

# Savio High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104959
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	307252
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Williams HMI

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 category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	792
6th form	77
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr T Lawless
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fr Briody
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Netherton Way Bootle Merseyside L30 2NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 5213088
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 5258435

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## Introduction

This inspection was conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. When the school was last inspected in March 2006 it was served with a Notice to Improve. This was because of significant concerns relating to achievement and standards and the sixth form.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average secondary school. It is situated in an area of social disadvantage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is nearly three times the national average. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is nearly twice that found nationally. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has specialist status for business and enterprise.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act of 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school has moved on significantly since last year's inspection and now offers satisfactory value for money. No areas of the school's work were found to be inadequate. This is due to the strong leadership of the headteacher and the good support of his leadership team. As a result there have been improvements in all aspects of the school's work, including raised standards and in the quality of the sixth form, both of which are now satisfactory. The issues identified in 2006 have been effectively dealt with. For example, the school recorded its best ever GCSE results in 2006 and is on course to improve upon these in 2007. Overall, students are now making better progress, although this is yet to be translated into all test results, particularly at Key Stage 3. Improved systems for tracking students' progress are in place. However, data from these systems is not always used effectively to monitor the rate of progress of individuals, classes and year groups, nor is the information used systematically to inform teaching and learning.

The personal development and well-being of students have improved and are now good. Attendance remains below the national average but is rising and the school now exceeds the targets set by the local authority. The school's caring ethos is evidenced in the students' strong sense of right and wrong. They develop into mature and considerate young citizens who are displaying more positive attitudes to healthy living than in the past. Their involvement in the school and wider community is enhanced through the school council and older students acting as sports leaders in local primary schools.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory and show improvements from the last inspection. Arrangements for the monitoring of lessons have improved and are impacting positively on the quality of teaching. For example, the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced so that the very large majority is now satisfactory or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the inspection and ranged from satisfactory to outstanding in quality: one of the more positive features being teachers using good questioning techniques. In some lessons though, there is too much teacher talk and tasks are not always well matched to individual student needs. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) remains inconsistent and is not always used effectively to develop students' independent research skills. The school's specialist status as a business and enterprise college is beginning to have an impact across the curriculum and in the range of work related learning opportunities. A good emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy has contributed to more positive outcomes in the personal development of students. A very good range of trips, visits, clubs, teams and special events exist which students appreciate very much.

A further improvement on last year and a strength of the school is its care, guidance and support for students, all of which are good. This is due to the commitment of all staff, good programmes of personal, social, health and citizenship education and improvements to academic guidance. As a result students are increasingly able to overcome previous barriers to learning. Support for vulnerable students remains strong.

The improvements in the school are the direct result of the headteacher's drive to put into place sustainable systems and measures that raise student achievement. This is now at the heart of the school and has been embraced by students, staff, parents and governors. The

whole school recognises it is on a journey and there is more to do. The community of pupils, staff, governors and parents, following the example of the senior leaders, know there is no room for complacency. They are aware inconsistencies in following agreed school policies remain. They are acutely aware that much of what they have put into place is bedding down and, over time, needs to translate more clearly into improved rates of progress and raised standards. Their efforts are appreciated by parents, a small proportion of whom responded to the inspection questionnaire. Given the progress made since the last inspection and the commitment of the school community, the school is judged to have good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement and standards in the sixth form are now satisfactory. Good progress has been made in addressing the concerns raised in the previous inspection. Tighter admission criteria combined with good induction and support arrangements has resulted in students being better prepared for the courses they take. The range of academic and vocational courses has been improved through good collaboration with a neighbouring school. Good care and guidance systems, particularly the support given through learning mentors and coaches, ensures students feel well prepared for their future careers or study. Progression rates into higher education and employment are good. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. More robust systems of tracking progress and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are being used more effectively to raise standards and improve progress.

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

- Improve rates of student progress, particularly in Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science.
- More accurately track the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts and use this information systematically to inform teaching and learning.
- Maximise the potential of ICT in lessons and students' independent research to extend their own learning.
- Ensure agreed school policies are applied consistently.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students enter the school with broadly average standards. However, assessments made by the school indicate that a significant proportion of students have below average literacy skills and a higher proportion than average has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Standards and achievement demonstrated in the 2006 national tests in Year 9 were below average. There was an improvement in mathematics and science but a dip in English. This dip was the result of the weaker performance of boys. In Key Stage 4 standards have improved since the last inspection. In 2006 the proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE was the school's highest result to date. This represents satisfactory progress by students

given their initial starting points. The achievement of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also satisfactory.

The school has implemented a number of strategies which are beginning to raise standards across the main school and the sixth form. The rate of progress made by students, however, requires further improvement. A good system for tracking pupil progress towards the national expectations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is now in place. However, this data is not yet used effectively to monitor the rate of progress of individuals, classes and year groups in the intervening years.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Personal development is good. Although attendance rates are just below the national average, they are steadily rising.

Students develop into courteous, considerate and mature young citizens with a strong sense of right and wrong, for example through discussions of fair trading, crime and social justice. Students' spiritual development is strong. For example, students reflected sensitively on a poem about the plight and suffering of a family facing great adversity. They report that there are good opportunities for them to learn about different cultures although they would like more contact with people with different beliefs, customs and traditions. The school is aware of this.

