

All Saints Catholic School and Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101247
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	307626
Inspection date	6 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1098
6th form	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dominic Savage
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Terling Road Wood Lane Dagenham RM8 1JT
Telephone number	020 8270 4242
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average secondary school which is the only Catholic secondary school serving this east London borough. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and there are more boys than girls. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. The school is in its thirteenth year as a specialist technology college. A new headteacher took up post in 2006 having formerly been deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides its students with an outstanding education. Standards are high and students achieve extremely well as a result of excellent teaching. The leaders and managers believe that each child is important and this maxim is at the heart of their decision making. There is a clear vision and a hunger for improvement building on the school's record of outstanding success. The strengths previously reported have been sustained. Standards have further improved, as has the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring quality and these improvements demonstrate the good capacity of the leadership to bring about continuing improvement. The school provides excellent value for money.

There is a strong culture of success for all; this is nurtured by very high expectations that inspire students to do well. 'They come down on us hard because they know we can achieve a lot, and we do' is how a Year 9 student summed up the reasons for his progress since he first joined All Saints. Intensive personal attention to students' learning and well being, and excellent relationships are given a high priority by the leaders and managers at all levels as a way of helping each one to realise their potential.

All groups of students achieve extremely well academically and in their personal development and well-being. The Christian ethos and practise of the Catholic faith permeate the life of the school and underpin the excellent relationships with all staff and students and its concern for the individual. Key to the success of the school is its high expectations of everyone.

'There is an opportunity for everyone to shine here, and people will respect what you do to get there' is a commonly held belief amongst the whole school community. This is a truly inclusive school where relationships are excellent within a diverse but cohesive community. Students and staff hold each other in high regard. This has a powerful effect on achievement and standards. Students say, 'We do well because teachers are close to us'. Staff give of their time tirelessly to show that each individual is valued equally and ensure that all possible barriers to learning are removed for each student to succeed.

With leadership changes and new appointments new structures are being introduced to give more systematic information on the performance of both students and staff. This is an area that is relatively underdeveloped.

The school provides excellent opportunities to seek students' and parents' views about the school and involves them in decision making. The school also has an innovative system for parents to view information on their child's progress but this is currently little used. Students and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Despite the very high proportion of students gaining the highest grades at GCSE, the school is determined to improve further. It recognises the need to extend some aspects of its provision for the 14-19 age group.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is good with some outstanding features. Sixth formers benefit from the same high quality care and teaching as the rest of the school. The school rightly seeks to raise students' aspirations by encouraging them to stay on in the sixth form. The outstanding progress and high results achieved in Year 11 create challenges in ensuring that Year 12 students find

the most appropriate courses to match their interests and abilities at advanced level. Consequently student progress can be less striking than in the main school. Students have high regard for the sixth form leadership but believe that guidance on finding the most appropriate courses could be improved. Consortium arrangements lead to a wide range of courses being available. Sixth form students make major contributions to the positive ethos of the school by acting as role models and mentors to younger students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop and implement the school's new procedures for self evaluation
- Improve the guidance in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The achievement of students is outstanding and standards are very high. Students arrive with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress through Years 7-9 and exceptional progress through Years 10 -11. Progress is particularly impressive in English resulting in great success in both Year 9 tests and GCSE. Overall the progress of all groups of students is outstanding placing the school in the top 1% nationally for students' progress. This leads to exceptional results at GCSE. In 2006 92% of Year 11 students gained at least 5 A* to C passes at GCSE. The proportion of students gaining 5 A* to C passes including English and mathematics was also well above the national average.

In the sixth form standards have improved and students make good progress especially in some applied courses.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are excellent. They are right to identify the relationships amongst students, and between students and staff, as major strengths. Students show respect for others in lessons and around the school. Behaviour is excellent. There is very little bullying and virtually no racism. Different racial groups mix very harmoniously at break and lunchtimes. Students feel very safe in the school. Attendance is good mainly because, as indicated in surveys and lesson observations, students overwhelmingly enjoy being at school. Students arrive at lessons on time and only a small minority are late coming to school. Where lateness occurs it is followed up rigorously. The spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of students is excellent.

The school has gained healthy schools status. A wide range of sports is offered and many students take part in these. The curriculum provides the recommended two hours of physical exercise for students. The school makes healthy eating a very high profile and nearly all students eat healthy food at break and lunchtimes. Students take on a range of responsibilities and make a significant contribution to school life and to the wider community. Considerable funds have been raised for charity. Students lead assemblies and many act as mentors. Students make excellent progress with basic skills and are generally well-prepared for work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. There are several elements that combine to bring this about. Excellent relationships create a culture where learning is respected and valued. Students are happy to work hard and show what they know and can do. Teachers have expert knowledge of the curriculum and understanding of their subject.

