



St Wilfrid's Catholic Comprehensive School, Crawley

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126095
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293470
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector Linda Kelsey HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Oakwood
School category	Voluntary aided		Old Horsham Road
Age range of pupils	11–18		Crawley RH11 8PG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01293 421421
Number on roll (school)	913	Fax number	01293 421429
Number on roll (6th form)	131		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mary Scott
		Headteacher	Paul Walker
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	11–12 December 2006	293470

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This school serves a wide catchment area, with the majority of students coming from Crawley. The school is currently managed by an acting headteacher and was granted specialist status in business and enterprise with ethics in September 2005.

Approximately a third of students are not of the Catholic faith, and the school serves a diverse community. Fewer students than average are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is growing and is above 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

This school is effective and inclusive and provides a satisfactory level of education. Standards attained by students are broadly in line with those found nationally. Achievement is satisfactory overall because students' performance varies across subjects. It is better in English than it is in mathematics and science. This is because teaching varies across subjects and, whilst always at least satisfactory, can range from outstanding to satisfactory.

Personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Students have good attitudes to school and enjoy lessons. In most lessons they are eager to learn, settle quickly to tasks and work well on activities. Teachers expect good behaviour from students and the care, guidance and support they give them are good. Teachers have good relationships with the majority of students and, as a consequence, there is very little poor behaviour. Most students know how to live healthy lifestyles and stay safe. They are aware of the need for an appropriate diet and regular exercise and willingly take part in the sporting opportunities that the school provides. Students learn to exercise responsibility through helping those less fortunate than themselves and taking part in the school council.

Teaching is satisfactory overall with just over half the lessons good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection and one lesson was outstanding. This was because the teacher had not only prepared and resourced the lesson very well but used a range of delivery techniques such as video clips and data projection to enliven the lesson for the students. Teaching here was interactive and exciting. However, in the satisfactory lessons, the good planning does not always translate into good teaching. This is because students are not encouraged enough to get involved practically and their learning becomes passive as they listen too long while the teachers talk at them. Students say that they enjoy the practical subjects such as art and technology better.

The curriculum is good because it matches the interests and abilities of the pupils and is well planned to meet their needs. The provision for work-related learning is outstanding. The school has established productive links with local companies and is able to offer students a good range of vocational courses both in-house and in collaboration with other providers. The provision for economic well-being is good.

Leadership and management of the school are currently satisfactory because teaching and learning and the overall achievement of students are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has successfully reorganised the senior and middle management teams but, because of the newness of their roles and responsibilities, this has had limited impact on raising standards and improving teaching. There is good capacity for the school to continue to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school has good sixth form provision, with standards in the sixth form currently in line with national expectations. Teaching is good and as a result, students are making better progress this year. Unlike the rest of the school, nearly all of the teaching provides challenging work to all levels of ability. The curriculum is good and over 20 courses are offered to students. Leadership of the sixth form is also good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further by improving the quality of teaching and learning so that more students make good progress through the school.
- Clarify the new roles and responsibilities of the management team so that there is a whole-school accountability of how to work together to bring about the necessary improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The standards attained by students overall are broadly in line with those found nationally, and their achievement is satisfactory. At both key stages, students perform well in English but less well in mathematics and in science

Students' performance at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science varies considerably. By the end of Year 11, standards in mathematics and science have risen, and the school met its targets in these subjects. In GCSE examinations, the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades has risen steadily over the last five years; however, the proportion of those achieving five or more A* to G grades has remained constant and is below national expectations. In applied leisure and tourism, students' attainment is well above the national average.

The school recognises that some middle-attaining students, particularly girls, achieve less well than they should, and is taking steps to address this issue. The performance of other groups within the school, including students with additional needs, is in line with national averages.

In the sixth form, results at AS and A level have improved in recent years, and are now in line with national averages, although the proportion of those gaining higher grades fell in 2006. For students following intermediate level vocational courses in business and in media studies, and advanced level courses in business studies and English, attainment is well above average. Performance is below average in science subjects. Despite variations between individual subjects, the achievement of students in the sixth form is broadly in line with expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. They understand the differences in faiths and cultures very well. Bullying is rare and students say that any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students joining the school from different countries are made to feel welcome and quickly make friends. The school makes good efforts to encourage attendance, which is in line with the national average.

The personal and social education programme and religious education provide good opportunities to learn about wider social issues. Students learn about other religions and cultures in religious education. Sixth formers enjoy a wide range of speakers and visits, for example undertaking a recent visit to the site of a concentration camp. Students also take part in events for charity.

