

Corpus Christi Catholic Sports College

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 119780 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 313421 |
| Inspection dates | 1–2 April 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Cox |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 783 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Steve Gray |
| Headteacher | Mr Martin Callagher |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 February 2004 |
| School address | St Vincent's Road Fulwood Preston Lancashire PR2 8QY |
| Telephone number | 01772 716912 |
| Fax number | 01772 718779 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector on secondment to Ofsted and three other Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Corpus Christi is a smaller than average school situated in the north of Preston.

A high proportion of students come from areas of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students receiving free school meals is slightly above the national average. The majority of students are White and of British heritage, and others come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students with a learning difficulty and/or disability is below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above the national average. There are very few students with English as an additional language. The school achieved sports college status in 2005 with technology being a second specialism. It has the Investors in People award, Healthy Schools status and Sportsmark award. The school is currently undergoing considerable building work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Corpus Christi Catholic Sports College provides a satisfactory standard of education. Many improvements are underway and are beginning to bear fruit. The school has growing strength in teaching, students' personal development and the curriculum. The commitment, dedication and hard work of the staff under the caring direction of the headteacher are impressive. Because of this, students' attendance has improved and behaviour is good. Students are proud of their school and appreciate belonging to a caring community where the Christian ethos is tangible.

The sports college specialism has a very positive impact across the curriculum and is helping to raise standards at Key Stage 4. It is beginning to have a positive effect at Key Stage 3. The school has developed an innovative approach to teaching and learning by engaging students in sport related activities to help accelerate their learning in English, mathematics and science. This has gained the school national recognition through the Youth Sport Trust as an example of good practice. Other sports college activities have been used to good effect across the school. For example, the 'Living for Sport' scheme, which enables students to take part in residential outdoor education activities, helps to build self-esteem, personal reflection and team working. The school also has evidence to show that this scheme has helped to dramatically reduce incidents of poor behaviour.

The school has instigated an innovative partnership project with primary feeder schools where a member of staff spends a day in each school helping students improve their reading and writing skills. A primary headteacher spoke enthusiastically about the rapid and significant improvements in learning the programme is making for his students.

Students make good progress in lessons at both key stages. Inspection evidence confirms the school's evidence from monitoring that current teaching is good overall. Improvements since September are boosting students' learning. Recent improvements in teaching and learning enabled the school to demonstrate that progress in the lessons seen at both key stages is now good.

Standards are broadly average. The school has had some notable successes in recent years. In 2007 every Year 11 student left school with at least one GCSE pass and the proportion of those leaving with 5 or more passes exceeded the national average. At Key Stage 3, however, standards are not as good as they should be.

School data shows that Year 11 students particularly, are making progress exceeding the national expectation. At Key Stage 3 students' progress is variable and the school is aware of the work that needs to be done in order to secure better achievement and standards overall. This includes the setting of challenging academic targets to reflect students' differing abilities and the use of teachers' marking to ensure students know how they can improve their work and rate of progress.

Links with the family of schools, colleges, businesses and the community are good and the school has strengthened these through the school's specialist activities. The sports college plan has been carefully thought through and is designed to impact across the school and the local community. The impressive new facilities at the school benefit the students and the local community very well.

The headteacher, with his senior leadership team, set clear direction for the school. Expectations for staff and students are known and there exists a strong determination to succeed. The recent

delegation of responsibilities across the leadership team are beginning to have a positive impact although the full and sustained benefit of these is yet to be reflected in improved achievement and standards.

Governance is good. Governors are very committed to the school and know how well it performs because of the systems for evaluating the quality of education it provides. They have a realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know what is required to drive the school forward and raise students' achievement.

The school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement because of the improving quality of the leadership, the significant positive impact of the specialist college status on teaching and learning and the productive collaboration with its external partners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the rising trend of achievement and standards at Key Stage 3.
- Ensure that students are set challenging targets, based on their capabilities and that their progress is carefully monitored by staff at all levels.
- Raise students' awareness of how they can improve their current performance.

A small proportion of the 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

Standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory. Students come to the school with broadly average standards overall. The school quickly identifies those students with low reading skills and have strategies to help them improve. Students with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress in line with others because of the good support available.

The overall standards reached by Year 11 in 2007 were average but with some notable successes. For example, 44% of students attained the higher grade passes at GCSE including English and mathematics, which was close to the national average of 46%. Similarly, the proportion of students leaving with good passes in 5 or more subjects was not far off the national average.

Students in Year 9 in 2007 were less successful. Each of the subjects of English, mathematics and science recorded below average results in the national tests. Students performed better in mathematics and science than in English. These Year 9 students entered school with below average prior attainment, but progressed less well than would have been expected. The school has provided additional support for them as they start Key Stage 4 and their progress overall is satisfactory. The current Year 11 students are making good progress. Good teaching is starting to prompt accelerated progress also in other year groups, including Year 9.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being is good. The large majority of students enjoy their lessons and are appreciative of the new facilities. Assemblies provide very well for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In one outstanding assembly, Year 7 students were given opportunities to reflect on the world wide impact made by famous people from different cultures and backgrounds. The skilful direction of the teacher allowed for students' personal

reflection on the impact they could make in their world, their school community and families. This gave students a sense of responsibility, purpose and influence, which raised their self-esteem and awareness of how important they are.

Attendance is satisfactory; improvements have brought it closer to the national average. The school has worked tirelessly to improve the stubbornly low attendance rate of some students. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Students demonstrate mature attitudes which is particularly impressive considering the major physical disruption caused during the re-building programme. They are courteous and polite and have a genuine interest in others. Students socialise well with each other during break times and lunch. Many take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Students adopt safe practices in lessons, following appropriate health and safety routines when practical activities are undertaken. Students say they feel safe and that bullying is rare. They know who to turn to if they experience any problems and say that issues are sorted quickly and effectively. They are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and demonstrate their enjoyment of the range of meals on offer, including those from different cultural backgrounds, for example the French dishes served on Mondays.

Students make the most of available opportunities. They take on responsibilities such as prefects, buddies to students new to the school and by being members of the influential school council. Mentors take seriously their work in helping students to board buses at the end of the day and talk passionately about assisting staff in this important health and safety role. Involvement in these opportunities helps develop leadership skills and prepares them well for the future. They make a good contribution to the community by raising funds for charities and by holding musical events. The school is developing its links with a partner school in Slovakia.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Consistency in planning lessons and effective planning overall reflect the recently implemented teaching and learning policy. Teachers set clear objectives, which helps students understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and skilled questioning is used to probe and extend students' understanding. In the more inspiring and engaging lessons, teachers allow students some independence in their learning. Many teachers possess good levels of expertise in using interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. Students have many opportunities to assess their work against clear criteria linked to national standards. There is a small proportion of lessons which lack pace and sufficient challenge. In these lessons outcomes are not always planned well enough to match the range of abilities of all students and consequently students' progress is limited.

Students recognise that the recent improvements in teaching provide them with a more varied, stimulating and challenging experience and that classroom routines are more consistent than they were. Consequently, they adopt positive attitudes, behave well and are well motivated to work both independently and in groups with minimal supervision. The good relationships which underpin effective learning are consistent throughout the school. Regular assessments inform students of their progress towards long term targets. However, teachers' marking is inconsistent; it does not explain what students have done well nor always set short term learning goals for improvement. Students have good opportunities to build on lessons through the Virtual Learning Environment to undertake homework.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum, carefully reviewed and significantly developed since the last inspection. It is enhanced by the schools' specialist status in sport which appeals to a greater range of students than at the time of the last inspection. The physical education department is providing innovative learning pathways for students that lead directly to degree level.

