



Our Lady and St Chad Catholic School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104401
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 286932
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 23 May 2006
Reporting inspector David Martin HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Old Fallings Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Wolverhampton
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Midlands WV10 8BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558250
Number on roll	786	Fax number	01902 558251
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2001	Headteacher	Miss M C Keelan

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	23 May 2006 - 23 May 2006	286932

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. In the course of the one-day visit, the inspector met with a range of staff and students and saw the school at work. Paired observations of several lessons were conducted with senior staff. The school's clear, analytical self-evaluation provided crucial evidence in shaping inspection judgements. Discussions with governors and the analysis of 160 questionnaires from parents further assisted the writing of this report.

Description of the school

Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Sports College is a popular school within the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school holds a number of good practice awards including Sportsmark Gold, Artsmark Silver, SEN Silver Quality Mark and Investors in People. It is a school which serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. Free school meal entitlement is above average. Student standards are below average on entry to the school and particularly so in literacy. The proportion of students with learning difficulties is around average, but that of students with a statement is higher than average. The sixth form is delivered through a partnership arrangement with other local schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Sports College is a good school with outstanding features. These include aspects of leadership and management and the care and support given to students in their personal development. This is achieved as part of the school's clear Christian mission statement and ethos. Leadership is sharply focused on improving students' life opportunities by helping them to achieve their potential and to develop as caring, thoughtful and active young people. The priorities of the school are shared and understood by staff and governors. Well constructed plans to improve the school consistently result in better opportunities and outcomes for students. The headteacher offers wise, considered leadership focused on continuous improvement. Most importantly, she has built an effective and energetic senior team who are empowered to lead in their own areas of responsibility. Similarly, subject and pastoral leaders and those with wider whole-school roles are encouraged and trusted to develop their areas. Many staff study for external qualifications to further improve their management skills. At the same time, managers are trained and supported within the school to evaluate the effectiveness of what is provided. The school, as a result, has a good understanding of its strengths and areas that require further development. There is a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to the welfare of students that is recognised by parents in the feedback given through questionnaires. Governors support the school unstintingly, are well informed about progress and effectively hold the leadership team to account. Consequently, the school has improved a great deal since the last inspection and has the capacity and drive to improve even further. Although broadly accurate, the judgements made by the school in terms of leadership and care, guidance and support and personal development are cautious and modest! A good example of the school's ambition for students can be seen in the benefits that are already being seen as a result of achieving Sports College status. This has made a major contribution to the curriculum, teaching and learning but perhaps most of all to the personal development of students. Sports status has increased students' awareness of what they might achieve, increased their self-confidence and provided opportunities for leadership and the taking of responsibility. Sport is only part of the overall picture. Students feel strongly that the care and support they receive from all adults is the greatest strength of the school. They know that there is always someone to take personal or work problems to, and they are confident of getting help. They feel valued as individuals, and encouraged to lead healthy, safe lifestyles. More than this, they are encouraged to take responsibility for helping each other. This can be seen in the peer mentoring programme run with the help of the YMCA, the many leadership opportunities and the good relationships and respect shown between adults and students in the classroom and around the school. Parental responses also praise the support and care of teachers, support staff, mentors and the school counsellor. As a result of the provision just described, students behave well, stay safe and adopt healthy lifestyle choices. Attendance is good and improving. The school is doing everything it can to work with parents and a wide range of other partners to encourage and ensure good attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Students enjoy their learning and play an active part within the school and wider community, for example providing

