

# St Patrick's RC High School and Arts College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105986
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	309003
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patrick Geraghty 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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	889
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Fr L Devany
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Barbara Rogers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Guilford Road Eccles Manchester M30 7JF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7894678
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7071335

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## Introduction

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

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; the curriculum; academic guidance and support; and leadership and management. A strong emphasis was placed upon understanding the reasons for the school's strong improvement trend in standards and achievement and their sustainability. Evidence was gathered from: discussions with the headteacher, senior management team and students; observations of teaching and learning; checking students' work; and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Patrick's High School and Arts College is a Roman Catholic mixed comprehensive school situated in Eccles, Salford. The school is located in one of the top 6% of the most deprived areas in the country. About half the students live within the top 10% of most deprived areas. Just over 8% of students are from minority ethnic groups. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational need is below the national average. The proportion of those eligible for free school meals is at the national average. The school is a Specialist Arts College. In 2006/07 the school was cited by the Department for Children, Schools and Families as among the top performing schools for sustained improvement in the proportion of students gaining five or more passes at grades A\* to C in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics. The school achieved a Healthy Schools award in 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which has achieved an impressive trend of improvement over the last four years. The progress and welfare of all students is at the heart of outstanding quality assurance, data analysis and monitoring systems. The headteacher and her senior staff drive an improvement agenda that has been successful in offering greater opportunities and individual development for all students. All staff share responsibility and accountability for promoting improvement. Teaching is lively, purposeful and committed. Students bring a sense of excitement and enjoyment to their learning. Attendance is good and behaviour outstanding. Care, guidance and support are exemplary. This is all achieved within an environment that promotes excellent relationships and respect for others. Respect for the individual and appreciation of artistic endeavour has a high priority within the school. One Year 11 student summed up his peers' pride in the school, 'I feel six-foot tall when I walk down the street in my uniform because I know how good my school is.' The leaders of the school have established a culture of improvement and aspirations for both staff and students.

Personal well-being and development are outstanding. The integration of the Every Child Matters themes into all aspects of the school life is excellent. The 'house system' has engendered supportive mentoring groups between younger and older students. Students feel safe, happy, challenged and develop strong aspirational ambitions. The Catholic ethos is thoughtfully integrated into all aspects of school life. Relationships across the school are excellent. Students have high praise for staff and their care, guidance and encouragement. Healthy living and participation in sport, clubs and cultural activities are encouraged and are popular. The school makes an excellent contribution to its local communities. Parents are supportive of the school and its ethos.

Standards are very high and achievement is outstanding. Standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 are significantly above national averages. Over a sustained period, the school has demonstrated a strong improvement trend. In 2007, 58% of students gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics. This was significantly better than that found nationally and represents an improvement from 27% in 2004. Some 74% of students achieved grades A\* to C in GCSE English and 87% of students achieved five GCSE A\* to C grades, excluding English and mathematics. Overall progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 is outstanding. The progress of boys is also outstanding and reverses a key area for improvement raised at the last inspection. Challenging targets are set and progress towards these are monitored carefully. The school has set ambitious targets for 2008 and inspection evidence indicated that it is making excellent progress to meet these. However, there are inconsistencies in the pass rates for science at both key stages. Learners' work is marked regularly with constructive comments identifying areas for further development. Examples of outstanding work were observed in art and design. Attendance and punctuality rates are good. Student behaviour is exemplary. The progress of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Challenging and innovative approaches to teaching and learning are central to this school's exemplary improvement culture. The headteacher and leadership team observe all teachers regularly. A rigorous internal observation system shows that 86% of teaching and learning observed in 2006/07 was judged to be good or better. Observations undertaken during inspection confirmed the school's judgements. Lessons are well paced and with a strong focus on student participation. An excellent example was observed in a history lesson where groups had composed song-chants to reflect the underling social and

