

# Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111457
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	337686
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Palmer HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1605
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	229
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Gus Van Cauwelaert
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Highfield Road Widnes Cheshire WA8 7DW
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<b>Email address</b>	head@saintspeterandpaul.halton.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 41 lessons and 41 teachers for approximately 30 minutes per lesson. Approximately 70% of inspection time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and a local authority representative. They observed the college's work, and looked at a range of documentation including 678 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and progress at Key Stage 4, particularly in English and mathematics.
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels and the capacity for sustained improvement
- the quality of teaching and learning across the college and in the sixth form
- the effectiveness of tracking and monitoring of students' progress and intervention strategies in all key stages
- attainment and progress in the sixth form.

## Information about the school

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College is a larger than average 11 to 19 years comprehensive school. In 2005 the college achieved specialist status as a sports college. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. The proportion of those eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The great majority of students are of White British heritage. The college serves an averagely affluent population although there are some pockets of socio-economic disadvantage. The college has achieved the advanced award for Healthy Schools.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Saints Peter and Paul is a satisfactory and improving college characterised by good and outstanding outcomes in students' personal development; excellent levels of care, guidance and support; and many highly effective aspects of leadership and management. The college is held in high regard by parents and carers. Comments from parents such as, 'The school has been excellent for our daughter and I would strongly recommend it to other families considering secondary schools.' and 'My son has had five happy years at Saints Peter and Paul – he has grown into a mature young man with good values and opinions and I feel that the school has helped in this with good discipline and teaching self-worth', are typical of the views expressed to inspectors.

Students' success in gaining five A\* to C grades in GCSE examinations has improved year-on-year from significantly below the national average in 2006 to significantly above in 2009. However, this did not include English and mathematics which, although generally improving, remained below the national average and declined in 2009. As a result, the trend over three years indicates broadly average attainment. Following the disappointing 2009 examination results the college identified raising attainment in English and mathematics as a priority and began rigorous implementation of a programme for improvement; the effects of which can be seen in the better progress of current students at Key Stages 3 and 4.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now good. A large majority of the teaching is challenging with the result that students are well supported in their learning and currently make good progress. Teachers mostly have high expectations, strong subject knowledge and engage the students well. In the less successful lessons, weak planning and slow pace prevents students from making the progress of which they are capable. The use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers know their students well and have a good understanding of their prior learning; they use this knowledge to plan lessons to meet individual needs and use questioning effectively within lessons to ascertain further understanding. However, this good practice is not applied consistently across the college and some learning opportunities are missed.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive outstanding care and support and, consequently, make good progress. The college provides a good curriculum which has improved since the last inspection to more fully accommodate students' personal needs and interests. Students appreciate these changes saying that it enables them to follow their personal strengths and aspirations. A very wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular provision enhances students' personal development.

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Students enjoy being at college. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour in lessons and around the college. They are polite to each other and to teachers and are able to manage their own behaviour without high levels of adult supervision. They make many quality contributions to the college and wider community through student leadership activities and a range of charitable events. The outstanding care, guidance and support contribute to students' good and sometimes outstanding personal development and well-being. The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They are keen to take part in, and influence the provision of, a wide range of sporting activities, some of which are due to the college's specialist status, and support the college's healthy eating agenda. Students, and their parents and carers, reported that the college does not tolerate bullying: the very few incidents that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively; consequently, students feel very safe and well cared for.

The senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the college which is communicated well to staff, parents and carers. The college has developed a range of effective partnerships to promote learning and contribute to students' well-being. The college rightly prides itself on its inclusive policies which permeate all aspects of its work, such as in the excellent support for vulnerable students and the valuing and celebration of diversity. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development. They have effectively addressed the areas for improvement at the last inspection: attainment has risen year-on-year and there are significant improvements in teaching and learning, care, guidance, support and attendance. Several strategic appointments have been made to tackle areas of identified weakness and the current governing body is very effective in challenging the leadership; hence, capacity for further improvement is good. Links with a range of local, national and international communities enable the college to make an outstanding contribution to community cohesion.

In the sixth form there has been considerable improvement in performance in some previously low attaining subjects and the successful introduction of BTEC courses has improved results overall. However, in some subjects, students continue to underperform. The best teachers demonstrate considerable subject expertise and students enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment programmes.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment and improve progress, particularly in mathematics and English at Key Stage 4.
  - Share best practice in order to remove inconsistencies in the quality of assessment to increase its impact on students' learning.
- – Raise achievement in the sixth form in those subjects where it is not high enough.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5

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inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

When students arrive at the school their attainment is broadly in-line with the national average. Although progress is improving and sometimes good due to good teaching and to strong leadership and management, overall it remains satisfactory. In the lessons observed by inspectors, most students made good progress. However, these improvements are not yet reflected in longer term measures of progress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and no particular groups of students underachieve.

Overall, students' attainment is broadly average. The college has been successful in securing improvements in GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4 over three years. However, there have been inconsistencies in English and mathematics. In 2008, the percentage achieving GCSE A\* to C grades in English and mathematics was in line with the national average but this was not sustained in 2009 when the grades fell to below average.

