



# St Wilfrid's RC College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 108736  
**Local Authority** South Tyneside  
**Inspection number** 288172  
**Inspection date** 15 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Brian Dower

This inspection of the school 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>	Harton Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		South Shields, Tyne and Wear
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		NE34 0PH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 4569121
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	917	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 4545070
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Arthurs
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Wright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Wilfrid's is a popular school, which is oversubscribed. It has specialist status as a mathematics and computing college. Students are predominantly of White British heritage but a small minority comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a small number of asylum seekers and refugees. A few of these students are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school's intake contains the full ability spectrum, but overall attainment on entry is average. The school serves an area of broadly average socio-economic circumstances but there are pockets of deprivation. A small minority of students has learning difficulties and disabilities, particularly of a social, emotional or behavioural nature.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic College is a good and improving school, with outstanding features. Christian values are at the heart of its work and students from different social, cultural and faith backgrounds feel welcomed and very well cared for. It has the confidence and support of parents. Standards are above average, and students' progress and achievement are good. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the small number whose first language is not English are well supported and make the same progress as others. Students have good literacy, numeracy and computer technology skills. Many students, however, do not take sufficient care over the presentation of their written and diagrammatic work.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and say that they feel safe and secure in this caring environment. They understand what they must and must not do to stay fit and well, and they adopt healthy lifestyles. Behaviour is excellent and any minor instances of poor conduct are dealt with quickly and effectively. A very small number of parents expressed concern about behaviour in lessons. The inspection found that, although there are a few students who have difficulty adjusting to the routines of school life, they are well managed. This was also the view of the students that the inspectors consulted. Attendance is average and the school is actively trying to improve this. Students are involved in a variety of charitable activities and environmental projects in the local and wider community. They exercise responsibility through the work of the South Tyneside and school councils, and as representatives on an international youth forum. Students know right from wrong and they have good social skills. Their spiritual and cultural development is also good. All students receive the care and support they need. For example, refugee and asylum seekers whose first language is not English receive the right support to enable them to benefit from the curriculum and so progress well.

The school has an excellent system for monitoring progress to identify and address weaknesses in students' performance and this has contributed significantly to rising standards. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and is good overall. Students know how well they are doing. They understand their learning targets and what they must do to improve. The school is aware of the need to challenge students to show greater initiative and to be more independent as learners, and is looking at ways to achieve this. The school's curriculum is good, and the computer and mathematics status has brought great improvements in the use of technology for teaching and learning. There are extensive enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular activities, and the take-up for these is high. This is particularly so in drama, music and sport, which do much to develop students' confidence and self-esteem, and to foster creativity and enjoyment.

Leadership and management are good. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion is excellent, and all students thrive. The headteacher and senior staff are steadfast in realising their vision for high quality care and education, and they are supported by able and diligent teachers and assistants. There have been

good improvements since the last inspection and the school's capacity to raise standards and achievement further is good.

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

- Ensure high standards of presentation in all written and diagrammatic work.
- Increase opportunities for students to show initiative and work independently.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average and, given pupils' overall levels of attainment on entry to the school, achievement is good. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have been above average over recent years. In 2005 this dipped to average because of that year group's lower ability profile, but there was a significant rise in standards in 2006 to well above average, with boys and girls performing equally well. The proportion of students attaining five or more good GCSE passes has improved over the last three years. The school just missed its 2006 target but standards remained above average, particularly so when English and mathematics are included. Progress and achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 are good for boys and girls, for students at an early stage of English language acquisition, and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school's efficient tracking of current standards and progress indicates that the above average standards of recent years are being improved upon. The school's specialist status for mathematics and computer technology is contributing to this improving trend. The school has identified average ability boys as a group who are not doing as well as they should and have strategies in place to improve their achievement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Students' behaviour in class and around school is excellent and the few instances of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively. The use of fixed-term exclusions has fallen significantly over the last year. Students say they feel safe, secure and free from any form of bullying or intimidation. They enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are average. The school is doing all it can to improve this. Students show respect for each other and go out of their way to help those who are vulnerable in any way. The extent of charity work and fundraising activities shows students' sensitivity to the needs of others and their commitment to contributing to the local and wider community. Students know right from wrong and understand that, as well as their own rights, they have responsibilities to others. They express their views articulately in a range of forums, including the school council, and so influence the way the school develops. The way in which students adopt healthy lifestyles is good. Many take part in sporting activities, eat healthily and understand the importance of emotional and social well-being. Students have the basic skills and personal qualities

