

All Hallows Catholic College

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	111458
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310604
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Harrison HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1176
6th form	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ciaran Fleming
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Billings
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2005
School address	Brooklands Avenue Macclesfield Cheshire SK11 8LB
Telephone number	01625 426138
Fax number	01625 500315

Age group	11-18
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Inspection number	310604

Amended Report Addendum

42

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Students attend All Hallows from a wide range of backgrounds. A large proportion are from advantaged areas and this is reflected in the low percentage of students eligible for free school meals. However, an increasing number of students are drawn from areas of social disadvantage. A small proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students enter the school with above average attainment based on their scores in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. All Hallows offers a faith-inspired education for the children of Catholic parents and others who are in sympathy with its aims and values. Around 65% of the student population is of Catholic heritage. The school became a specialist college for 'Business and Enterprise with Ethics' in September 2007 and is now called All Hallows Catholic College.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

All Hallows has improved significantly in recent years and its overall effectiveness is now good. The senior leadership team has successfully addressed many of the issues that were identified at the previous inspection. In particular, the quality of teaching and learning has improved this year and is now good.

The standard of students' work is above average and students achieve above average results in national tests and examinations. In 2007 the proportion of students who gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C rose to 72%. This represented satisfactory progress against their starting points. Students are now making good progress in the majority of lessons. The improvement in teaching and learning is very recent and it is too early to see the impact of this in terms of the progress students make across their whole time at the school. Students in the sixth form achieve well; they made good progress in 2007 and are continuing to do so.

Students' personal development and well-being are good in the main college and outstanding in the sixth form. The Catholic ethos helps to foster very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Student contribution to college life and the wider community is excellent. They have a very good understanding of living healthily and staying safe. Attendance and behaviour have both improved in recent years and are now good. The college is using its business specialism well to prepare students for when they leave. The majority of students enjoy coming to the college and are well motivated, and in the sixth form these aspects are outstanding.

Students receive good care, guidance and support. Pastoral support is particularly strong. Support systems for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very effective and these students make good progress. Students receive good quality information and advice to help inform their course choices and their progress into further education and employment. Academic guidance is excellent in the sixth form; it is satisfactory and improving in the main college.

The leadership team has been strengthened in recent years and leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior team provide strong and effective leadership. The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the college and many commented on recent improvements. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements in attendance, teaching and learning, and the curriculum. The college is using its specialist status extremely well to improve the whole school in terms of teaching techniques, resources for learning, and motivation of students. The senior team is rigorous in its self-assessment of the college, it has proved effective in addressing issues, and there is good capacity for further improvement. The senior team is aware that academic targets set for individual students have not been sufficiently challenging, particularly for the higher attainers, and this is being addressed for next year. At subject level, there is some inconsistency in the quality of management: for example, the understanding and analysis of student achievement data to bring about improvement varies too much.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Students are very enthusiastic about lessons and other activities. They thoroughly enjoy coming to college, they attend well and a high proportion complete their courses. Teaching and learning are good; students work hard in

lessons and speak very highly of the support they receive from tutors. Teachers are skilful at developing the students' confidence to become more independent learners. Examination results are above the national average and the proportion of students achieving grades A to B at GCE A level is above average. The progress students make against their starting points on joining the sixth form is good in most subjects and outstanding in the vocational specialist provision. Personal development is outstanding. Students play a very active role in the school and contribute well to the wider community. They provide excellent support for younger students and organise a range of activities to enhance the curriculum and to raise money for external causes. The curriculum has developed well in recent years to meet a wider range of needs and there are plans to introduce further options in September 2008. Students gain valuable skills in time management and teamwork, which prepare them well for when they leave the sixth form. They receive excellent care, guidance and support. Systems for target setting and academic guidance are stronger than in the main college, which ensures students are being stretched to achieve well in most subjects. There are excellent guidance systems to prepare them for when they leave college and progression rates to higher education are very high. The sixth form is well led and managed, with robust performance management and appropriate strategies to bring about further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the higher academic targets being put in place for individual students, particularly the higher attainers, are achieved.
- Improve consistency in terms of the effectiveness of management at subject level

