

St Andrew's Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125275
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315219
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Ramesh Kapadia HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	745
6th form	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Earl
Headteacher	Mrs K Burke
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	Hillfield Grange Road Leatherhead KT22 7JP
Telephone number	01372 277881
Fax number	01372 279135

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, attendance and behaviour, the quality of teaching, the sixth form and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, policies and other documents, national published assessment data, the school's assessment data, lesson observations, discussions with students, staff and governors, and views expressed in parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that those 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 Andrew's Roman Catholic School is a relatively small school with a growing sixth form, which represents about a sixth of the school. Most students are of White British heritage with a home language of English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average and the proportion entitled to free school meals is lower than average. The school has had specialist status for mathematics and computing since 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of St Andrew's school is satisfactory, with some good features. In particular, there is evidence of improving achievement in the main school. A scenario of falling rolls has been reversed and many year groups are now almost full. An ambitious and exciting building programme is under way to extend facilities and consolidate accommodation on a single site. A positive aspect of the school's specialist status is the high proportion of Year 11 students who attain a vocational qualification in information and communication technology (ICT). Students' progress is good in the main school, although there are inadequacies in the sixth form provision, which have yet to be fully addressed.

Students come to the school with prior attainment that is near the national average and reach standards at GCSE that are broadly average and above average in some aspects. Results at Key Stage 3 have improved in English. At GCSE over the last three years, the proportions attaining five or more higher grades has been above average, as has the total point score; the proportion attaining higher grades including English and mathematics is average. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups in the main school, an indication of its inclusive nature. The school is developing strategies to enable the most capable students to attain highest levels and grades in Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations respectively.

The school has a caring ethos and students noted that teachers are friendly and offer good support. Spiritual and moral development is well supported by the school's Catholic ethos, as noted in a recent inspection carried out by the Diocese. The student councils for year groups and the whole school meet regularly; one student has successfully been elected to be vice-chairman on a borough-wide youth council. There are annual dramatic productions and the school supports a charity in Africa linked to education. The school's commitment to promoting positive views of disability is evident in its support of disabled staff and students in its community.

The school has sent out its own questionnaires to parents but elicited limited responses. Parents were generally positive about the school in the inspection questionnaires, particularly with regards to the support offered by individual teachers. Communication and behaviour were raised as issues by a number of parents. Whilst no poor behaviour was observed, there were a few instances where students did not work with good concentration. The level of fixed-term exclusions is relatively high; the school has carefully collated the reasons, but has yet to undertake an analysis to investigate whether there are any patterns. There was a high rate of absence at registration sessions observed during the inspection; teachers indicated that this is an issue of punctuality rather than attendance, which was average last year.

The quality of teaching and learning in the main school is good and supported by a carefully conceived initiative by the senior leadership team to implement further improvements through targeted support and the sharing of good practice. In a good lesson in science, a teacher capitalised in experimental errors made by some students to help them develop better understanding of key ideas. This did not happen in a mathematics lesson in the sixth form, where the teaching and learning are less strong than in the main school. Teachers make effective use of data projectors in their lessons.

There is a large leadership team some of whom are part-time. The school has made sound progress in addressing the issues from the previous report and has become more popular in the community. Specialist status has been acquired and has led to increased numbers gaining

vocational qualifications in ICT. The school's development plan has eight priorities. In some areas, there are clear measurable targets for improvements, based on a careful analysis; however, in some areas, such as examination performance, data are incomplete. Challenging targets have been set for Key Stage 3 tests but not for GCSE and sixth form results in 2008. Managers have made secure judgements about aspects of the main school's work such as those related to students' personal development and well-being. Governance is satisfactory overall, although governors have not made an incisive analysis of the sixth form provision. They have supported the school well in securing finance for the new buildings and promoting it vigorously in the community. The leadership and management have made secure improvements in the main school, indicating a capacity to make improvements elsewhere.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 4

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are inadequate. Standards are low. In 2006, the average point score per candidate at the end of advanced level study was well below the national and local average; this figure fell in 2007. Students do better on vocational courses in Year 12, but generally do not achieve well, as shown by value-added data. A strong and successful emphasis on increasing student numbers has meant that some have taken inappropriate courses such as Year 12 science, where most students failed last year. The curriculum is limited because, though a large number of advanced level courses are offered, the time allocated for some subjects is too short.

Students' personal development has some good features, based on the school's Catholic ethos and links to the community. The community sports leadership award, which can also be taken at the higher level, enables students to help in both primary and special schools. Students noted that they get good support from their teachers in a secure environment. However, too many students are not punctual: in one registration session, the tutor was unsure why over a quarter of the students on the register were absent.

The school has data on its value-added performance in the sixth form, based on a nationally recognised system. Though available for the last two years, the school has not analysed the data in its self-evaluation. The data show that students achieve much less well in terms of overall results than their peers elsewhere, even though class sizes are low. The school's strategic plan includes some targets for improvement in the sixth form, but these are not always measurable; nor does the plan make direct reference to new course specifications and diplomas in the 14-19 curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in the sixth form by offering suitable courses and thereby enable students to make better progress and attain at an overall level closer to the national average.
- Make better use of a range of data to set appropriately challenging targets across the school.

A small proportion of 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.

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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	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?	3	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	4
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	IE 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	3	
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	IE ²
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	IE ²

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.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	4
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	3	4
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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
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

28 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St Andrew's Catholic School, Leatherhead, KT22 7JP

Thanks very much for the welcome you gave me during my visit to your school. You also helped me by talking to me about your experiences in the school.

Standards in the school are broadly average and you make good progress in the main school because of good teaching. Your teachers are friendly and help you with your work. You have opportunities to express your views, through the year and school councils. However, at registration sessions, too many of you are not there in time: you could help by being more punctual. In the sixth form, you also value the support from teachers and have good opportunities for working with primary and special schools via the community sports leadership award. However, academic progress in the sixth form is unsatisfactory overall. The sixth form does offer you a secure environment but the school should take more care in matching its provision to the needs of those of you who stay on. There are two main areas for improvement:

- the school should improve its sixth form provision
- the school should use information about performance to help set appropriate targets.

Yours truly,

R Kapadia

HMI