The school's business and enterprise status has resulted in most students developing a good set of skills and understanding that will stand them in good stead when they enter the world of work. Sixth form students are proud of their involvement in the school's bid for this specialist status and say that, along with English and business studies, the school is very successful at preparing them for future adult learning and work. Their faith also encourages them to take an ethical approach to business.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well and make good use of resources. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and these expectations are met. In some lessons, for example in drama, a brisk pace and a high level of challenge enable students to make good progress. Students particularly enjoy practical activities in lessons, for example in art and physical education.

Of the lessons observed many lacked the appropriate challenge and pace needed to make learning good. In lessons where year groups are set according to ability, teachers do not always ensure that work is set differently for the different abilities within the class.

Not all students are securely aware of what levels they are working at, or what targets they are expected to achieve. This leads to inconsistencies in the teaching across the school and between subjects. There is a lack of pace, challenge and excitement in some lessons.

In the sixth form, teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their subject expertise and their awareness of examination requirements to good effect to make lessons more

challenging. For example, in business studies, students benefit from stimulating teaching and very precise and detailed help with regard to examination preparation, with the result that they achieve well in A and AS level examinations. Overall, students make good progress in the sixth form and standards are improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good because programmes are well matched to students' interests and abilities. Provision for work-related learning is outstanding, and shows the positive impact of the school's specialist status in business and enterprise. The school has established productive links with local companies and the local college, and is able to offer students a range of vocational courses both in-house and in collaboration with other providers. Students enjoy taking part in a good range of out-of-school activities, including trips, visits, sporting, cultural and work-related activities.

In the sixth form, students can choose from a good range of academic and vocational courses. This choice is enhanced by the school's partnership with other local schools and the college.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school guides its students well and takes good care of them. Students feel safe at school and are well supported, both academically and socially. The school is very committed to including all students and encouraging them to learn to the best of their ability.

Arrangements for the detailed evaluation of each student's needs are made, including regular assessment of standards and progress. Most students know how well they are doing. Some departments make sure that students have a clear idea of the national tests and examination criteria or at what National Curriculum level they are currently working. These will often, but not always, include what they need to do to reach the next level.

The school provides good support for students with learning difficulties and those for whom school life is a difficult challenge. The school is effective in raising standards of literacy. There is good communication with parents and carers. The school also works well with appropriate outside agencies to ensure a flexible approach to schooling for those pupils most at risk of failing. As a result, there are few exclusions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The acting headteacher and the acting associate headteacher provide secure leadership and the management of the school is satisfactory. The school has evaluated itself satisfactorily and has put in place new strategies to bring about improvement, with a focus on inclusion, care and the raising of standards. There is an increased emphasis on the developing role of the directors of welfare and progress. They monitor the academic and pastoral provision for every pupil to identify and effect change for the benefit of the pupils. However, the outcomes of this new initiative have yet to be fully evaluated.

The progress of all the pupils is monitored and this empowers the managers when planning improvements, but as yet there are still too few opportunities for this monitoring to be used more effectively. The school works well with the local authority, social services and parents to enhance the pupils' learning experience.

The governors provide good support and discharge their statutory responsibilities well. They have a good understanding of the life of the school on which to base their decisions. They have been proactive in appointing the new headteacher who is soon to join the school. There are systems to monitor how the school uses its funding and efficient use is made of available resources. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There is good attention to meeting the students' needs for support, advice and guidance. All students are aware of their progress and the targets they need to reach their potential. As a result, teaching and learning are good and students make good progress.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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	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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2
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	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

We enjoyed meeting and talking to so many of you during our two-day visit. We would like to share with you what we found about your school and how we feel it could be made even better.

Some of you told us that although you enjoy school, some of the teaching is not exciting enough and that you spend too long listening to teachers. Although you get on well with your teachers, we agree with you that some lessons don't challenge you enough. When there are more practical tasks in lessons, you feel more involved and learn more. We have asked the teachers to make sure that more of the teaching is as good as some of the good and occasionally excellent teaching that we saw during our visit.

Although most of you achieve satisfactorily and reach broadly average standards, we feel you could do better than this. After all, many of you start the school with average standards gained from your primary schools. You do better in English than you do in mathematics and science. We have asked the school management to make use of its new management structure to make sure that they monitor more effectively why there are these differences in your achievement.

Many thanks for making us feel welcome in your school. We wish you all the best of luck for the future.