

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr WA Branney  
Headmaster  
Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School  
and College of Performing Arts  
Wood Green Road  
West Midlands  
WS10 0QS

Dear Mr Branney

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 20 March 2007 to look at work in ESD. The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with pupils and staff, scrutiny of relevant documents, participation in an assembly and Mass and observation of four part-lessons.

The overall effectiveness of Education for Sustainable Development was judged to be good.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are satisfactory overall.

- Students in Years 10 to 13 are aware of the key messages of sustainability and global awareness. Students in Years 7 to 9 do not discuss these topics with such confidence.
- Students understand the importance of leading healthy lives and appreciate the changes made to the canteen food. They take a satisfactory amount of physical exercise although Year 11 students only have one hour a week. Many boys participate in after school sports, especially football.
- Students' understanding of global warming is sound although not all of them are aware of how this impacts on their own futures at home and in school.

- Students are knowledgeable about how people live different lives in other parts of the world, The school's links with other communities, for example in Ghana, are very worthwhile. Students are caring about those with disabilities and generous in fund raising for charities.

### Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

Teaching and learning in ESD are good overall.

- Teachers and students learn together in a respectful atmosphere and these good relationships contribute to the enjoyment of lessons. Classrooms have lively and interesting displays.
- In Guidance lessons (a blend of citizenship and personal, social and health education) teachers develop students' thinking skills well and encourage them to debate controversial issues.
- Some teachers are skilful at using interactive whiteboards, seen in a Year 11 science lesson where Internet extracts and video clips enhanced students' understanding of global warming.
- Although teachers discuss many ESD issues in lessons, especially in mathematics, geography and science, they do not always relate these topics to students' lives at school and at home. For example, students are not sure whether the school has recycling boxes on not.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for ESD is good overall.

- The themes used in Years 7 to 9 are particularly suitable for cross curricular ESD topics, these were evidenced in drama and modern foreign languages for example.
- Guidance lessons include discussion of many sustainable and global issues. Students speak highly of these lessons and also appreciate how ESD topics are incorporated into religious education lessons.
- The school offers numerous trips and visits in the UK and overseas which strengthen students understanding of global and cultural issues.
- Several subjects, particularly science and geography, incorporate ESD thinking well into their schemes of work.

### Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD are good.

- You and your deputy head are keen to see ESD developed further.
- The head of science is an experienced and knowledgeable member of staff with considerable understanding and expertise in ESD.
- Other heads of department are already embracing the concepts of ESD in their planning. Departments have begun to use the DfES sustainable "doorways" to evaluate how they can further develop ESD.

- The school is working with the local authority to promote ESD principles.

## Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good overall.

- The Catholic ethos underpins the harmonious atmosphere in the school and students' enjoyment of school life.
- Students from different backgrounds and faiths get on well together.
- It is very good practice that students from other schools with physical and mental disabilities use the school for sporting activities and that Stuart Bathurst students help the visitors to enjoy this physical activity.
- The school appreciates the importance of 'focus times', for example, Black history month or UN Water Aid Day as well as its involvement with CAFOD.
- The school's ambitious plans, for example to offer education from the age of three, parenting classes and a farm on site, confirm its determination to be a school that is at the heart of, and responds to, the needs of the local community.
- Students are encouraged to voice their opinions by posting comments and joining in discussions on the school's website. Although sixth formers work hard at organising the school council, it is not yet a significant forum for change within the school and the local community.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- strengthen students' understanding of how topics covered link together under the ESD umbrella and impact on their lives at home and at school, especially for those students in Years 7 to 9
- raise the profile of ESD throughout school procedures, for example by raising awareness of recycling and promoting energy conservation
- raise ESD awareness among staff by supporting those teachers, particularly the head of science and the citizenship teacher, who have an interest and expertise in ESD
- fully involve the governors in future consideration of ESD issues
- develop the use of the school website and the school council as ways of promoting student voice.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop Education for Sustainable Development in the school. A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies  
Additional Inspector