political tensions surrounding the events leading to the Gunpowder Plot. The room was filled with a gusto of voices enjoying their participation but also skilfully developing their understanding of the historical topic. Outstanding practice was also observed in English and in art. The sharing of good practice is firmly embedded in the school culture. Teachers are good at conveying the excitement and enjoyment of their subject to students. Students respond to this with enthusiasm, commitment and a sense of enjoyment and challenge. One Year 10 student observed when asked what was good about lessons, 'It's simple, learning is fun.' A wide variety of teaching strategies are used to challenge students and encourage their participation including group and paired work, discussion and debate, role-play and student presentations. There is good and improving use of information and communication technology to promote learning. The school has a strong sense of what is required to elicit further improvement to teaching and learning and well-focused strategies to achieve these objectives have been developed.

The school has significantly improved the breadth and appropriateness of the curriculum since the last inspection. Outstanding progress has been made in creating individually tailored curriculum pathways that fully meet the needs of students and have contributed to accelerated improvements in standards and achievement. For example, excellent provision in construction has been developed to meet the needs of a distinct group of boys and has proved to be a change factor in their attitude to learning. In 2007, 85% of the construction group progressed to construction or similar courses at college. Students value the large variety of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. There are excellent links with colleges and programmes to engage the world of work are of high quality.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The Every Child Matters themes have been fully integrated to augment excellent guidance, support and curriculum processes. Transition and induction arrangements are very well planned. Students settle into school life quickly. All issues around a students' learning and welfare are monitored carefully. There is excellent and speedy support for students who are causing concern or in need of additional support. The school works very well and in close partnership with all stakeholders and support agencies. The 'house system' makes an excellent contribution to the school ethos and provides a strong example of the aspirational nature of the school. Each 'house' is named after a great artist: Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Gainsborough, Renoir, Picasso, and the local painter Lowry. Students demonstrated a good understanding of the style of their 'house' artist and many were able to enter into a discussion on their relative merits.

Central to the school's exemplary and continuing improvement is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. She is ably supported by an excellent senior leadership team. The vision that they share places students' learning and progress at the centre of all school activity. There is no complacency in this school and senior managers and staff have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, are self-critical and constantly seek and drive for further improvement. This vibrant culture of continuous improvement is enthusiastically shared by staff. Leadership responsibility, accountability and aspirational targets for all are strongly promoted. Quality assurance systems are excellent. The use of data is comprehensive and informs tracking and monitoring processes. The school self-evaluation is impressively integrated into this strong quality assurance system. Communications with parents are excellent. Governance is a strength. Governors have a clear commitment to the ethos and direction of the school and are very well-informed about students' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning. Finances are well monitored. The accommodation currently available for teaching and learning has some limitations but is well maintained. The school has used Arts College Specialist status very well and this has had a significant impact across the school. Curriculum innovation, for

example, in art, has encouraged other departments to review and update their curriculum. Also, the use of artists in residence, student exhibitions at the Lowry Arts Centre and increased links with primary schools, colleges, the local community and art institutions is exemplary.

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

- Improve consistency of science pass rates.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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>	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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
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 St Patrick's Roman Catholic High School and Arts College, Manchester, M30 7JF

Thank you very much for welcoming me so warmly into your school recently. I greatly enjoyed talking with so many of you about your work, interests and how much you enjoy and give to your school. I found that your school is outstanding.

What I most liked was:

- the excellent improvement in your examination results
- the outstanding teaching you receive and your challenging and lively response to it
- the excellent leadership of your headteacher and her senior staff
- your enthusiasm for learning
- the excellent relationships between students which enhance learning
- your outstanding behaviour and strong commitment to your school
- the outstanding care, guidance and support you receive
- your enthusiasm for the arts and extra-curricular activities.

With your help your school now needs to:

- improve the consistency of pass rates in GCSE science.

I am sure that you will continue your enthusiasm for learning and continue the impressive improvements made in your examination pass rates and progress over the last few years. Above all, take the opportunity that your school offers you to work hard, enjoy learning and develop your ambitions for the future.