

St Wilfrid's Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126095
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340923
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Jones 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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	920
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Monsignor Anthony Barry
Headteacher	Mr J Morris
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2006
School address	Old Horsham Road Crawley West Sussex RH11 8PG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 40 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning and evaluation documents including the school development plan. The school's analysis of students' progress and attainment was scrutinised as were a total of 111 questionnaires received from parents, 152 from students and 62 from staff.

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

- achievement in mathematics
- the impact of actions to improve the quality of teaching in all subjects and raise standards
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures in delivering high quality practice.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than similar schools and moved recently into new buildings. The proportion of students claiming free schools meals is well below average. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with a first language other than English is above average as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school serves a diverse community and approximately a third of students are not of the catholic faith. The school has specialist status for business and enterprise with ethics and has gained 'fair trade' status, silver Artsmark and is a bronze level eco-school.

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

St Wilfrid's is held in high regard by parents and students alike. As one parent commented: 'My children are privileged to be taught by professionals who have such a passion for their subjects and who engender a positive and happy learning environment.' Students are proud of their school and feel very safe and well cared for. From slightly below average starting points on entry to the school students make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are overall in line with the national average. They achieve particularly well in English but do not perform as well in mathematics where achievement is persistently lower than it should be as teaching does not adequately engage students or meet their needs. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is due mainly to the good individual support they receive. Standards in other subjects such as science improved in 2009 with the recent introduction of new courses into Key Stage 4. These are more suited to students' needs and interests and are aimed at increasing choice and, through that, improving achievement. The school's specialist status has made a significant contribution to both the curriculum and the wider life of the school. All students now take a course in social and ethical studies (SES) and the school is widening the scope of the work-related learning programme.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving as the actions taken by the school to improve teaching are starting to have an impact. These are especially successful where teachers plan for a variety of activities that engage and interest their students. Students behave very well and are keen to cooperate and learn. Teachers do not always take full advantage of this in their planning and lessons do not always give enough opportunities for students to be actively involved with their learning. Appropriate strategies are in place to ensure students know the level they are working at and how to improve their work but these are not always applied consistently by all teachers.

The school takes outstanding care of the students through a total commitment to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Staff make every effort to get to know their students as individuals and work both with families and agencies to ensure all students receive support and any help they might need. The students' commitment to the school is reflected in their high attendance and outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities in school and outside both in their local parishes and elsewhere. The school council is an authoritative and respected body that contributes to decision making in areas such as school uniform and staff appointments.

Good leadership has steered the school successfully through the disruption associated with the building of and move into a new school. There is good capacity for further

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improvement as the extended leadership team now has an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and knows what needs to be done to improve performance, especially in mathematics. A strong sense of community has been established both within the school and beyond through locating equal opportunities and community cohesion at the heart of its work with outstanding success. The sixth form is growing in success and popularity. Students enjoy their time in the school and act as good ambassadors for St Wilfrid's both in and outside of school. Teaching and the care taken of the students ensure they are well prepared for the challenges they face after leaving school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics by:
- developing more opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning
- making better use of information on students' performance to ensure teaching meets their needs more closely.
- Improve the consistency of learning in lessons by planning for a range of learning activities which motivate and engage all students.
- Ensure all staff apply the school's assessment strategies consistently so that all students understand the levels they are reaching and know what they need to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The percentage of students gaining five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics was just above national levels in 2008 due largely to good results in English. In 2009 the percentage of students reaching the highest grades in mathematics improved but overall the number of students gaining A* to C grades was similar to 2008. Standards in science improved in 2009 from previously below average levels due to the introduction of a wider range of science courses. Attainment in religious education was below the national average but above that for Catholic schools. The percentage of students gaining five A* to C grades improved significantly in 2009 from previously below average levels due to improved curriculum provision.

Students are keen to learn and work effectively where tasks are appropriate and engaging. The school's strongly inclusive ethos results in a seamless environment where different groups of students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make equal progress and students with special educational needs and/or who are disabled make good progress. Students behave very well around the school and have responsible attitudes towards others, making sure that no one is left out. Some students will drift off-task in lessons if they are not involved in activities, especially where the teacher talks for too long.

Students are well aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and have an especially good understanding of the factors affecting their emotional well-being. A few students and parents feel that the school could do more in this area although inspectors found

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little evidence to support this view. The curriculum makes a good contribution to students' future economic wellbeing although numeracy skills are weaker. The different groups of students in the school work well together in a very harmonious community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and felt by the students to be central to the life of the school. As one said, 'It creates all sorts of bonds at all sorts of levels which makes the place special, I am glad I came here.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The good relationships teachers have with their students create a positive learning environment. Where teaching is more successful, lessons are varied and students are active learners, excited and involved in the varied tasks with information and communication technology well used to support learning. In lessons where teachers talk for too long and there is a limited range of teaching and learning styles, students easily become bored. Teachers do not always use information on performance consistently to plan for the diverse needs of students. Students' work books are usually marked regularly. The school has appropriate assessment procedures but these are not always

¹ 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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used consistently to give students feedback or inform lesson planning.

