

St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College: With Speech and Language Resource

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108297
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	377731
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Bernard Campbell HMI

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,778
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Green
Headteacher	Michael Pyle
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2007
School address	Cutsyke Road Featherstone Pontefract WF7 6BD
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 57 lessons taught by 57 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff, and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised the school's plans, records, analysis of data and self-evaluation. Inspectors took account of 388 parental questionnaires, 66 staff questionnaires and 150 pupil questionnaires. Four responses were available from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) which informed the planning of the inspection.

Information about the school

St Wilfrid's Catholic High School is a much larger-than-average secondary school with a large sixth form. A new headteacher took up post in September 2010. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion of students that are supported by school action is a little above average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, including those with a physical disability, is also a little above average. The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs, managed by the local authority. This currently caters for 11 students with speech and language difficulties. The school met the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It promotes students' good achievement and strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students and staff demonstrate mutual respect and a strong commitment to achievement which contributes to a positive climate for learning and good behaviour. The school is not outstanding because of some inconsistency in achievement between subjects, a lack of sharpness in monitoring and evaluation and because teaching is good rather than outstanding.
- Achievement is good. Attainment at GCSE is above average. At GCSE, students achieve well in English, science and modern foreign languages which is a school specialism. Achievement is less strong in mathematics, history and geography. The sixth form is good. Students achieve well at A level. There is some inconsistency in the performance of different subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Some teaching is satisfactory and a smaller proportion is outstanding. Relationships are good and the purposes of lessons are clearly outlined so students know what they are doing and why. In satisfactory teaching, planning does not sufficiently meet the range of students' needs; there is not enough opportunity for active engagement and the use of assessment data is not sufficiently effective.
- Behaviour and safety are good and are well managed. Exclusions are low. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour and most students engage well in learning. There is little bullying and students feel safe. Attendance is high.
- Leadership and management are good. The good capacity for further improvement is demonstrated by the good track record in consolidating good achievement, behaviour and attendance. Since the previous inspection, achievement has improved in the sixth form. Improvements to the curriculum have been well led. Professional development has improved aspects of good and satisfactory teaching and performance management is well linked to school priorities. However, a few inconsistencies remain due to insufficient rigour in

the monitoring and evaluation of students' progress in the sixth form and in the targeting of professional development to accelerate improvements in satisfactory teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation and professional development are more rigorously targeted to tackle instances of weaker student progress and to improve satisfactory teaching.
- Reduce inconsistencies between subjects in the sixth form by:
 - sharpening the monitoring and evaluation of students' progress to improve the quality of provision.
- Further improve attainment and progress in GCSE mathematics, history and geography.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - consistently using assessment data to provide appropriate challenge and ensuring that activities more frequently meet the different learning needs of students
 - making sure that all lessons actively involve students and promote their independence, with more imaginative use of information and communication technology
 - improving the consistency of marking to inform students how to improve
 - increasing the use of peer and self-assessment to enable students to take more responsibility for their learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

A high proportion of students gain five or more GCSEs at grades A*–C. Attainment is above average in English and average in mathematics with an improving trend. The reasons for lower than average results in history and geography in 2011 were identified by the school and acted upon and there is evidence of improved performance by the current Year 11. A higher-than-average proportion of students study a modern foreign language and gain above average results. Overall, all groups of students make good progress from their starting points. Students make better progress than average in English and average progress in mathematics. Evidence from the tracking of progress and the analysis of GCSE results shows that students with special educational needs make good progress overall. The 11 students in the speech and language resource are on course to meet their challenging targets in almost all subjects.

Achievement in the sixth form is good. Over the last three years students have generally made good progress. However, there is some inconsistency between subjects. For example, in 2011 students made good progress in chemistry and

history but weaker progress in English and social science subjects. Results from externally marked modules show improved progress in social science subjects in 2012. The school identified that some students had been placed on courses that they were not suited to, particularly in the social sciences, and this has been rectified by providing more vocational courses at level 3 for the current Year 12. The minority of students following vocational courses make satisfactory progress and there is a trend of improvement on these courses.

Students are willing to learn. They are respectful and work cooperatively. In good learning, for example in science, they develop their reasoning by working out general principles from specific examples. More-able students are often thoughtful and articulate and are willing to explore ideas and are keen to extend their knowledge. In some lessons, for those with special educational needs or with weaker literacy skills, students develop their self-esteem and are well-motivated to engage in discussion which helps them to improve their literacy skills and understanding of the subject. In a few lessons, students are not sufficiently clear what they need to do to succeed when models and explanations of how to achieve are not provided. Occasionally, students are passive and compliant because lessons lack pace and challenge or are dominated by teacher-talk. Almost all parents and carers said that their child is making good progress and most said their child's particular needs were met. Inspectors found that students usually make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is typified by positive relationships and well structured lessons. In the most effective lessons, clear explanations of the concepts being studied are given, with good reference made to assessment criteria. Well-designed activities enable students to be actively involved. Information about students' prior attainment is used to match tasks and strategies to their needs and ensure the right level of challenge. Students are therefore well equipped to make progress. Their learning is rigorously checked throughout lessons with adjustments made in light of the findings. Students therefore learn well. In good lessons, for example in English, the teachers' methodical approach and good use of praise encourage students' thinking and extend their use of language. In a very successful Year 13 drama lesson the teacher's enthusiasm and expert insights led to high involvement and deep understanding of text and character.

