

St Philip Howard Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112972
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	289476
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Shaun Dillon HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	462
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Don Bowdren
Headteacher	Miss Wendy Steciuk
Date of previous school inspection	16 February 2002
School address	St Mary's Road Glossop SK13 8DR
Telephone number	01457 853611
Fax number	01457 852830

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2007
Inspection number	289476

© Crown copyright 2007

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 and two Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

St Philip Howard Catholic School is a small school which has specialist status in sport. The proportions of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, from minority ethnic backgrounds, eligible for free school meals and from overcrowded and high social class homes are low compared with national figures. Students' attainment when they join the school aged 11 is close to the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Philip Howard Catholic School is a satisfactory school which provides good pastoral care, personal development and well-being. These judgements concur with the school's self-assessment. The school, however, overstates its strengths in curriculum, care, guidance and support, leadership and management. The headteacher, governors and managers have improved the school's ethos, accommodation and morale significantly since the last inspection. They have clear plans to develop the school further, but do not focus sufficiently on raising students' achievements and standards. The school's strengths relate to its pervading Catholic culture. This engenders high levels of respect between staff and students. The highly effective pastoral care and family focus encourage the students to be friendly, helpful, well behaved and well mannered and also ensure that behaviour is good and attendance is satisfactory. Students enjoy school life and feel safe.

Students in Years 7 to 9 progress well and attain high standards. Learning is effective, because these students are attentive, receptive and act maturely in lessons. Boys progress very well. Most students are keen to learn. This progress does not continue in Years 10 and 11 and students do not reach average standards in their GCSE results. Much of this was due in 2006 to the poor attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of influential students, mostly boys. Managers are confident that the current Year 11 students will be more successful, based on evidence of coursework and mock examination results, and their view is born out by inspection evidence. Students progress well in English.

Teachers know their subject and course requirements well, but not all plan lessons thoroughly nor take account of the learning needs of different students. Teachers use the new electronic recording system effectively to note students' results and targets but do not use this information sufficiently or consistently enough to inform students how to improve.

The impact of the sport specialism is significant in other subjects and in raising students' sporting aspirations. It is also invaluable in encouraging healthy living. However, because of the disappointing results in 2006, the school has not met all its targets. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is rich and varied and meets students' needs. However, in Years 10 to 11, it is heavily focused on GCSE qualifications. For the minority of potentially disaffected students, this curriculum is insufficiently varied and appropriate.

The headteacher has a sensible vision for the school, works hard to bring about improvements and has the support of her management team and other key individuals. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Governors and managers have worked very hard to ensure that the school is a very caring Christian community which encourages mutual support, good communication and personal development. The school is aware that actions to improve teaching and learning, assessment and the curriculum have not been effective, partly as a result of a lack of rigour and consistency in the school's quality assurance arrangements.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of under performance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards and achievement of students in Years 10 and 11.

- Develop teaching and assessment to improve students' progress.
- Extend the range of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to meet the needs of all students.
- Improve its ability to make rigorous judgements of its own effectiveness and to take appropriate action once weaknesses are identified'.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students' achievement and standards are satisfactory. They make significantly better progress in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 to 11. When students enter the school in Year 7, their standards are broadly average. In their first three years they make good progress, especially in English. Boys make particularly good progress. Standards in Year 9 improved in 2005 and 2006 to be high, especially in mathematics. Standards attained in science are satisfactory overall, but too few pupils gain the higher levels.

Students in Years 10 and 11 normally make satisfactory progress, but progress in 2006 was much lower, due to a minority of disaffected students. Students make better progress in English than in mathematics. As a result of this unsatisfactory progress, students' attainments, which are normally average, declined to be below average in 2006. Attainments in English are average, but in mathematics they declined to be below average. Boys perform better than girls, whose standards are below average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE higher grades declined significantly. Students' standards are highest in information and communication technology, science, English, mathematics and social science and are lowest in design and technology, geography and religious studies. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. The school did not meet its Year 11 targets in 2006, but has set realistic targets for 2007, based on evidence of the improving progress and standards of the current Year 11 cohort.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, especially the spiritual and moral dimensions. They enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to their studies. They attend regularly, and arrive punctually at school and to lessons. Too many students, however, take holidays during the school term.

The school provides a safe learning environment. Most students behave very well in lessons and around the school. Nevertheless, the high numbers of short term exclusions reflect the poor behaviour of a minority of students, mostly boys. There is no evidence of racist behaviour. The school deals promptly and effectively with the few incidents of bullying that occur.

The school's sports specialist status has contributed strongly to students' understanding of healthy lifestyles. They participate enthusiastically in the many sporting activities and in after school clubs. They eat and drink healthily at school.

Students' relationships with each other and with staff are highly positive. Many contribute well to the life of the school and the wider community. They involve themselves in many charity events, the school council and working as prefects. Students develop a good understanding of the world of work through the extensive programme of careers education, enterprise events and work experience. Almost all students go on to further education or training.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with examples of good practice in certain subjects. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subjects and of course requirements. However, not all lesson planning is sufficiently detailed to match the needs of individual students.

Most teachers begin lessons by recalling previous work and setting the scene. They do not always use key learning targets to direct the lesson and do not explicitly refer to them at its end to review students' progress. Consequently these lessons lack direction and checking of students' learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to probe understanding and develop ideas and students respond positively to clear instructions and explanations.

