

All Hallows Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125315
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315235
Inspection dates	19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Mr Paul Armitage

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	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1278
Sixth form	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Bradley
Headteacher	Mrs E C Lutzeier
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Weybourne Road Farnham GU9 9HF
Telephone number	01252 319211
Fax number	01252 328649

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement and standards of students, the response of management to weaknesses in students' achievement; students' personal development; the curriculum; and some of the care and support provided by the school. Evidence was gathered from visiting classes; looking at examples of students' work; a review of school documentation; and discussions with students and representatives from governors, senior and middle management. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were unjustified. Consequently, these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is a larger than average Catholic comprehensive school with students mainly from Surrey and north Hampshire. Students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Students are predominantly White British with the remainder from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. There is strong representation from the Nepalese community linked to military backgrounds. A higher proportion of students than usual are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of students who have learning difficulties including dyslexia, autism, and behavioural, emotional and social problems is about average. The overall ability of students who join the school in Year 7 is above average and for those who join the sixth form in Year 12, it is below average. Attendance is well above average. The school has technology college status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's overall effectiveness is good.

In recent years, the academic standards achieved by many students in Years 7 - 11 have been significantly above the national average. There has been variation between subjects but taken as a whole, results have been consistently high. In the sixth form, standards are average but with some very promising recent improvement.

Overall, students' progress is good even though, in both Key Stages 3 and 4, some individual students do not progress as well as expected. The school is working hard to address this, looking particularly at how data on students' performance can be used more effectively to help teachers target teaching and learning better. In the sixth form, students' progress is good, particularly for those taking the Vocational Certificate of Education.

Students' personal development is outstanding. They clearly grow in confidence as they grow older; they are reflective and thoughtful and develop a better understanding of themselves and others. They are capable of justifying moral standpoints. Students work well together - the frequent collaborative work in class as well as the way they sometimes assess each other's work are two examples of this excellent collaboration. Cultural development is impressive with extensive participation in music, art, drama and dance and evidence of the celebration of other cultures. For example, their responses to presentations by Nepalese students on Nepal and the celebration of the Chinese New Year and religious festivals showed their thorough enjoyment and appreciation. An outstanding feature is the way in which students of other faiths are made to feel welcome in the school but draw on the Catholic ethos to help them grow as people.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is clear that teachers want their students to do well and students acknowledge this. Students say that teachers are always willing to help. Students learn well; they are good listeners and are also very keen to be involved in their learning - they like doing things. Teachers monitor the performance of students very closely and adjust their teaching accordingly; this is particularly supportive for those with greater needs. Both inspectors and teachers note that students need to be given more opportunities to pose their own questions and find out the answers. Students are well informed about their progress towards their targets. Those at risk of failing are effectively identified and action is taken to support them.

The curriculum is outstanding. In recent years, different routes have been introduced to provide students with a curriculum more tailored to their needs; for example, workplace learning and vocational studies. There are opportunities for fast-tracking more able students for example, in statistics and in religious education where Year 11 students take AS theology. Extra-curricular provision is extensive; sports opportunities and take-up is very good. The arts are well-represented in musical groups, an orchestra and choirs. There are also many clubs; for example science and the debating society, and opportunities for travel - such as the recent trip to northern Italy.

The way in which students are cared for is outstanding. Students adopt safe practices and feel safe. They participate well in physical education and sports; acknowledge the positive steps to introduce healthy food in the canteen; move carefully about the school and observe safety procedures, for example, in science. Behaviour in class is generally excellent; there are a few exceptions which are dealt with well. Bullying and other forms of intimidation are also dealt with effectively. There are excellent links with outside agencies and procedures for child protection are in place.

Students make a lively contribution to the school and outside community. Sixth formers mentor younger students; some act as reading partners with Key Stage 3 students with the result that younger students become more confident. There is an effective school council and prefect system. There is a substantial amount of fund raising for charity. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being; for example in work experience, the Young Enterprise scheme, careers advice, and in personal, social and health education.

The quality of leadership and management is good with outstanding features. The first of these is the high quality leadership provided by the headteacher. This is critical to the success of the school and is acknowledged by all. She has a clear, well-informed vision, which she successfully conveys to staff so that there is the high degree of collegiality among all levels of staff. The second outstanding feature is the fact that governors and managers at all levels know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well and have good plans for the development of the school. This was very clear not only in the good quality of the school's self-evaluation but also in the openness and frankness with which governors and staff discussed issues with inspectors. They have addressed the issues for development raised in the last report; they have excellent capacity to address the one key issue this time and to ensure that the school improves further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Standards are average but because of students' lower than average starting points when they begin the sixth form, their progress is good. There has been steady improvement over the past three years. Part of the reason is the successful induction programme which helps students select the right courses. A very good feature is the low drop-out rate; virtually all students who start in the sixth form finish their courses. Students are very successful in gaining places in employment, further, and higher education. Sixth formers participate fully in community life. A good example, linked to the school's technology college status is that they help with technology days for local primary schools.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify and address the reasons why some students do not progress as well as expected.

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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?	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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	3
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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1	1
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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

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

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	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	No

Annex B



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

02 April 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of All Hallows Catholic School, Farnham, GU9 9HF

As you know, we recently inspected your school. We met a good number of you, visited classes and looked at examples of your work. We also spoke to your headteacher, governors and other members of staff. You were very helpful, answered a lot of questions and I would like to thank you for your patience.

When we spoke with groups of you, you were very certain that you have a good school. In particular, you mentioned your teachers, saying how encouraging and helpful they are. You said that your school is a safe and happy place and that people get on well together. You mentioned the absence of racism and said that bullying is dealt with effectively. You also said the curriculum offers you helpful choices and there are plenty of things to do in outside the classroom. My fellow inspector and I worked hard to look at all these things and we agree with you. You go to a very good school which is led very well by your headteacher, the governors and other staff.

There is one area where we and your teachers feel you can improve and we would very much like you to work with them to sort out the problem. You have very good GCSE and other results in Years 7 - 11 but the statistics for your school suggest that some of you could be doing even better. A number of you are not making quite the progress expected. This is something you need to explore, perhaps in school council? So your point for improvement is:

- identify and address the reasons why some of you do not progress as well as expected.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your help during our visit and may I wish you good luck in your future careers.

Yours sincerely

Paul Armitage
Lead Inspector