

# Christ The King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104964
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308721
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Norris 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	1051
6th form	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Rayner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Gannon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Stamford Road Southport Merseyside PR8 4EX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 565121
<b>Fax number</b>	01704 550447

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## Introduction

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

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, particularly in mathematics and in the sixth form; students' personal development and well-being; the impact of the school's specialism; and the school's use of self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form; data from national assessments and the school's own assessment records; a range of school documentation; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff and students; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Christ the King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre is a popular, larger than average size secondary school. The social background of the students is mixed. The proportion eligible and applying for free school meals is slightly below the national average. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is very small and few students speak English as an additional language. The overall proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is well below average although the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities overall is just below average. The school has specialist status for technology. It has achieved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, Naace ICT Mark and Artsmark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Christ the King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre is a good school with good capacity to improve further. It has improved well since the previous inspection in 2004 and has successfully tackled many of the weaknesses in teaching and learning identified at that time. It is a happy and positive community.

Students enter the school with broadly average attainment although in recent years the number with weakness in literacy and numeracy has increased. During the first three years at the school students achieve well in English and science and, at times, very well in some foundation subjects. Progress in mathematics is improving and is satisfactory overall. Students reach standards that are usually above average by the end of Year 9. This strong start is developed well in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results are above and occasionally well above the national average and have shown strong improvement since the previous inspection. The school has a positive track record of eradicating underachievement. Inspection evidence, including the school's own data, indicates standards in mathematics are average but rising steadily.

Many students leave the school for their sixth form studies and this has a bearing on the school's examination results in Year 13. These are broadly average, and this reflects good progress in relation to individual students' achievement in GCSE examinations. Students in Years 7 to 11 usually achieve the challenging but realistic targets set for them. Leaders are aware that a few students, particularly boys, do not always convert their strong start in the first few years at the school into good achievement in Key Stage 4. The greater attention given to tracking their progress, the use of alternative worthwhile curriculum programmes and the specific work of some key senior managers are having a positive impact in addressing this issue. Students indicate they are pleased with the level of support they receive and have noticed improved standards in the quality of teaching in many subjects in recent years. A number spoke well about the innovative approach to homework, feeling that it gives them a chance to develop research skills and promotes independent learning.

Students' personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school, have good attitudes to learning and report the school provides a safe and caring environment. Behaviour is good and the school has been successful in improving the way teachers and other staff help those with challenging behaviour. Students generally cope well moving along narrow corridors during the day. The atmosphere in many classrooms is calm and supportive. Incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment do occasionally occur but students report that issues are dealt with promptly. Attendance is above average. Students develop a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives and know where to go to receive help and advice. The school provides opportunities for students to voice their views but has not yet fully included them in helping to determine the current effectiveness and future direction of the school. Students' involvement in community activities, together with a thorough programme of careers education and guidance, helps them develop good skills for future employment and adult life.

Teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. At the heart of these improvements is the increasing attention given to addressing individual student' needs. This has led to significant improvements in many teachers' planning and the accuracy of their assessment of students' work. The school has a busy and purposeful atmosphere with many staff providing a very clear and positive example to students. A good example of this was when an inspector made an unannounced visit to a music lesson because of the sheer joy and

excitement conveyed by the teacher. The students and teacher were at ease with each other, having fun but clearly achieving high standards. A further good example was seen during a Year 9 mathematics lesson when the teacher gave clear attention to the needs of all students and used the interactive whiteboard very well to demonstrate how to translate shapes. Students were encouraged to use specific mathematical language to explain what they were doing and clearly enjoyed the lesson. However, despite improving standards in teaching and learning in mathematics, teachers do not always plan effectively for all students and do not have sufficiently high expectations.

Students are provided with a good curriculum. The school's specialist technology status provides them with many additional opportunities to contribute to the local and wider community. The development of a revamped school website, and the associated e-learning package that supports students' learning, successfully builds on innovative work undertaken by the school in recent years. Students are provided with opportunities to take part in a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities and take-up is good despite some having fairly long distances to travel home after school.

The school benefits from good and improving leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher is effective in leading a strong group of senior managers who are clearly focused on raising achievement and improving provision. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, based on the significantly improved assessment procedures. Increasing attention to detail in this area of the school's work has ensured that English and science results have improved well and progress in mathematics is gaining speed. Leadership and management of subjects have been strengthened and greater responsibility has been given to key leaders to improve students' achievement. In many respects this has proved successful with some subjects achieving very good rates of improvement in students' performance. There are, however, occasions when too little attention is given to checking the work of individual teachers and this results in some students not making the expected rate of progress in some lessons. The impact of the work of the teaching and learning staff group, and the coordinated efforts of staff led by the assessment manager, have been impressive and have acted as important levers in raising teachers' expectations and improving student attainment. Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school, are highly effective in meeting their statutory requirements and provide strong support, as well as an appropriate level of challenge. Parents are on the whole very supportive but a small minority feel they are not communicated with sufficiently well so that they gain a clear and accurate understanding of the school's work and influence its future direction.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form provides a good education. Many Year 11 students stay on into the sixth form but a significant number, particularly higher attainers, leave for other schools and colleges. This means, although standards achieved at the end of Year 11 are generally above average, overall attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average. Students make good progress and attain average examination results at the end of Year 13. The great majority of students complete their courses successfully with a significant number going on to university. Teaching is good and some of it outstanding. Students are full of praise for the staff. 'They know us well and go the extra mile to help,' and 'They are our friends,' are unsolicited comments made by students to inspectors. The care, guidance and support for students and their personal development are very good. The management and leadership of the sixth form are good and

improving well. Significant attention is given to analysing assessment data to ensure students' remain on track to achieve their target grades. Any sign of slippage is followed up speedily and very often effectively.

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

- Ensure all teachers' planning and level of challenge in mathematics lessons match the best in the department.
- Involve students more in helping to evaluate the current effectiveness and future direction of the school.
- Improve communication with all parents so they gain an accurate understanding of the life and effectiveness of the school.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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?	2	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

<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>	2	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
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	

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Christ the King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre, Southport, PR8 4EX

We thoroughly enjoyed coming to your school and would like to thank you for welcoming us and talking to us so openly. We were delighted to see you enjoy being at school and agree with your comments and the views of many parents that Christ the King Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre is a good school. Your school is proud of how you conduct yourself and the contribution so many of you make to the school and local community.

We agree that there is much good teaching and teachers provide interesting and relevant lessons. Your teachers know their subjects well and are keen to share their enthusiasm with you. The staff want you to do well and they work hard to help as much as they can. You appreciate this. Many of you told us the school feels like, 'a big happy family'. We have three areas for improvement. We would like to see all mathematics teachers have appropriately high expectations of you and plan lessons more carefully. Also, we would like to see you involved more in helping to evaluate the current effectiveness and future direction of the school. Finally, we feel the school should improve communication with your parents so they gain an accurate understanding of the life of the school.

We were impressed with the way you help each other and how you behave around the school. You cope well with the narrow corridors and generally move around the school with regard to others. We were struck by the friendly atmosphere and the good relationships between you and your teachers.

We would like to praise the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They are tackling well the most important areas requiring improvement and are an important reason for the school's overall improvement since the previous inspection.