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Student achievement is satisfactory and improving in the main college and good in the sixth form. The standard of work is above average. Students make satisfactory progress against their starting points but do not always reach their full potential. This is particularly the case for higher attaining students. The college generally achieves better than average results in public examinations. In 2007 the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C was 72%, a considerable improvement on the previous year. The proportion achieving five or more higher grades including English and mathematics is above the national average. Key Stage 3 results are also above the national average. The college is taking vigorous action to address the issue of student progress. Improvements have been made in attendance and teaching and learning. All students are aware of their targets and the college is beginning to make these targets more challenging. Students now make good progress in most lessons but the recent improvement in teaching and learning has not been in place long enough to impact sufficiently on overall student progress.

Achievement in the college's specialist subjects is generally good and the impact of the specialism is evident more widely across the whole college in terms of better attendance and motivation to learn. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and the majority of these students make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of personal development and well-being in the main college is good with some outstanding features. It is outstanding in the sixth form. Overall, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos that permeates all aspects of students' experience. The college's 'Leading Aspect Award' recognises the high priority given to ethical issues and the excellent procedures for promoting inclusion. One student said, 'The college has changed me and I feel more confident and a lot happier.' Because relationships and attitudes are characterised by mutual respect, students feel safe, secure and valued. Effective strategies, particularly the impact of the inclusion and isolation units, have raised attendance levels and reduced the number of fixed term exclusions. The great majority of students behave well, both inside and outside the classroom. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are swiftly and constructively dealt with. Students are exceptionally well integrated into consultative processes that evaluate teaching and learning and contribute to decision-making. The college council is a significant force in developing these aspects and enables students to make a positive contribution to the college community. Similarly, older students play a big role in supporting the well-being of students in their early years at the college. Students adopt healthy lifestyles, both in terms of eating and exercise, and are very well informed about health and safety issues. The college ensures that pupils are well prepared for the world of work and their future economic well-being

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning in both the main college and the sixth form is good. The prime focus of the college's improvement strategy has been to improve the quality of lessons. There is a regular and rigorous programme of lesson observation by managers and intensive staff training. As a result of these measures, the senior leadership team recently concluded that the majority of teaching and learning is now good or better and inspectors agree with their judgement. Year 10 and Year 11 students told us how much better they are taught now than when they first came to the school. There is evidence that this is beginning to impact positively on student progress.

The college has improved teaching and learning in several ways. The majority of lessons are very well planned with activities that ensure students are engaged and remain on task. As a result, they behave well in most lessons. Techniques to check students' understanding are varied and effective. Another aspect of the college strategy was to improve the use of computers, and information technology is now used well as a teaching and learning tool inside and outside the classroom. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well understood. Such students are well supported in class and they make good progress.

In a minority of lessons, especially those involving mixed ability groups, there is still insufficient planning to ensure that all students achieve at a level appropriate to them. Where the work is

not challenging enough, students, particularly the higher attainers, do not make as much progress as they could.

Students' work is assessed regularly. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way marking is used to guide students. Homework, and learning material for students, is available for parents to view on the college's impressive web-site.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Inspectors agree with the college that the curriculum, both in the main school and in the sixth form, is good. Members of the English department serve as Year 7 tutors and time is allocated for them to boost literacy skills. Key Stage 4 work begins in Year 9 which helps students stay focused after completing the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The college has increased its range of GCSE courses and it offers a number of vocational courses and key skills based qualifications to meet the varied needs of students. Higher attaining students can take a second language from Year 8. The percentage of students taking a GCSE modern foreign language exceeds national targets.

The curriculum is enriched by a programme of visits related to learning, enterprise, culture, sport and recreation. Students enjoy these additional activities and the level of participation is good. There are good opportunities outside lessons to help students in the completion of homework and coursework. The curriculum increasingly reflects the college's specialism. This includes provision to develop work-related skills and prepare students for their future education and employment. 'Enterprise Week', for example, was used to launch a variety of individual and community learning challenges. The college's work in this area and in encouraging its students to accept responsibility and take initiatives is recognised by a Leading Aspect Award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The college provides good care, support and guidance. It is outstanding in the sixth form. Students feel safe from bullying and confident in the college's clear commitment to promoting respect and care for all. Arrangements to support vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very good. The guidance these students receive is sensitive and very well coordinated. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection meet government requirements. Students are confident that they can turn to adults and senior students for confidential support if the need arises. Parents and students are appreciative of this aspect of provision. Parents are well informed about academic and pastoral progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. In most cases students are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Guidance arrangements as students move from one stage in their education to the next are thorough. Students feel they are given valuable information, advice and support when considering the range of alternatives open to them. The very high proportion of students who opt to continue with their education after completing Year 11 reflects very well on their experience at All Hallows.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The very clear direction of the headteacher has contributed significantly to the good improvement since the last inspection. The strong leadership has engendered confidence and support from the senior leadership team, middle leaders, staff, governors and the students themselves. Staff value the opportunities they have to collaborate with each other and to share good practice. The college has used its specialist status in Business, Enterprise and Ethics effectively to bring about improvement both in students' attitudes and in the quality of teaching and learning. The senior leadership team has put systems in place to ensure accurate monitoring, self-evaluation and effective improvement planning. There are regular reviews of student progress by senior and middle leaders alike. Systems ensure that underachievement is swiftly identified. However, the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning varies considerably across subjects and some middle leaders have not yet undertaken training in data analysis to make them confident about its use. The college has been successful in reaching the challenging targets it set itself to improve attendance, students' attitudes towards their learning, and the quality of teaching and learning. The college is set to reach current academic targets and has plans in place to increase the level of challenge next year. There are good links with partner institutions, universities, primary schools and the local business community. The college has an accurate view of its strengths and of what can be improved. There is now a tangible shared sense of purpose. The college provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve further. Governors are very well informed, involved in the everyday life of the college and are now well placed to act as critical friends.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
---	----------------	-------

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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	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	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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?	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	1

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?	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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of All Hallows Catholic College, Macclesfield, SK11 8LB

As you know we recently inspected your college. I am writing to tell you about our findings and to thank you for your help in giving us your views.

We think All Hallows has improved in many ways in recent years and is now a good college. The standard of your work is above average and the results you achieve in national examinations are above the national average. You generally make satisfactory progress against your starting points on joining the school. Recent improvements in teaching and learning mean you are now making good progress in most lessons but it is too early for us to see what impact that will have on your overall progress since starting at the college. We were very impressed by your participation in activities outside lessons, the way you contribute to school life generally and the help you give in the wider community. Good luck with 'Jesus Christ Superstar'! It was good to see the improvements that have taken place in attendance and behaviour. You and the majority of your parents told us that the care and support you receive is good. You all know the targets you are working to, but we think for some of you targets are not sufficiently challenging and that you could do even better!

The college is using its specialism in 'business and enterprise with ethics' very well to improve the use of computers, both in and outside lessons, and the standard of accommodation. There is a good range of courses on offer to you, including vocational courses in business. We think you are developing a good understanding of the world of work to help you when you leave school.

The provision in the sixth form is good. Students in the sixth form make good progress against challenging targets and a high proportion of them move on to university. The students we spoke to were very enthusiastic about all aspects of their experience in the sixth form. We were impressed by their confidence in lessons and the help they provide in the running of the college.

The college is well led and managed. The headteacher and staff are working very hard, with your support, to make the college even better. We have asked the headteacher to ensure that targets are sufficiently challenging for all of you and to make sure that subjects are well managed across the whole college.