The school provides a very supportive environment for beginning and newly qualified teachers to hone their skills. This in turn results in high quality teaching and learning. These teachers told inspectors that what makes this school special is the high expectations of students and teachers. In this supportive environment where much is expected of everyone, the vast majority of students flourish. This is particularly true of students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Another key feature is the strong emphasis on assessment. Students know the level at which they are working and, through teacher explanation together with regular and helpful marking, they are very clear about how to improve their performance.

In the sixth form students benefit from similar high quality teaching to that which they have become used to in the main school. However, they are not always well enough prepared for the independent work required at advanced level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school offers a good and improving curriculum with a broad range of courses at GCSE and post 16. Within the constraints of its technology specialist and Catholic status the curriculum has improved greatly and statutory requirements are now met. The school provides pupils in Years 7-9 with the full range of national curriculum subjects. A small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 take the opportunity to follow vocational courses at the local college and all students take a vocational course in information and communication technology (ICT). The school also offers everyone a good choice which enables pupils to achieve well in groups of subjects they enjoy.

Groups of students have enjoyed success in enterprise competitions. However, while careers education is strong, a coherent programme of enterprise education and personal financial education is still being developed. Sixth form students felt their financial education to be weak, but overall the sixth form curriculum is strong. A wide range of courses is offered including level one and two vocational qualifications. The enrichment and religious education programme for sixth formers is exemplary.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The care, guidance and support for students are outstanding and are a key factor in the school's success. School rules are clear and understood very well by students. The support for students

with social and behavioural difficulties, particularly through the 'Learning Enhancement Centre' is excellent. There is very rigorous support for students with special educational needs. They are very well known by staff and their progress is carefully monitored. Parents rightly value the strong links they have with the school and attendance at parents' evenings is very high. Gifted and talented students are identified and a wide range of support is targeted on them. A major strength is the support and guidance provided for students before they join the school.

Sixth form students rightly think that they could have received more support before they joined the sixth form. Careers guidance throughout the school, and advice on higher education in the sixth form, are highly valued by students. There are excellent procedures in place, including risk assessments, to ensure the health and safety of students. This includes rigorous procedures for child protection. The system for tracking students' progress, identifying and supporting underachievers has recently been made more rigorous but has yet to be firmly rooted.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and a highly committed leadership team have successfully created a first class learning environment that students and staff feel proud of. The impact of leadership and management can be seen clearly in the excellence found across the school's operation and the improvement in results to their current very high level.

Governance is outstanding. Governors and the senior leaders work closely together as a team and know their school well. They are clear about the direction the school must take to sustain the dramatic improvements achieved in recent years. They drive the school's self review and are keen to strengthen this to maintain the momentum of success that students achieve. To this end, they have reviewed their quality assurance systems to improve the effectiveness of self evaluation across all areas of the school's work. While senior staff at all levels are involved in assessing the quality of teaching and learning and areas requiring improvement, their findings do not yet inform long term strategic planning. Similarly, while results are analysed carefully to set challenging targets for students, this information does not inform teaching and learning consistently across all the departments.

The school provides a supportive professional environment and opportunities for all adults to contribute fully. Senior and more experienced staff are highly visible and accessible. This, and their readiness to help and support, has a positive impact on recruitment of staff from the pool of qualifying teachers training in the school. The school is successful in its concerted effort to secure suitable professional training and development opportunities as part of the school's strategy for improvement.

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Annex A

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?	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
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?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
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?	1	1
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?	1	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
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	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

20 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of All Saints Catholic School and Technology College, Dagenham, RM8 1JT

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do. We believe your school is an outstanding school and we would like to give our reasons.

- There is a strong sense of Christian morality in the school, both in the way you are treated, the way you respect one another and also in the concern shown for vulnerable people through your charitable activity.
- The very high examination results at GCSE.
- The headteacher and the people with responsibility make decisions with your best interests in mind. You, through the school council, play an important part in improving the school and your ideas are acted upon.
- You enjoy coming to school and you achieve exceptionally well.
- The quality of teaching in your school is excellent as is your behaviour.
- You told us that you are cared for extremely well. We saw lots of evidence to support what you told us.
- You behave in a very sensible and mature way around the school. The vast majority of you and your parents are very happy with the school and all it offers. Many of you take part in the wide range of extra activities.

While we judge your school to be outstanding, that does not mean that it is perfect. The school recognises this and is already working to improve some of its systems to monitor how well you are doing and how well it is doing in all aspects of its work. It is also examining how it might adapt your curriculum to keep it up to date with the latest developments. Some of the sixth form told us that while you get lots of advice on university choices you wanted better guidance on the most suitable courses when you start Year 12. We have asked the school to work on this.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector