

All Saints RC School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121720
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	314091
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Tanya Harber Stuart 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	1203
6th form	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Cannings
Headteacher	Mr Bill Scriven
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Mill Mount Lane York North Yorkshire YO24 1BJ
Telephone number	01904 647877
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

All Saints Roman Catholic High School is a larger than average secondary school serving the south west area of York and surrounding villages. The school operates on two sites nearly a mile apart. The playing fields are a bus drive away. The school serves a relatively affluent area as shown by the much lower than average percentage of students who receive a free school meal. However the school does serve some areas of deprivation. Most students are of White British heritage and very few students speak English as an additional language. Very few students have statements of special educational needs and the percentage of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school is the preferred local authority school for hearing impaired students.

All Saints Roman Catholic High School holds the Healthy School Award, the Sports Mark and is an Investor in People. The school is a specialist language and performing arts college. The school holds the International School Award for its work with schools abroad.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

All Saints Roman Catholic High school is a good school with outstanding features. The good education provided is enhanced by the outstanding caring and supportive environment which is based on its strong Roman Catholic foundation. This is a school in which the personal development and well-being of each student takes priority. The vast majority of the parents praised the pastoral care shown to their children and the moral values they were being taught. As one student commented, 'We look out for one another.' This is exemplified by the very successful inclusion of hearing impaired students. The split site, although a challenge for the staff, is seen by parents and students to be a positive aspect of the school.

Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are consistently well above average. Students enter the school with standards which are above average. Therefore the vast majority make good progress at the school. In 2007, 16 year olds made better progress and reached higher standards than the Year 11 cohort did in 2006. This was because of the proactive approach taken by senior leaders to behaviour management which led to better behaviour in lessons and improved attitudes to learning. However, not all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported and guided well and make good progress.

Teaching and learning in the school are good. There is a good system for monitoring teaching and learning. However, the best practice is not always systematically shared, either within or between departments. In the best lessons the needs of all the students are provided for through different activities, there are good relationships between staff and students, and the students have opportunities to work independently. In some lessons assessment is used well to plan activities which relate to the needs of the students. The good curriculum is regularly reviewed and adapted to cater for the needs of the students. The provision and support for students who find it difficult to cope with lessons is a strength of the school.

The school's specialist status in languages and in performing arts makes positive contributions to the students' social and cultural development. Opportunities are provided for the students to take responsibility and they very willingly take them up. For example, through year councils, and contributing to the development and delivery of the transition programme from primary schools to All Saints. This programme is highly valued by the students and their parents. Students feel safe, and know there is someone they can talk to if they need to. Students welcome the opportunities to raise money for charity. The 'collapsed curriculum days' focusing on the work-related curriculum and the good links with business partners, mean the students are well prepared for their future lives when they leave All Saints.

The strong, proactive senior leadership in the school has successfully improved standards and achievement without compromising the outstanding level of pastoral care. Through good line management, middle managers are engaging in debates about standards and achievement and their contribution to improving them. The governors are both supportive and challenging of the leadership. All these factors mean that there is good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is good and provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Students from a range of schools are welcomed to continue their education in the sixth form. The large majority

of students in the sixth form are from All Saints and there are a small number who join from Europe through the school's international connections. The students have a wide range of prior attainment but overall standards are above average on entry.

Students make good progress to reach very high standards by the end of Year 13. The progress made by the highest attaining students is excellent. There are variations in the progress students make between subjects. However, the sixth form is as robustly monitored and evaluated as the rest of the school and appropriate measures have been taken to improve the consistency of learning and promote higher achievement. The curriculum has been broadened to better meet students' needs. The school's specialist status has been well used to extend opportunities and increase the enjoyment of learning. As a result, achievement has strengthened in recent years at both advanced supplementary and advanced level.

Students make good progress because of good teaching and learning and outstanding care, guidance and support. Students greatly appreciate the help and support they receive. In the best lessons there is confident, well-informed specialist teaching, underpinned by excellent relationships. However, there is some less successful teaching. In these cases, students are too dependent on the teacher as the teaching methods adopted do not fully exploit students' capacity and keenness to learn.

The personal development and well-being of students is outstanding. Students readily take on responsibilities and enthusiastically participate in the sporting, cultural and intellectual life of the school. They gain a great deal of enjoyment from their sixth form experience and this is shown in their good levels of attendance. Students and parents strongly praise the careers advice and preparation for university entrance.

This is an inclusive sixth form. It has a very positive, harmonious and constructive ethos in which every student can find a place and develop their talents. Students are given very good guidance on entry and say there is always someone they can turn to if they are troubled. The school has achieved a very successful balance between promoting academic excellence and encouraging students' personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the best practice in the school is systematically shared to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons to further improve student progress.
- Ensure all members of staff consistently implement the school's policies on behaviour and assessment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The students enter the school aged 11 with standards which are consistently above national average. The very high standards the students reach at the end of Key Stage 4 mean that the vast majority make good progress at All Saints.

In 2007, 64% of students gained five good grades at GCSE including mathematics and English. This was an increase from 2006 of 9%. Nevertheless the leadership team has not been complacent, and after a thorough evaluation of the 2007 results has put in place well thought through initiatives to tackle the small number of relatively weaker subjects.

Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 3 are consistently well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Given their starting points the vast majority of students make good progress. In 2007 the progress made by the students in mathematics decreased. This was especially so for the more able boys. A review of the teaching methods provided the department with the areas it needed to improve and progress towards the challenging targets set for 2008 is good. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress in the school. The school met its specialist status targets in 2007 and the tracking data seen at the time of the inspection showed the school is on course to meet the 2008 targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

A significant factor in the students' good achievement is their outstanding personal development and well-being. The students' mature and considerate attitudes towards each other, including those with different cultural traditions and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, prepares them well for the next stage in their lives. They enjoy school and have excellent working and social relationships with each other and staff. The students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. They appreciate the opportunities the school offers them, as a student remarked, 'All Saints is the best thing that has happened to me.' Although a small number of parents have concerns about behaviour, the very few behavioural issues that occur are dealt with effectively. The overwhelming majority of students behave exceptionally well and take pride in their contributions to school life. They are particularly proud of their school council role which allows them to contribute to decision making and school improvement. Students are confident that there is always a member of staff on hand to listen if they have any concerns or worries. Students are very aware of the consequences of failing to adopt a healthy lifestyle because of the work they complete in personal, social and health education. They know how to stay safe. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and makes a valuable contribution to their sensitivity and awareness of global issues.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. In the better lessons teachers use assessment data well to ensure activities meet the needs of the students. In these lessons the behaviour for learning policy is applied consistently. The use of interactive whiteboards and the involvement of students in a range of varied activities maintains their interest and engagement. In the outstanding lessons students are involved in assessing the extent of their own learning and that of fellow students. Teachers' high expectations and students taking responsibility for the quality of their work are also characteristics of the best lessons. In less effective lessons the activities are not based on the needs of the students. The pace of the lessons is slower, teachers talk for too long and the students have less involvement in their learning.

When the students understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve, the progress they make in lessons is good or better. When staff use information from assessments to plan activities based on the students' needs, the progress they make is even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

A good broad and balanced curriculum, enhanced significantly by the two specialisms of languages and art, meets the needs and interests of vast majority of learners. Departments work closely with associated primary schools supporting effective transition. The combination of academic and vocational courses meets the needs and aspirations of most students in Years 10 to 13. Through the languages specialism students are able to study up to four languages. Good relationships and effective collaboration with external providers enhances this provision. Vocational courses are responsive to the needs of local employment. Preparation for life after All Saints is through an integrated programme of careers education and work experience.

Opportunities for students to undertake work-related learning and engage in business education have developed successfully. Enterprise education is evident throughout the school and it supports the students' personal development. Leadership skills are developed through, for example, the Community Sports Leaders programme. Community links and contribution to community cohesion is a significant strength of the school. The students organised an activity day to fundraise for local and national charities. A high number of students participate in an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment programmes. School performances in music and performing arts, one of the school's specialisms, are of very high quality and valued by students, parents and carers. There is a strong international dimension throughout the school with student visits and exchanges to countries throughout Europe and with some students from overseas studying at the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school's religious foundation underpins the outstanding care, guidance and support. Everyone is cared for and an outstanding range of activities are provided. There is exemplary provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The overwhelming majority of students make good progress because the staff are highly effective and committed. The provision for students unable to cope with day to day lessons sets high expectations and nurtures its students to develop mutually respectful relationships. The qualities of leadership, responsibility and self-reliance are developed through lessons to promote personal development and citizenship and extensive charity work. These skills, and the good information about future opportunities, ensure that the students are well prepared for life after they leave All Saints. The student planners are used successfully to communicate with parents and are an integral part of the behaviour for learning policy. The outstanding links with outside agencies enable the vast majority of students, even the most vulnerable, to fully engage with school at all times. Students know their school is inclusive. They say that they are known as individuals and this is what makes the school special.

Academic guidance is the relatively weaker aspect of care, guidance and support. Some students are not aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Procedures for safeguarding and health and safety meet government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The good senior leadership and management have focused on ensuring that each and every student is cared for. Their focus on care has strongly contributed to the outstanding personal development and well-being of the students. Recently there has been more emphasis placed on improving the students' performance in examinations and this led to the improved results in 2007. However, it did not compromise the high level of care offered.

The senior leadership team has developed a good system of self-evaluation based on rigorous and detailed analysis of examination results. This self-evaluation is the starting point for development planning in the school. These plans are focused on providing a curriculum which meets the needs of the students and improving outcomes for them. Areas of weakness identified by self-evaluation are tackled in a supportive, yet demanding way. Middle leaders are well supported through regular and challenging line management meetings. These are focused on evaluating progress towards improving student outcomes.

The senior leadership and management have developed the capacity in the school, which is now good. Middle leaders are encouraged to engage with national training courses. All staff, both teaching and support, are encouraged to take and lead initiatives such as in the use of interactive whiteboards. However, not all good practice is shared in a systematic way.

Governors are supportive of the leadership and management but also challenge them. The governors are proactively involved in the strategic management of the school. Their effectiveness has been enhanced through their self-evaluation and the good quality training provided by the local authority.

Whilst the split site requires careful management in terms of staffing and resources, it is considered to be a positive aspect of the school by the students and their parents. This is because Key Stage 3 students are taught at one site and Key Stage 4 and the sixth form at the other. This enhances the outstanding personal development and well-being of the students.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
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?	1	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?	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?	1	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 Saints RC School, York, YO24 1BJ

Thank you for all your help in the inspection of your school. You made a significant contribution to the inspection, both in formal meetings with the inspectors, and informally, throughout the two days. Many of your parents filled in a parental questionnaire and this meant we were able to take their views into account.

All Saints is a good school with some outstanding features. Your staff work extremely hard to make sure that you are exceptionally well cared for and supported and that each of you is treated as an individual. You and your parents appreciate this care and it is a real strength of your school. Teaching and learning are good and almost all of you behave very well and work hard. The standards you reach at the end of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form are very high and you make good academic progress. You contribute to school life through the school council and you appreciate that your views are listened to. You feel safe and know there is always someone you can talk to. You enjoy school, especially the extra-curricular activities, and the performance of Little Shop of Horrors was particularly successful.

I have asked the headteacher and the staff to improve All Saints even further by:

- ensuring all staff are consistent in implementing the behaviour and assessment policies
- enabling staff to learn from the teachers who teach the best lessons.

You can contribute by continuing to work hard, attend school and contribute your ideas through the school council.