

Holy Family Catholic School

1 Shernhall Street, Walthamstow, London, E17 3EA

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 11. They make consistently good progress over time, in all subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Standards remained above average at Key Stage 4 in 2013.
- The sixth form is good. Overall, students achieve well from their different starting points. They are on track to achieve higher results in 2014.
- Pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school's work. This contributes hugely to the sustained good results at the end of Year 11 and to mature young people in the sixth form.
- Teaching over time is mostly good and some of it is outstanding. It is underpinned by a strong approach through which teachers and students share a love of learning and this secures good progress for all learners.
- Senior leaders, staff and governors are totally committed to the common goal of providing high quality education. New systems, which were put in place in September 2013, are helping leaders to keep a close check on students' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Governors are very hands-on in their involvement because they are very proud of this school and are determined to make sure that teaching improves further.
- Pupils behave well, underpinned by a common approach which stresses responsibility and kindness towards others as well as towards oneself. Their safety is catered for. Students are quietly confident and respectful towards one another.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding over time. Books are not consistently marked across subject areas. This means that students do not always know whether they are making good progress or not.
- Low ability pupils, students who have no identified special educational needs and the most able students are not stretched enough beyond what they can do. Therefore, they make slower progress than they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons. Twenty were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team, including the headteacher.
- An extensive scrutiny of pupils' and students' work books was carried out, both during lesson observations and out of the classrooms.
- Meetings were held with: the senior leadership team; the Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment; a number of heads of subject departments; and a few teachers and teaching assistants.
- Inspectors met also with the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative of the local authority. In addition, a telephone conversation was held with an independent consultant who has worked with the school for a number of years on its continuous development plan.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and to students in the sixth form to see what they think of their school. Pupils and students spoken to represented all groups in the school, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Inspectors looked at relevant documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, policies regarding behaviour, attendance, safety and safeguarding, and many others, for example the policy for the provision of special educational needs.
- They took account of the opinions of 41 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- They also considered responses by 43 members of staff who completed the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mina Drever, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Martin Marsh	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Justina Llochi	Additional Inspector
Babrul Matin	Additional Inspector
Howard Dodd	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized secondary school with an above-average-sized sixth form. It operates on two sites, one for Years 9, 10 and 11, the other site for Years 7 and 8 and the sixth form. Students in the sixth form also use facilities on both sites.
- Pupils and students come from 22 different ethnic backgrounds. The largest ethnic groups are Black Caribbean, Black African, Other Whites and White British, in that order.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make up two fifths of the school population and their numbers are well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- Also above the national average is the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding. In this school, eligible pupils are those entitled to free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment.
- The headteacher plays a central role in promoting the school and in developing a range of effective educational partnerships with the aim of providing high quality education. For example, the school works with feeder primary schools in a school-to-school support scheme via the London Schools' Excellence Fund, to train primary schools in science teaching and to provide science education for primary children. It also provides Saturday school programmes with the award of a grant from the SHINE Charity Trust, which was secured through competitive bidding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that all pupils and students make better progress, by:
 - making sure that all teachers set work that is more demanding and challenging to both low and higher ability pupils and students
 - providing consistently high quality marking and feedback across all subject areas so that pupils and students know how they are performing in all their learning all the time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points. They join the school in Year 7 with attainment that is generally below average. Some of them have very complex special educational needs. They make steady and sustained progress and by the end of Key Stage 4 their attainment is above average.
- GCSE results were significantly above the national average in 2013, although fewer pupils than in previous years attained five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Current pupils are on track to attain better results in 2014.
- From 2014 the school plans to enter only the very highest achievers for early examinations, and only after consultations with pupils and parents. In previous years, pupils entered early for examinations were not disadvantaged by this.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well. Although few of them attained the highest grades, they made good progress, in both academic and work-related subjects, in line with their peers nationally and in line with their own targets.
- Since September 2013, there has been a strong recovery in progress in the sixth form and the students are on track for higher attainment in 2014. This is because leaders have introduced more pathways for students to choose from and more individual support on, for example, essay writing and one-to-one discussions on assignments. A course of studies in English and mathematics for those students who did not attain a grade C in GCSE allows them to aim for higher grades.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well as a result of careful care in identifying their needs and providing appropriate individual support. This can include periods of time receiving highly focused support away from their classrooms in a 'nurture' type classroom with a specialist teacher, with intensive work on a one-to-one basis.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make significantly better progress than similar groups nationally. In 2013 the gap in attainment between these pupils and their peers in school increased on previous years; they were behind by about a third of a grade in English and half a grade in mathematics. The progress of the current group this year has put them practically on a par, with a slight advantage in English. They are on track to do as well as other pupils.
- Pupils eligible for support through the Year 7 catch-up funding make good progress because the school uses this funding carefully to help develop their skills in numeracy and literacy. This sets them up well for their future studies.
- Pupils and students who speak English as an additional language achieve very well, significantly above the national average. All ethnic minority groups also achieve well above the average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall and over time. Much learning has taken place since September 2013 and a lot of progress has been made in the development of subject knowledge and understanding of important facts and theories. For example, Year 11 students went from studying atoms in September 2013 to measured forces in neutrons in March 2014.
- Pupils often display skills and talents which show that they have been well taught over time. For example, pupils in one Year 8 English class read out their own speeches, prepared in advance, on areas of prejudice they felt strongly about. The breadth of vocabulary and high levels of literacy, together with very confident and mature delivery, held the whole class, and visitors, in a trance of bewildering admiration.
- Their peers also displayed high levels of critical reflections as they gave feedback to the speakers on many aspects of their presentation, for example their use of persuasive vocabulary, their level of confidence, their voice projections, the strength and/or weakness of their arguments.