Such features are not as evident in the less effective lessons. Information about the prior attainment of students is not always taken into account when planning lessons, so students' work is sometimes not adjusted for their different abilities or targets. On occasion, activities do not promote enough active involvement to allow students to develop their independence. Occasionally the pace in lesson is too slow. The information and communication technology available is not always utilised fully to add interest or to aid learning.

Students know their targets well and much marking of work provides detailed and constructive feedback to them on how they are doing and how to improve. However, not all written and verbal feedback is as helpful. Peer and self-assessment are used well to deepen students' understanding, but the use of these tools could be extended more widely.

The curriculum is being adapted well to ensure a greater focus on developing students' literacy skills, with further training for all staff planned. Some good examples of the promotion of students' literacy and oral communication across different subjects were seen during the inspection, but opportunities to do so were also missed. Teaching and other activities such as tutor periods make a positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, students are provided with opportunities for personal reflection at the start of the day; lessons provide opportunities for students to work with their peers and to value each other's contributions and the art and literature of other cultures are studied. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said they thought their children are well taught. Inspection evidence supports these views, but found that this is not the case in every lesson.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most students and their parents and carers believe that behaviour is good. Inspectors agree. The behaviour of students in lessons and around the school site is good. Pupils are considerate, polite, show respect for adults and their peers. They value their learning and appreciate the support they receive from staff. Teachers' expectations of good behaviour in lessons are high and students cooperate well. The analysis of behavioural incidents is effective and leads to prompt action to support good behaviour. Scrutiny of behavioural records shows that behaviour over time is good. The school is caring and inclusive. Students with a diverse range of needs are integrated into mainstream lessons and thrive. This includes students with speech, language or literacy difficulties, some with learning difficulties, some with English as an additional language and those with challenging behaviour. As a result, all groups of students develop a positive attitude to learning. Exclusions are low. Incidents of bullying in any form or racism are rare. There are effective procedures in place to support students reporting incidents of bullying and to prevent further incidents occurring. Students feel safe. There is a good range of places students can go to for additional support. They develop a good awareness of the dangers of cyber-bullying, and drugs and substance misuse. High attendance and low persistent absence reflects well on students' enjoyment of school and commitment to learning.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides firm leadership and his approachable and open style is appreciated by students, staff and governors. He and the senior leadership team have introduced major curriculum reform which has been thoughtfully designed to better meet the range of student needs in the main school and the sixth form. The introduction of foundation tier learning for students in Years 7 and 9 whose circumstances make them most vulnerable and slower learners is providing positive support. Additional provision to support literacy skills in other years has been introduced effectively but is at an early stage of development. The school carefully tracks the progress and behaviour of different groups and promotes equality by ensuring that no groups underachieve. A high proportion of students of all ages and backgrounds enjoy the good range of enrichment activities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

In the sixth form, effective action has been taken to overcome identified issues of underachievement by raising the entry requirements to improve students' chances of success. In addition, the extended range of vocational provision in the sixth form builds more effectively on Key Stage 4 and provides a better match of courses to students' abilities and interests. Leaders showed the impact of these changes in early signs of improved results in Year 12. However, monitoring and evaluation in the sixth form has not been sufficiently rigorous to minimise inconsistencies between subjects.

Regular and comprehensive monitoring of teaching involves a wide range of senior and middle leaders. While it is positive that middle leaders are involved in this process, not all have had sufficient guidance or training on how to judge the quality of teaching and learning. A wide range of courses for professional development is organised which has contributed to improvements in teaching. Some faculties are very active in providing coaching and feedback to tackle identified weaknesses in their subject area. However, the use of bespoke professional development to tackle issues arising from the monitoring of teaching or performance management is not always applied with sufficient consistency and rigour.

The governing body has a new chair and vice-chair and effective procedures have been introduced for all senior leaders to report to governor committees. Governors are increasingly well informed, they understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are closely in touch with school improvements. They are rapidly developing the effectiveness of their role. The school communicates well with parents and carers through its website, frequent newsletters and well-attended annual student progress meetings. A wide variety of strategies is used to engage parents, including team building and study skills workshops for both students and parents new to Year 7. Safeguarding meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



23 March 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College:
With Speech and Language Resource, Pontefract, WF7 6BD**

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn.

We judged that this is a good school. In the questionnaire that you completed most of you said that you are happy at school and staff help you to do as well as you can. These were some of the main things we found in our inspection.

- Achievement at GCSE is good. Attainment is above average. Students achieve well in English, science and modern foreign languages. Achievement is less strong in mathematics, history and geography.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well at A level. There is some inconsistency in the performance of different subjects.
- In your questionnaires most of you said teaching is good and you learn a lot. We agree with you, but we think a few aspects of teaching can be improved.
- In your comments most of you said that behaviour is good, bullying is dealt with well and you feel safe. We agree with you. Your attendance is good too.
- Leaders have created a good climate for learning in the school and are working hard to improve the school further.

To help the school to improve, we have said that senior leaders should do the following.

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation and professional development are more rigorously targeted to improve students' progress and improve satisfactory teaching.
- Reduce inconsistencies between subjects in the sixth form.
- Further improve achievement in GCSE mathematics, history and geography.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching.

I hope you continue to make a good contribution to learning and the life of the school.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

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