In Key Stage 3, students are taught all subjects of the National Curriculum along with a strong emphasis on improving students' literacy skills. In addition to a wide range of academic subjects, the move towards a broader range of vocational subjects at Key Stage 4, is proving popular. A range of accredited courses are delivered in school and in partnership with a local further education college and other agencies. Overall, the curriculum is well suited to the needs and aspirations of students across the full ability range, is contributing to raising overall performance and is fostering positive attitudes to learning in students less suited to more traditional GCSE courses.

The curriculum is complemented by a wide range of enrichment activities. A large number of students take advantage of the various sporting activities, clubs, educational visits and residential opportunities on offer. These enrichment activities make an important contribution to both the students' personal and academic development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support overall are satisfactory. The school has a strong commitment to student's welfare. Arrangements for safeguarding students are thorough and meet current requirements. Students and sometimes their parents, benefit from the good pastoral care offered by dedicated teachers and support staff. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Academic guidance for students is satisfactory. The school is aware of the improvements it needs to make in setting more challenging targets and in providing timely information to students on how they can improve their work and rate of progress.

The use of data has had a positive impact on raising standards in Key Stage 4 but not as much at Key Stage 3. Department teams have appropriate systems to track students' progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the outcomes are not used strategically by the whole school to ensure that all students make the best progress.

Effective links exist with the local primary schools. Students from these schools enjoy a thorough induction programme to prepare them for the change to secondary school. There is a similarly good process to support students in Year 9 when choosing their options to study.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported by an effective senior leadership team, sets clear direction for the school and provides the impetus to move the school forward. This is seen, for example, in the new building programme and the achievement of specialist sports college status which has contributed to

improvements in teaching and learning across the school. There is evident a sense of purpose and pride both in the school and within the community. Senior leaders set clear expectations for both staff and students and there is a strong determination to succeed. The headteacher has shown thoughtful leadership in delegating leadership and management roles and responsibilities but it is too early to see the full impact.

The school is inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity. There is a clear focus on raising students' self-esteem. The atmosphere in the school is purposeful. The school runs well on a day-to-day basis, despite the current constraints of the building work. Investor in People status, conferred on the school in 2005, confirms the high commitment made by the leadership of the school to the development of its entire staff.

Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met. Governors are very committed to the school and show a good knowledge of what it offers and how well it performs. They have given high priority to long term plans to improve the accommodation and they support and challenge senior leaders appropriately.

The school has recently established rigorous systems for evaluating the quality of education it provides. Governors and senior managers have a realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what is required to drive the school forward and raise students' achievement. At present, whole school academic targets are not as challenging as they could be.

The school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement. This is due to the improving quality of the leadership, the significant positive impact of the specialist college status on teaching and learning and the productive collaboration with its external partners. Resources are managed effectively and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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? | 3 |
| 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? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

3 April 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Sports College, Lancashire, PR2 8QY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we recently inspected your school. We are pleased to share our findings with you. Overall, we judged Corpus Christi to be satisfactory.

Lots of good things are happening in your school, including the new building work which undoubtedly has caused some disruption to your daily routines. We were very impressed by the way you are coping with this work and not allowing it to affect your studying. You behave very well, are courteous and respectful. Your teachers and governors have worked hard to provide these new facilities. To support them in their work to provide the best for you, we have asked the governors, headteacher, and staff to concentrate on three areas.

- Accelerate the rising trend of achievement and standards for those of you at Key Stage 3. We feel that you ought to get better results in your national tests at the end of Year 9.
- Ensure that you are set challenging targets, ones that more realistically reflect your potential. We are also asking the teachers to keep a close eye on your progress towards these targets.
- Help you to see how you can improve your performance. You told us that you understand the position you are at now and the levels and grades that you hope to achieve.

You can help your teachers by continuing to be cooperative and maintaining your good behaviour. I have no doubt that with your mature and caring attitudes towards each other and your high regard for the school, you will help Corpus Christi go from strength to strength. Good luck for the future!

Yours sincerely

Peter Cox

Lead inspector