The new Key Stage 4 curriculum is well designed and personalised to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. Religious education is included in the core curriculum as part of the school's Catholic ethos and adds significantly to the pastoral life of the school. The school is currently redesigning the curriculum for Key Stage 3 with a greater emphasis on learning and thinking skills. The curriculum is enhanced by the partnerships and support which arise from the school's specialist status which then contributes to the students' experience of work-related learning and their skills. Students are enthusiastic participants in the widening and varied range of both sporting and academic extra-curricular activities.

The excellent care students receive enables them to make the best of the opportunities the school offers. The full-time school Chaplain contributes significantly to students' emotional well-being while supporting the pastoral programmes. The school draws in services from other agencies as needed to ensure students' diverse needs are met.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear drive from a dedicated headteacher, respected by staff, students and parents alike, to improve all aspects of the school. The extended senior team is now providing extra capacity to focus more effectively on improving teaching and learning, especially in the weaker subjects such as mathematics, and refining the school's monitoring and evaluation systems. Whole-school development planning is tightly focused on outcomes for students and is continually revisited and updated. Most managers routinely make use of the outcomes of secure monitoring procedures to plan for successful improvements. Target setting is increasingly challenging and improving outcomes in many areas.

The promotion of respect and valuing others is central to the school ethos. For example, great care is taken to ensure new students are looked after, for, as one parent commented, 'this ensured my son is the happiest he has ever been in school'. The school maintains excellent communications with parents through strategies such as a parents' forum and the headteacher's 'Open Door' policy. Safeguarding procedures are robust and as a result students feel very safe. The governing body has a good understanding of its role in supporting and challenging the school. Governors are reflective and always consider and evaluate the most effective way they can work with

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the school. The school has made good use of funding to develop the new learning environment.

St Wilfrid's is a strongly faith-based school, the strong emphasis placed on promotion of equality and elimination of discrimination has created a thoroughly integrated community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Sixth form

Sixth form students are good role models for the rest of the school. The numbers of students in Year 11 staying on into the sixth form is increasing. Students make good progress and achieve examination results that are well above those found nationally, even when taking into account a slight dip in 2009. Students are well taught, especially in lessons where teachers are good subject specialists who use their knowledge to involve students in discussing and enlarging upon their own thoughts and ideas. Lessons are well structured to ensure students' progress can be assessed to give an accurate picture of the current standard of their work.

The good curriculum offers a wide and growing range of courses. Good liaison with other providers is widening the range of courses available as students move between the institutions involved.

The excellent care and support enjoyed by students in the main school continues into the sixth form. Students value and appreciate the work done by the school to ensure that their different needs are met and in supporting them, for example, in their university applications. The introduction of an agreed contract between the student, the

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school and parents has been very successful in improving attitudes to their studies. Students participate in an extensive range of activities both in and out of school. They act as mentors to younger students and are involved in challenging activities out of school through their community service.

New leadership of the sixth form is having a significant impact on improving outcomes. This is being achieved through regular monitoring of the student contracts and high attendance. Students are now more readily held to account for their commitment to independent study. Regular contact with parents has established strong links with the school that students find very supportive.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

In comparison with most secondary schools, an average number of parents and carers returned a response to the questionnaire. The response was very strongly supportive of the school with every return agreeing, unusually, that they were happy with their child's experience at the school. A very small minority felt that the school did not help their child to have a healthy lifestyle, an issue with which the students agreed in responses to their questionnaire. Inspection evidence found little evidence to support this. Almost all the parents felt their child was making enough progress in the school, a view that was not entirely shared by the inspection team. A few parents were concerned about communicating with the school and helping them to support their child's learning but there was little evidence that these were widespread concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Wilfrid's Catholic Comprehensive School 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 920 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	54	50	45	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	49	56	49	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	46	54	49	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	46	57	52	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	44	61	55	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	39	61	55	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	29	69	62	11	10	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)	42	39	63	58	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	41	60	53	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	37	62	57	6	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	29	71	65	5	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	50	46	56	51	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	59	46	41	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



2 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic School, Crawley, RH11 8PG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and meeting with you. We were particularly impressed by the pride you take in your school. This letter is to tell you what we found; you may also like to read the full report.

- St Wilfrid's is a satisfactory school that is improving with many good and some outstanding features.
- Sixth form provision is good and students make good progress.
- In the main school you make satisfactory progress overall. Your achievement is much better in English GCSE than in mathematics GCSE.
- Your achievement is improving in other subjects such as science because the school has improved the curriculum and the new courses are much better suited to your needs.
- You tell us you feel really safe in the school and you enjoy your lessons when they are lively and interesting.
- You really enjoy school and your attendance is high especially in the sixth form.
- You make an excellent contribution to the school and are keen to take on extra responsibilities both in school and outside in your parishes and the wider community.
- The school takes excellent care of you. You know that the staff care for you as individuals and there is always someone to help if needed.
- Many of your teachers plan for lessons that will keep you interested but some do not always give you enough opportunities to be more involved in your learning. When your books are marked teachers do not always give you enough information on how to improve your work.
- The headteacher and his staff are committed to making sure you are always well cared for and able to fulfil your potential.

We have asked the school to look at the following areas to help you to improve:

- Improve your achievement in mathematics by encouraging you to be more actively involved in your lessons; making sure teachers make better use of information on

your performance to plan lessons.

- Plan your lessons to include a good range of different learning activities that you will find interesting and engaging.
- Make sure all teachers use the school's assessment systems consistently so you understand the levels you are reaching and know what to do to improve your work.

We wish you well for the future.

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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