The extent to which students feel safe is outstanding; this is supported by the views of their parents and carers. Their understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle is also outstanding; students, including the most vulnerable, understand the factors that impact on physical, mental and emotional health. They demonstrate an outstanding commitment to improving the college and wider community through activities such as the student council, sports council, music and drama performance and leadership activities. Students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by links with South Africa, China and Latvia. Students have good opportunities in lessons, assemblies and tutorial time to reflect on their own feelings and values and the consequences of their actions. They are prepared well for their future economic well-being, learn financial literacy and enjoy a good range of work experiences and business links. They have developed good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and are now demonstrating good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good because teachers make use of a wide variety of activities and teaching styles with the result that students sustain well their motivation and application in lessons. Good use is made of interactive whiteboard technology and effective use of questioning and opportunities for independent learning further contribute to students' enjoyment of learning and their current good progress in many lessons. However, a minority of teachers miss the chance to help students make rapid progress by not effectively assessing their understanding and using such information to help students understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is well designed to meet students' needs by offering more choice through alternative provision, a greater range of vocational courses and early entry to GCSE. These changes are popular with students as is the varied programme of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. The college provides interesting and effective cross-curricular provision for students. For example, an Olympic project involving history, geography, art, music and ICT was ongoing during the inspection and commented on favourably by students.

Very effective transition arrangements ensure that students, who join Year 7 or other year groups, settle into the college quickly and smoothly. Case studies for vulnerable students are documented extensively, demonstrating the excellent arrangements the college has with external agencies, parents and carers, to support individual needs. The college undertakes rigorous tracking of all students' academic progress and well-being. Intervention strategies are carefully designed to meet individual needs contributing to the outstanding care, guidance and support students enjoy.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The senior team focuses effectively on improving the quality of teaching and learning to ensure improved outcomes, particularly in English and mathematics. There is an effective programme of professional development for all staff which is beginning to focus on the sharing of best practice in order to remove inconsistencies in the quality of assessment. The specialism has impacted positively on improving teaching and learning and raising standards through effective in-house professional development, as well as having a strong impact on students' personal development and well-being. The governing body has extensive knowledge of the college's systems, areas of strength and priorities for improvement. It sets appropriate targets based on informed data and holds the leadership closely to account.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the college's leadership team; their views are taken into account and they receive high quality information through the weekly newsletter and regular progress reports. An example of the outstanding engagement with parents and carers is the detailed and informative 'parents' guide on target-setting, assessment and reporting'. The college has developed good links with a variety of educational, business and other external agencies to promote learning and well-being. This includes links with a Manchester high school to enable students to meet young people from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds, thus contributing to their cultural understanding, the college's outstanding community cohesion, and the leadership's outstanding commitment to tackling all forms of discrimination. Students speak with pride of the college's zero tolerance of discriminatory language or behaviour. They are involved in inter-generational links and engage with students in other countries through international leadership visits. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The quality of information given to staff is exemplary; procedures are clear, detailed and regularly reviewed. An example of how students have contributed to both safeguarding and the school community is in their identification of potentially unsafe situations regarding traffic on the college premises and their success in fund-raising for the traffic calming measures which are now in place.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form provides a satisfactory, supportive education where students make satisfactory and improving progress. The college has introduced robust tracking procedures to guide teaching, learning and assessment. The effect has been improvements in teaching which is now good and outstanding, and a significant improvement in attainment and progress in many subjects, including some where performance had previously been weakest. The best teachers have excellent subject knowledge; their lessons are interesting, engaging and make effective use of ICT to promote learning.

However, improvements have not been consistent across the sixth form and in some subjects students are not achieving as well as they should. Staff organise provision effectively on a day-to-day basis. Programmes and activities are well matched to students' different needs and students speak very highly of the care, guidance and support they receive. Leaders and managers are highly motivated to improving outcomes for students and review systems efficiently with the result that these are now sufficiently embedded to secure improvement across the sixth form. The improvements in teaching and in students' progress are clear indications of leaders' and managers' success.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Forty two percent of parents and carers gave their views and the great majority of responses were supportive of the college and its management. A very small minority did not feel that the college dealt effectively with unacceptable behaviour although inspection evidence judged students' behaviour to be outstanding overall. A few of those who responded did not feel that the college took enough account of their suggestions and concerns or helped them enough in supporting their children's learning; however, inspectors judged engagement with parents and carers to be outstanding. A very large majority of parents and carers told us that their children enjoyed college and a similar proportion were happy overall with their children's experience at college.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 673 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1605 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



22 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College, Widnes, WA8 7DW

After our visit to your college, I would like to share our findings with you and thank you for your friendly welcome and for taking time to talk to us.

Saints Peter and Paul is a satisfactory and improving college with several good and outstanding features. Your success in gaining five good GCSE grades has improved year-on-year. However, this has not included English and mathematics which, although generally improving, have remained below the national average and declined in 2009. Because of this your teachers have prioritised your learning and progress in English and mathematics and, as a result, you are now making good progress towards meeting your targets. Attainment is also improving in the sixth form although this is not consistent across all subjects.

Many aspects of your personal development and well-being are outstanding. You told us that as a result of the excellent care, guidance and support you receive you feel very safe and secure in college. Your understanding of healthy lifestyles and take up of healthy options and activities are excellent. The college's sports specialism has enhanced the curriculum and helps you to stay healthy. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour, care for others and contributions to the community through leadership activities, music, drama and charity fund-raising. Many of your teachers have very good subject expertise and you engage very well with the lessons. There are very good strategies in place to identify those who need extra help. The leadership and management of the school and sixth form are good. There are now more vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and opportunities to begin GCSE courses in Year 9.

In order that staff can help you to continue to progress well we have recommended that the college undertake the following:

- raise attainment and improve progress, particularly in mathematics and English at Key Stage 4
- share best practice in order to remove inconsistencies in the quality of assessment to increase its impact on students' learning
- raise achievement in some subjects in the sixth form to match that of the best.

You are rightly proud to be a member of Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College. I wish

you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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