Students display more positive attitudes towards healthy living than in the past. This is the result of improved opportunities for exercise within school. They adopt increasingly safe practices in school. For example, a drugs education agency regularly works with groups of students, alerting them to potential dangers. Students make a good contribution to their own and the wider community, examples including the school council making many useful suggestions and older students acting as sports leaders in local primary schools. Opportunities to develop work related and other skills are good, not least through the school's business and enterprise specialism. For example, a mentoring scheme has been established for sixth form students whereby they receive advice and guidance from the business community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, is improving and contains some good and outstanding features. As a result there have been improvements in the students' learning.

The best lessons are well planned, make clear to students what they are to learn and contain an interesting variety of activities. In these lessons students make good progress. They are generally aware of how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to involve students and to check understanding. Students are given time to reflect and to answer within a supportive learning environment. An emphasis on key words and sentence structure is developing students' speaking and writing skills. Where teaching is stronger, for example in the business studies, sociology and history lessons observed during the inspection, ICT is used well to enhance learning.

However, there remain inconsistencies in teaching and in the planning of lessons. The use of ICT is also inconsistent in many subjects and students' independent research skills are not systematically developed. Some questioning is not focused and marking is sometimes superficial and does not offer clear guidance on how to improve. In weaker lessons, there is too much teacher talk and resources do not stimulate all students. In these lessons students are not challenged enough and tasks are not matched to their individual needs. Nonetheless, good relationships are a feature of most lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory with an improved range of courses for sixth form students.

Collaboration with other local schools and providers is increasing to ensure appropriate pathways for all students from Year 10 onwards. The range of vocational subjects is still limited but there are appropriate plans to develop this aspect of provision further. The school's specialist status as a business and enterprise college is beginning to have an impact across the curriculum and in the range of work related learning opportunities. Partnerships with local businesses and external agencies are very good. Careers guidance and work experience programmes are well established.

An emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy contributes to the personal development of students. The alternative curriculum provision for students with particular learning difficulties in Year 7 and in Key Stage 4 is appropriate and builds their confidence. The result is improving achievement. The range of trips, visits, clubs, teams and special events is very good. Students appreciate the improved programme of activities at lunchtime.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Staff are highly committed to improving enjoyment and achievement. Students say that they can turn to adults for help regarding academic and personal difficulties. Typical comments include, 'Teachers listen and give you good advice. They are approachable and will always help with any problems'. Procedures to ensure health, safety and child protection are in place and regularly reviewed.

Developing academic guidance is having an increasing impact on progress and students have a clear understanding of their targets. Learning mentors and support officers make a significant contribution to the school's work and help many students overcome barriers to learning. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and others in danger of under-achieving receive good support in the learning support unit. Good personal, social, health and citizenship education is leading to strong personal development. The school gives students good information about their future options and works effectively with Connexions in this regard.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features, not least the strong leadership of the headteacher. The school has made effective progress in tackling the issues raised in the previous inspection although the impact has not yet been translated into end of key stage three results. The headteacher and his good leadership team now have a much sharper view of the school's strengths and weaknesses through detailed departmental evaluations and whole school improvement plans. They are aware though, more needs to be done to ensure greater consistency across these evaluations and in the implementation of agreed school policies. A very positive feature of the strengthened leadership is the shared commitment to improvement by the whole school community. There is no complacency. Where small pockets of underperformance still exist, it is rigorously challenged. Expectations of what students can do is higher, although the school knows it has more to do in making better use of day to day assessments.

Since the previous inspection, governance has improved. It remains satisfactory but governors are now holding the school to account more effectively. Leadership of the sixth form has also improved. It too is satisfactory. Throughout the school regular monitoring of lessons is helping to eradicate incidents of unsatisfactory teaching. Staff are deployed effectively. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.

Overall, the school now offers satisfactory value for money. School leaders know much of what they have put into place is bedding down and, over time, needs to translate more clearly into improved rates of progress and raised standards. Nonetheless, much has been achieved over the last year and this, coupled with the commitment of the school community, shows there is good capacity to make further improvements.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	3	3
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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3	
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>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
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	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	3	
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

Inspection of Savio Catholic High School, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 2NA

Thank you very much indeed for the warm welcome you afforded Mr Hussain, Mr McLachlan, Mr Pope and I and the time spent with us when we recently inspected your school. I am writing to you to let you know our findings.

Firstly, I am delighted to tell you that Savio no longer requires significant improvement. Congratulations to you all for your part in achieving this success! Your school is an improving school, currently providing you with a satisfactory education. We were very impressed by Fr Briody and what he has been able to achieve in his short time at the school. My colleague inspectors and I know he will keep things on the boil and, with the support of his leadership team and the commitment of the entire school community, keep a close eye on what is happening to ensure the quality of education you receive keeps on improving. This is why we think the school has a good capacity to improve further. To help Fr Briody and you all on your journey we have asked that:

- your rates of progress, particularly in Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science, be improved
- teachers more accurately track your progress and use this information to inform teaching and learning
- information and communication technology is better used in lessons and your independent research to extend your own learning
- agreed school policies are applied consistently.

So what else were we particularly impressed by? Here is a short list:

- your GCSE results improving
- you are now making better progress in your lessons
- there have been improvements in the quality of teaching; we were pleased to see some outstanding teaching in the inspection
- the sixth form has improved well with more of you enrolled on courses better suited to your needs
- you behave well and are developing into considerate and mature young citizens
- the school cares, guides and supports you well
- relationships in school are good.

Well done!

Last year, my colleague Ms Kirby HMI closed her letter to you by saying, 'You can help too by making sure you attend regularly and arrive at school on time, so that the day can start promptly for everyone.' Well, attendance is rising, but you will only gain the most from your time at Savio if you continue this upward trend. So keep it up!