healthy lifestyles. They participate in exercise both through the school's extended physical education programme and in further activities outside of the school day. Students eat healthily in the dining room and readily drink water round the school and also in lessons.

Students are given many opportunities to take responsibility, and are proud of their involvement in mentoring other students and participating in activities which enhance the school environment and facilities, such as developing the school gardens. Their confidence and self-esteem are enriched by having their opinions heard through the

school council, and the Senior Girls Leadership Team, for example, in the involvement of students in Year 8 in the refurbishment of the toilet block. Students' contribution to the local community is outstanding. They are involved in numerous activities within the local and wider community and support a variety of charities. They also participate in a good range of activities to acquire workplace skills, for example, through learn to earn days, the investment club, and work experience.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory which agrees with the school's evaluation. However, there is inconsistency and lessons range from outstanding to inadequate. Senior managers know where the best teaching is to be found and support all staff in improving their skills. This is particularly helpful to the high number of inexperienced teachers who joined the school over the last year.

The regular recording and analysis of students' progress are used well to set and review targets in consultation with students and parents. They also provide teachers with a very good range of information to assist planning for learning. However, this is used with varying effectiveness in raising teachers' expectations about what individual students can achieve. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of behaviour. In this context, good relationships promote mutual respect and students can concentrate on learning. Lessons are planned well and a variety of engaging activities ensures a good pace to learning and sustains students' attention. Some teachers use questioning well, both to challenge students to think at an appropriate level, and to evaluate how effectively students are learning. However, this is not consistently the case, for example where teachers are teaching subjects for which they are not trained. In less successful lessons inappropriate behaviour is tolerated, lesson plans are too vague and do not take into account the individual learning needs of the students, and too little is expected of students, resulting in students drifting away from the tasks and slowing the pace of learning.

The school has invested considerably in improving the information and communication technology (ICT) facilities across the school and good use of ICT is made in most areas of the school to support and enhance learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets the needs of most learners and promotes enjoyment through the outstanding opportunities for curriculum enrichment that the school provides. Work and enterprise related learning is developing well and the school is working with other schools to share and develop good practice. Students benefit from the extra opportunities for learning support outside of the school timetable, as well as from the very good range of extra-curricular activities offered through the extended

school, especially in the visual and performing arts. However, the needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities are less well met in the mainstream curriculum. The school's specialist status in visual arts has had good impact across the school, with examples of the effective use of imagery being made in different subjects to support understanding. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and contributes well to the girls' outstanding social moral and cultural understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The students are well cared for, and child protection is secure. There is excellent collaboration with outside partners to ensure students' well being and safety, and students' personal development is carefully monitored and supported through the pastoral system.

The school has developed an excellent tracking system to monitor academic progress and identify students who need support before allocating appropriate intervention strategies. The system is used very effectively by subject leaders and the lead tutor teams, particularly for Year 11 students, but not by all teachers in the planning of their lessons. The majority of students interviewed during the inspection were fully aware of their targets and appreciated the use of the numerous review meetings where they and their parents are given guidance on what they need to do to reach their targets. In addition to studying a broad range of subjects some high achieving students are able to take GCSE examinations in Years 9 or 10.

Students who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress due to the support they receive in lessons. However provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities has suffered from the absence of a permanent leader for more than twelve months. Consequently up to date records, identifying students' specific needs, are not in place for all students and some mainstream lessons are not planned to meet the needs of individuals. In addition, the school does not provide an appropriate learning area designated for LDD support.

Students learn about the world of work in lessons as well as through a range of other opportunities and are given helpful guidance by Connexions personal advisors to help them make the right personal and academic choices before they enter Key Stage 4 and again before they leave the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has ensured that there is a caring and inclusive ethos, fully rooted in Catholic values. Within the school there is a strong commitment to inclusion and the care and concern for all pupils is a high priority. She has initiated a range of changes that are shaping the educational direction of the school. Senior staff are aware of the strengths and weaknesses and make good use of the inspection framework for self-evaluation. They

are beginning to have a positive impact in improving certain aspects of the school's provision. There is a clear focus on raising standards and promoting personal development and wellbeing. Good monitoring and evaluation systems are in place, including rigorous analysis of attendance, attainment and progress towards students' targets.

Although staff speak favourably about their managers there are still inconsistencies in how effectively managers work together in teams. For example, the senior leadership group is not yet fully established to ensure a completely shared vision. The effectiveness of curriculum leaders in improving the quality of work in their departments is not yet consistent across the school. High staff turnover has led to inconsistent application of the school's policies and procedures, for example in the disruption it has caused to the management of provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities. Governors are committed and have a clear understanding of their role, the areas of the school that have improved and the weaknesses that remain. Learning resources, including ICT are good. Financial management and budgetary control are good, although value for money is satisfactory because pupils do not achieve well.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, talking to your teachers and other staff and visiting lessons. Many of you told us how the caring and supportive environment and your good relationships with teachers mean that you enjoy school and feel safe there.

We judged your school to be providing you with a satisfactory education.

We were impressed by:

- the personal development that you have made due to the very good pastoral support that you receive and the school's emphasis on positive attitudes and healthy lifestyles
- the way that information technology is used widely across the school by you and your teachers to support your learning
- the learning opportunities available to you outside of normal lessons through the extended school provision and through the school's visual arts specialist status.

To make your school even better we think it needs to:

- increase the amount of good or better teaching so that results in national assessments and exams improve, and you make better progress in some lessons
- improve the support given to students with learning difficulties and disabilities
- improve the way that the senior staff of the school work together in teams to ensure improvements are co-ordinated across the school.

The senior staff and governors know what needs to be done to improve the school and have got plans to do it. We believe that if some of you can improve your behaviour in lessons and help the school put in place these plans, and our recommendations, then standards will rise. On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making our visit so enjoyable and we wish you every success for the future.

Nigel Fletcher, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools