

Holy Family Roman Catholic and Church of England College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131726
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	328637
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	545
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Paul Daly
Headteacher	Mrs S Casey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pot Hall Wilton Grove Heywood Lancashire OL10 2AA
Telephone number	01706 360607
Fax number	01706 363950

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
Inspection number	328637

© Crown copyright 2009

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 three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

In September 2007, the original Roman Catholic High School occupying the site closed and reopened under a new name as a joint faith Roman Catholic and Church of England High School. From 2007, the school has admitted Roman Catholic and Church of England students into Year 7. The Roman Catholic students from the original High School make up Years 9, 10 and 11. This smaller than average school serves an area of broadly average social and economic circumstances. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is average. Most students are White British. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. The school has specialised in mathematics and computing since September 2006. It has held the Healthy Schools Award for the last three years.

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 in every respect. It gives outstanding value for money. Students make excellent progress, especially in Key Stage 4. They respond extremely well to the exceptional levels of care, support and guidance the school provides. Students are proud of their school and value highly the outstanding teaching they receive. 'I've learned so much during my time at school. I'm going to miss it when I leave. I'm really grateful to the teachers for pushing me to do my best and giving me lots of their time', is a typical comment from an older student. Parents, too, are pleased with the quality of education provided by the school. 'I would recommend this school to any parent. My children are happy because they feel valued. They enjoy school and are making good progress. What more could I ask for?' is a telling parental comment, reflecting a widely held view. The school's success is built on the cornerstone of traditional values such as respect, good manners and good behaviour. Students have exceptionally positive attitudes to lessons. They are keen to do their best at all times. Leaders and managers have used the school's specialism in mathematics and computing astutely to add to the quality of teaching through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). This, in turn, is leading to rising standards year-on-year.

Students join the school with broadly average levels of attainment. They make good progress to attain above average standards by the end of Year 9. Their progress accelerates in Years 10 and 11 and is outstanding because of an excellent curriculum and very high quality teaching which is challenging and rigorous. Exceptionally close checks on their progress and the highly effective support students receive from a team of talented learning mentors also play an important role in accelerating their progress. The proportion of students attaining at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has risen year-on-year. In 2008, it was significantly above average. Inspection evidence shows that this year it is set for another significant rise. The school's deep commitment to equality and inclusion is seen in the fact that every student, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, attained at least six GCSE passes including English and mathematics in 2008. The school is now turning its attention to making sure that students' progress and achievement receives a boost in Key Stage 3.

Students' are unfailingly polite and respectful. Their high levels of enjoyment are seen in their above average attendance levels and the obvious relish with which they approach lessons. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They feel safe and secure because of the exceptional levels of care and guidance they receive. The sophisticated checks on their progress mean that students know how well they are expected to do, how well they are doing and, importantly, what they need to do to attain the demanding targets set for each individual. Students grab at opportunities to take on responsibilities. The school council is very effective. It has brought about significant improvements to school facilities and assists in the appointment of staff. Students' high levels of self-belief and their high levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills mean that they are exceptionally well prepared for future success.

The quiet yet commanding leadership of the headteacher promotes very high levels of teamwork. Morale across the school is of the highest order. Leaders and managers at all levels are exceptionally keen to make sure that high standards are maintained and, where possible, further improved. The change of status to a joint faith school has been managed expertly. The new governing body, working closely with senior leaders and managers, has done outstandingly well to make sure that the change has taken place seamlessly. Rising standards, exceptional

levels of impact on students' personal development and an unrelenting focus on making the school better indicate that the school has outstanding capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate students' progress in Key Stage 3 to match that of students in Key Stage 4.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From their broadly average starting points students make good progress in Key Stage 3 to attain above average standards. In Key Stage 4 the school ratchets up its levels of support and guidance for students so that by the end of Year 11, standards are well above average, especially in the proportion of students attaining at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics where very demanding targets were exceeded. This represents outstanding achievement. Lower attaining students, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, also achieved outstandingly well in 2008 and exceeded the demanding targets set for them. Every student in Year 11 in 2008 left school with at least five GCSE passes including English and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that this year even more demanding GCSE targets are set to be met and that all groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are set to achieve outstandingly well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally strong. Students' spiritual development is supported at all stages by the strong Christian ethos that pervades the school. Students know the difference between right and wrong. They are respectful to each other and adults. They show very good levels of understanding and respect for other races and religions. Their work to support charities, both local and international, is relentless. Students know how important healthy lifestyles are. Participation rates in the school's wide range of sporting enrichment activities are very high. Students know the dangers of smoking and substance abuse. Above all, students are proud of their school and enjoy helping to make it so successful. Many show a level of maturity beyond their years; this puts them in an outstanding position to lead fulfilling and successful lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Students have very positive attitudes to their learning because teachers ensure that lessons are interesting and relevant. Teaching involves students continually in activities that promote discussions, investigations and group working. Very good use of ICT across the school ensures that students' learning is well supported by visual resources that engage them and encourage the development of their independent learning. Group work is managed very successfully to encourage students to share ideas and help each other. Teachers have high expectations of students, who are challenged to extend their thinking and understanding by teachers' excellent use of questioning and the brisk pace of lessons. The very effective assessment and tracking of students' progress ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are able to meet precisely the identified needs of all students. Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting students

individually and in small groups. This is reinforced by excellent relationships and the celebration of individual successes that build confidence and self-esteem. Staff plan well together and have strong subject knowledge. They ensure that students make good use of time and resources and are able to make excellent progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very carefully planned to ensure the individual needs of students are met. The introduction of a mixed-age nurture group for lower attaining Key Stage 3 students is an example of the lengths the school is prepared to go to help every individual. All students in Key Stage 4 have full access to the flexible curriculum that includes vocational and off-site courses alongside more traditional courses offered in school. This has proved very successful and popular. It enables all students to achieve outstandingly well. Very good arrangements prepare students for the world of work. All students follow challenging courses in ICT. In Year 11, they follow a popular short course in citizenship. This supports the excellent personal and social development of students which is then enhanced in subjects across the curriculum and in five focus days a year where enterprise, health and fitness, and citizenship are further developed. Popular out-of-school visits and many visitors to school add extra interest and relevance to learning. For example, students talk glowingly about the Year 8 Civil War Day. Students value the exciting range of lunchtime and after-school activities that are available. They are proud of their awards in sport but they also value activities like cooking, art and ICT. The school's specialism in mathematics and ICT has enriched the curriculum. ICT skills have brought subjects to life and motivated students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding care, guidance and support. Pastoral care for students' personal welfare coupled with outstanding support for students' academic development are at the heart of the school's success. Very strong links with outside agencies ensure that specialist advice and support can be called upon when needed. Effective transition arrangements ensure students settle quickly into Year 7. Year 11 students are fully aware of the options available to them when they leave school. Procedures for safeguarding students meet government requirements. Attention to health and safety including risk assessments is meticulous. Procedures for checking on students' progress are very effective; in Key Stage 4 they are outstanding, involving teachers, students and parents/carers in monthly assessment and written reports. Teachers mark students' written work regularly. Comments are of a high quality in showing students what they need to do to improve their work further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management at all levels ensure that the school has an unrelenting focus on improvement. The headteacher's commanding leadership promotes exceptional levels of teamwork. The headteacher has the support of a talented team of senior leaders who are all crystal clear about their responsibilities. Middle managers, too, are adept at monitoring the effectiveness of the areas for which they are responsible. The school is a highly ordered community but one in which innovation is always welcomed. For example, the use of ICT has

been strongly promoted to improve teaching and learning. Comprehensive systems for seeking the views of a wide range of stakeholders enable leaders and managers to have an accurate view of the school's strengths and where it could do even better. The outcomes form the core of the high quality school improvement plan. The school's commitment to equality and inclusion is outstanding. All students, regardless of background or ability, are equally valued and supported. The school can demonstrate outstanding impact on community cohesion because it has comprehensive systems to evaluate how well it is doing. Students grab at opportunities to take on responsibilities in school and in the local community; they are aware of the challenges of life in a multicultural society; and their global awareness is heightened by close links with schools in Albania and Nigeria. Although the governing body is relatively new, it has made outstanding progress in gaining a solid understanding of the school's work and asking relevant questions to hold the school rigorously to account.

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
---	----------------

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	NA
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 ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. What you told me was very helpful in enabling me to reach my judgements.

You will be delighted and proud to know that you go to an outstanding school. I was so impressed with how well you all get on together and how well you behave. It was particularly striking to see how eager you all are to learn; you are to be congratulated on your positive attitudes. Your eagerness to learn coupled with the excellent support and guidance your school provides enable you all to make very good progress in your learning. In Years 10 and 11, your progress is outstanding. The GCSE results you attain are a credit to you and all the adults who work with you. Your teachers ensure that you know your targets and make sure you know what you need to do to achieve them. The school's leaders and managers at all levels are knowledgeable and concentrate all their efforts on making sure you do as well as you can. It is no wonder, therefore, that you are all extremely well prepared for future success when you leave school.

In order to make sure your school is even better I am asking it to make sure that students in Key Stage 3 make even more progress so that their achievement is as outstanding as that in Key Stage 4.

It was a real pleasure to get to know your school. I am sure you will continue to work hard to make sure it remains an outstanding place in which to learn and that it continues to go from strength to strength.

I wish you all the best for the future.