to make the most of the next stage in their education or training and to provide a sound base for their future economic well-being. However, students' self-reliance would improve if they were required to work independently more often.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Secure planning clearly identifies a wide range of interesting activities to be undertaken in lessons. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching, communicate clearly, have excellent relationships with their students and keep them fully engaged. Students know what is expected of them and complete tasks quickly and confidently. The management of students is very good and the learning atmosphere in classrooms is routinely excellent. Students sustain full attention for long periods and listen with respect to others' oral contributions. Practical activities are well organised and safe. A strong feature is the use of computer technology to present tasks, diagrams and visual images to students. This enhances the pace of lessons and learning. Good use of oral questions establishes that students understand their work but occasionally there is insufficient insistence on high standards of presentation in written and diagrammatic work. Students confirm that most of their work is marked helpfully so they know how to improve it.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides its students with a good curriculum. Secure pathways through the National Curriculum subjects, coupled with good teaching and a high level of guidance, enable students to make good progress in their academic studies. In Years 10 and 11, a good range of academic and vocational options caters fully for all of the students' needs. A particularly strong and successful emphasis on students' personal development is evident throughout the daily life of the school. Students benefit from an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities. Drama, music and sporting activities are extensive, are attended in large numbers and students really value them. A strong emphasis on healthy eating and exercise enables students to make well informed personal lifestyle choices. Provision for students with learning difficulties and those at risk of disaffection is very effective and enables them to make the same good progress as other students. The school's specialist status has brought significant improvements in the use of computer technology for both teaching and learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Very robust procedures for child protection, health, safety and risk assessment are in place and reviewed regularly.

Vetting procedures for staff working directly with learners are fully in place. High levels of commitment to all aspects of students' welfare ensure that they have all of the personal support that they require. Students feel safe in school and they are very positive about it. They confirm that bullying and misbehaviour are rare. Relationships between learners and the staff are excellent.

Extremely effective systems track students' standards, progress and personal development. Students confirm that they understand the levels they are working at and know what they need to do to improve. Assessment systems trigger extra help or alternative strategies where they are needed. Hence, vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties are supported very well and enabled to make the same good progress as other students. Excellent liaison with students' parents keeps them fully involved in target-setting and review.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her senior colleagues have a clear vision for the school's future direction. They have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve. They are well supported by able and committed teachers and support staff who work effectively as a team. Subject leadership is good overall, with some excellent practice in certain departments. The challenge facing the school is to ensure that there is rigour in the monitoring in all curriculum areas in order to raise standards. Morale is good. All who work in the school are committed to equality of opportunity for every student and the removal of any barriers to their personal and academic development. This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. The governors know the school well and play a full part in forward planning. The school is well staffed. There is an appropriate range of good quality resources to support students' learning and they are used well. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection and the school's capacity to improve further is good.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

St Wilfrid's RC College

Harton Lane

South Shields

Tyne and Wear

NE34 0PH

16 Feb 2007

Dear Students

Thank you for the welcome you extended to us during our recent visit and the time many of you gave to talk to us about your school. You answered our questions very well and made a good contribution to the inspection. We enjoyed our short stay and only wished we had more time to see all the creative and interesting activities you are involved in.

We found that St Wilfrid's is a good and improving school with outstanding features. Everything is done to ensure that you all make good progress and achieve high standards. All who work in the school are sensitive to your needs and to removing any barriers to your learning. You impressed us with your courtesy and the way you work well together. You are confident young people and enjoy your work and take full advantage of the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

There are many things in your work to be proud of. You have the skills and personal qualities that will enable you to succeed in your education and in the outside world. You behave well, work hard and show consideration for others. There are students whose social and cultural backgrounds are different from most, and yet they are accepted as part of your community and enjoy all that the school has to offer.

There are two things for you and your teachers to work on to raise standards further. Some of you take insufficient care over the presentation of your written and diagrammatic work. This is a skill to be developed if you are to make the most of your educational and employment opportunities. You know the importance of adaptability and self-reliance. More opportunities to show initiative and independence in your work would help you to develop these qualities.

Thank you again for showing your school off to us. We wish you all every success.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower

Inspector