entertainment and lunch for local pensioners. Again, the sports provision is reaching out to local schools and sports groups through the community use of the newly extended facilities and staff teams. Students are able to sample work experience opportunities and the school is planning for a more coordinated approach to enterprise activities and a wider understanding of the world of work. The more vulnerable are well provided for, as is shown by the 'Friendship' club at lunchtimes run by learning assistants. As a younger student said, 'I can meet with friends here any lunchtime and find fun things to do'. The students' social and moral development is very strong, and spirituality is built into every school day. The different cultures represented in the school are recognised and celebrated as part of the respect for individuals. This can be seen in the way in which pupils joining from European and African countries are readily accepted and integrated into the life of the school. Teaching is mainly good, and sometimes outstanding, confirming the school's own findings through self-evaluation. The great majority of lessons are well planned, imaginative and actively involve students in their own learning. This results in interested, motivated students who enjoy learning and smile a lot! Such lessons proceed at a lively pace and result in productive learning where skills and knowledge are built upon lesson by lesson. Students appreciate such learning and report that they dislike and are 'bored' by the minority of lessons that are still too text-book based, lack variety and active involvement. The 'Lead Learning' team is committed to continue spreading imaginative teaching approaches throughout the school. Assessment and the marking of students' work offers constructive feedback that gives advice on how to improve. Students generally understand the level or grade that they are working at, the standards that they are expected to reach and what the next steps are. They are helped by subject and guidance staff through, for example, the well established 'Review Days'. Most parents attend these meetings, where student progress is discussed and ambitious targets are set. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has improved a great deal since the last inspection, and is now recognised as good practice within the local authority. Individual education plans are carefully drawn up, always involving students and often parents. They are understood by staff and used to match lessons to the needs of individuals. The same is true of the identification and provision for gifted and talented students. The curriculum is increasingly well matched to student need, and the school is developing a broader range of vocational alternatives. Sports College status is again making a major contribution to wider provision, but other courses such as 'DIDA', a computer-based qualification, are becoming well established. The school is committed to providing a broad range of courses for 14-19 year-olds with an imaginative use of mixed age groups. Some of these courses are being established already, with seven vocational options offered to the present Year 10 and a few open to older students. The curriculum is extended by an impressive range of sporting, artistic and cultural opportunities, too numerous to mention individually. As one student commented, 'there are tons of things to do here'. These include exciting opportunities for educational visits in this country and abroad. PSHE and citizenship provision, although securely in place, could be more effectively coordinated so that students can identify and understand the importance of the issues that will affect their adult lives. The leadership of staff, effective care and guidance, good teaching and curriculum development have led to improved outcomes in recent years. Students

enter the school with standards that are below national averages. By the end of Year 9, results remain below average, but students are making reasonable progress from their starting points. Results have been steadily improving, particularly in mathematics and science. The English team are now demonstrating the capacity to raise standards in the subject. By the end of Year 11, results have improved almost to the national average, with a substantial increase made again in 2005. The progress made is good by this stage, and better than that made in most schools. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, make equally good progress, an indication of the inclusive nature of the school. School assessment information indicates that this improvement will continue, particularly as new courses make an impact in the coming years. Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Sports College is a successful school that gives very good value for money and is respected and valued by students, teachers, parents, governors and the wider community. The school has clear priorities for further improvement that it is pursuing vigorously.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school has an accurate view of the present stage of development of the sixth form as satisfactory overall, but with similar strengths in terms of leadership and care, guidance and support and personal development. The leadership of the sixth form has recently been re-focused and is reviewing and strengthening partnership arrangements. The standards and progress achieved are in line with what might be expected, given students' starting points, but the school is ambitious to improve the results. There are already some opportunities for staff to observe other teaching in the partner schools. This is a key development as some students expressed a view that the teaching they receive across the partnership is not consistent. The teaching seen on the school site during the inspection was indeed good. The curriculum is being extended as part of a 14-19 strategy in the local area to include a broader range of qualifications, including vocational subjects. This is aimed at providing a more suitable choice for those who are not well served by traditional A-levels alone. A number of students are not retained in the sixth form partly because courses are currently not well matched to their needs, but the school is aware of this and is determined to press ahead with planned changes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

This grade is explained above.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

This grade is explained above.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

This grade is explained above.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

This grade is explained above.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

This grade is explained above.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

This grade is explained above.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	2

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	2
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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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

You may remember that I visited your school for a day recently as part of an inspection. I am writing to tell you what I found on my visit. Before I do, I need to thank you for your kindness and the honest answers given to my questions in classrooms, in the meetings and around the school. You told me that you go to a good school, and I wholeheartedly agree. Furthermore, some of the things that I found are outstanding. These are:

- the personal care, guidance and support given to students by adults
- the behaviour and positive attitude of students
- the sense of responsibility that many of you gain by helping each other and people outside the school
- the way that adults who lead the school are always seeking ways to help you achieve your full potential and develop as active, caring young adults.
- how being a Sports College offers many exciting new opportunities and helps you to stay fit and gain confidence.

Although you all make good progress by the time you leave school and clearly enjoy your education, Miss Keelan and all the staff are keen that things continue to improve. They are determined to:

- improve examination and test results even further so that you can make the most of your opportunities in life
- further develop enterprise and work-related learning opportunities to help you prepare for the world of work
- make all lessons as interesting and active as the best that I saw on my visit and offer qualifications that suit your needs and interests
- work closely with other schools in the sixth form partnership to offer a broader range of courses, further improve learning and consequently the results you achieve.

As I told the students that I met at lunchtime, a school is not a building but the people in it! The adults and students in your school are friendly, caring and respect each other's differences. I wish you and the school every success and happiness in the future.