Students' behaviour is exemplary in class. They are attentive to teachers, cooperative with their peers and settle well to work. Teachers and students respect and trust each other. Students enjoy working in groups on interesting practical tasks. They make significant progress when challenged to take responsibility and solve problems.

Students use computers increasingly for research and to help them develop independent working skills. Many teachers use information and communication technology well to enhance learning.

Teachers mark students' work frequently. They record results centrally and set targets which they share with parents. Not all teachers, however, implement the school's agreed assessment strategies consistently nor do they apply them effectively. Consequently, students do not know how to improve in all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Managers have used the sport specialist focus effectively to widen experience, raise the profile of physical education and to motivate students. Teachers have developed a sports theme within all subjects. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is good. Students in Year 7 learn art, music and drama as separate subjects and gain a rich experience of the expressive arts. Gifted students may study French and German after Year 7. Lower attaining students receive appropriate levels of additional literacy support and the school generally gives satisfactory support to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

However, although a small number of students in Years 9 to 11 attend a local college for vocational courses, most take mainly academic GCSE subjects in school. This provision does not adequately reflect the ability and interests of those students who struggle to cope with demanding course requirements. There is insufficient opportunity for Year 10 and 11 students, regardless of ability, to develop work-related or other key skills through the study of accredited courses despite the many other non academic links that have been established with other schools and colleges.

The programmes for personal, social and health education and citizenship and religious studies prepare students well for adulthood. The numerous extra curricular activities, including school visits, are popular and help students extend their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school deserves its reputation as a very caring school with a family ethos. It promotes the health and safety of all its students effectively. However, some of the toilet facilities are poor, partly due to minor vandalism. A small proportion of students smoke on the schools premises. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. The school provides good education in citizenship. The transition from primary school is well managed, and new students quickly feel at home. The school works well with the Connexions service and other outside agencies to ensure that students receive good guidance about their future options.

The school has recently adopted a new electronic system for tracking and monitoring students' progress. Monitoring of academic progress is therefore improving, though it remains inconsistent in quality. Teachers of English, for example, use assessment information effectively to raise students' achievement, but this is not yet the case in all subject areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school development plan is detailed, but lacks a focus on raising achievement and standards. The management of Years 7 to 9 is very effective; students progress well and reach high standards. Despite the best efforts of the school to improve the performance of a minority of disaffected Year 11 students in 2006, their achievement and standards were low. However, managers have introduced improved procedures in 2007 that are already having an impact on the standards of students currently in the school. Quality assurance processes lack rigour and consistency, especially in lesson observations, appraisal, staff development and self-evaluation. The school has not yet met all of its sports specialist targets.

Governors have a wide range of relevant expertise and experience. They challenge and support senior managers appropriately and monitor students' progress thoroughly. The school provides the statutory daily act of worship. Governors and senior managers have a satisfactory capacity to improve the school.

Financial planning is prudent and is now related more closely to school priorities than at the last inspection. Managers deploy physical and human resources effectively. Value for money is satisfactory.

Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. Staff morale has improved since the last inspection. Managers have improved accommodation and resources, in the sport, e-learning and information and communication technology areas, significantly since the last inspection. The modern fitness suite is available to staff, students and the local community. Although the school has improved access for people with restricted mobility, they are unable to enter certain specialist rooms.

Day to day communication within school is very effective as is communication to parents. However, a significant minority of parents believes that the school does not take account of their concerns sufficiently.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A**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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

30 March 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St Philip Howard Catholic School, St Mary's Road, Glossop SK13 8DR

Thank you for the welcome which many of you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you at lunch time and in lessons. Thank you also for being so open in telling us what you thought were the best parts of your school and the parts that you considered needing improving. We think you belong to a satisfactory school which has some good features.

Most of you enjoy school, feel safe there and work well with your teachers. Your behaviour and attitude are good and we were impressed. We think that much of this is due to the clear Catholic background to the school. However, a small minority of students disrupts the life of the school by bad behaviour and vandalism, especially in the toilets. Last year, some of these students did not progress well and did not do well in their GCSEs. Unfortunately, their attitude passed on to other students who did not do as well as they should have done. Your teachers think that this is unlikely to happen again. Most of you improve your knowledge and abilities a lot in Years 7 to 9 and we think that this should continue in Years 9 to 11.

Many of you enjoy the extra activities and clubs you can take part in outside lessons, especially the much improved sporting facilities. You also raise funds for charities and contribute to school life through the school council. Most of you enjoy your lessons. Your teachers know their subjects. We think your lessons would be improved if there were better plans to include all of you in learning, whatever your ability. You all know your targets, but we think that some teachers could offer you sharper guidance that would help you progress more.

We think that the school is led and managed satisfactorily. Your teachers, the school's managers and the governors provide you with a very caring environment. They help you to develop and mature very well. They encourage you to be healthy, act safely and to mature to become a responsible adult. They want you to succeed at school and in life. In order to improve further, we suggest that they should:

- raise your standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11
- improve teaching and assessment to help you progress better
- extend the range of options in Years 10 and 11 to include wider choices that will meet all your needs
- be more careful in checking that everything is done to a high quality.

Best wishes for your future.

Shaun Dillon HMI