- Teaching in the sixth form is good, and some is outstanding, because teachers have very high levels of subject expertise and because they have very high expectations of their students. The students are particularly skilled in assessing each other's work, as in a Year 13 class on movements and equilibrium. Higher ability students have access to additional work which enables them to achieve their potential.
- Literacy is a strong focus in all teaching across all areas of learning and all year groups, including the sixth form. Pupils and students are expected to show that they have reviewed their homework – which is set regularly – and assignments with corrections and, or, additional work as requested by the teachers.
- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not always stretch pupils to try harder work, especially the lower ability groups and the most able pupils and students. In addition, the quality of marking is inconsistent and, as a result, not all pupils understand how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Pupils and students display high levels of commitment and positive attitudes to learning and to doing well. They are supported in this endeavour by a well-coordinated approach to behaviour management, well executed by all adults. In and out of school behaviour is very good. In lessons, disruptive behaviour is uncommon. On the rare occasions that this happens, teachers are quick to tackle it with appropriate measures.
- One well-established measure is the use of the 'Bethany Room', a place where pupils who are encountering difficulties in getting on with their work in the classroom are able to pursue their learning in a supported environment. This is usually temporary until teachers and pupils agree that the pupil's learning behaviour has changed for the better.
- Students are highly positive about their school and are proud to be a part of it. They say they benefit from good teaching and good out-of-school experiences, for example by joining the fire cadets. They love coming to this school and, as result, attendance is above average.
- There are very few concerns expressed by parents about behaviour in the school. Parents are positive about, and supportive of, the measures in place to deal with behaviour incidents.
- There is zero tolerance of bullying of any sort, including cyber bullying and discriminatory language. Any incident is dealt with appropriately and immediately by all staff by applying the very effective systems in place. Parents are involved at all stages of dealing with incidents.
- The school's work in keeping pupils and students safe is good. Leaders and governors have good risk-assessment procedures in place to ensure that pupils and students move between the two school sites safely. Students feel very safe and parents also believe that their children are safe.

The leadership and management are good

- Governors, senior leaders, subject leaders and all staff are working very hard, with good success, to reverse the in-house decline over the last year in attainment, with rapid improvement in achievement across current year groups, including the sixth form. Actions have included the introduction of five pathways from which students can choose to follow studies more suitable to their ambitions.
- The school has good, rigorous and robust systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. Only staff that have fully met all their achievement targets receive promotion and pay awards. In addition to lesson observations by senior leaders, since September 2013 the school has adopted a new and very successful approach. This is beginning to have a strong impact on improving the quality of teaching: mutual observation and evaluation of teaching and learning in groups of three teachers on a six-week cycle.
- Monitoring of pupils' and students' progress has also been strengthened since September 2013 when a new data tracking system was introduced. This is used effectively to see where pupils

and students are on a regular basis. Teaching and support sessions are adjusted as and if necessary.

- Staff are very appreciative of the quality of leadership and the ethos which brings the whole school community together in pursuing common goals. 'I would not teach in any other school,' said one teacher. Teachers are well supported in their professional development.
- As a result of all the above measures, all current pupils and students in all year groups are on track for higher achievement in 2014, including those eligible for the pupil premium. The gap in achievement has now completely closed, according to the school data, as a result of targeted support and better monitoring of progress.
- The curriculum has great breadth and depth to cater for the entire school community. The programme for extended education – through, for example, partnerships with sport clubs, the construction and beauty industries – is carefully designed and monitored for impact on outcomes. Higher ability learners are challenged with an array of exceptional out-of-classroom opportunities which have an impact within the school and beyond. For example, there are university master classes, visits to Oxford and Cambridge universities, visiting speakers and international trips. The new curriculum for September 2014 has been developed in conjunction with pupils and parents, with the aim of offering pathways suitable for all students.
- Very strong principles of love and respect for all human life, regardless of skin colour, backgrounds or creed, play a central role in the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is present in many lessons as part and parcel of learning. For example, a guest speaker to students in Years 9,10 and 11 had great emotional effect on the students who listened with respectful attention to her very emotional experience of the war and the sufferings caused by the concentration camps.
- The school meets statutory safeguarding requirements.
- The local authority has been working with the school on a light touch basis for some years now. It contributes to the school's continuing development at the request of the school, for example in evaluating teaching and helping with teachers' professional development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is very good. Governors understand the school's needs and provide a real challenge and drive for improvement. Governors are very involved with the school, visiting regularly, both formally and informally. They scrutinise examination and progress data with great effect and know exactly where weaknesses and strengths lie, so that they can ask leaders for precise explanations. They are clear that salary progression for staff must link to improvements in students' and pupils' progress. One area in which they have had particular impact is in identifying teachers' specific professional development needs so that they have been able to support both them and senior leaders in providing targeted training. This is the result of them consulting directly with teachers. Governors are constantly vigilant on safeguarding and risk assessment because of movement between the two sites. They keep a very tight budget, but ensure that the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up grant are well spent.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103106
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	440979

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
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	1,160
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs V Fawcett
Headteacher	Dr A Stone
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2011
Telephone number	020 8520 0482
Fax number	020 85200482
Email address	a.stone@holyfamily.waltham.sch.uk

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