



Corpus Christi Catholic College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108096
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 288025
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Philip Jarrett HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Neville Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Leeds
Age range of pupils	11–16		West Yorkshire LS9 0TT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	113 2482666
Number on roll (school)	931	Fax number	113 2350758
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Martin Dowling
		Headteacher	Mr M Woods
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	22–23 November 2006	288025

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Corpus Christi Catholic College is an expanding comprehensive school for pupils aged 11–16, located in the heart of inner city Leeds. It was designated a technology college in 2001. Most pupils are of White British heritage although there is a small number of pupils who have English as an additional language. The school has a specialist base with provision for 20 pupils with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Around three in ten pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is well above average. The school also receives above average numbers of pupils who have statements of special educational needs. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The school is part of the Department for Education and Skills programme, Building Schools for the Future. The headteacher is currently working to support a second Catholic school in a neighbouring authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Corpus Christi Catholic College is a good and improving school. It is popular with students and parents and this is reflected in the significant increase in numbers on roll over recent years. Standards have risen substantially and the college has a good capacity for further improvement.

The college has improved in a number of important respects since the previous inspection. In particular, standards have risen consistently. Attainment is below average on entry to the college. Standards remain below average at the end of Key Stage 3 but have improved steadily over recent years. The unconfirmed results for 2006 are the school's best ever. The improvement at Key Stage 4 is even greater and the number of students who achieved five or more good GCSEs has risen in recent years from 24% to 53%. Although unconfirmed results for 2006 are not quite as good as the previous year, the upward trend remains and standards are close to the national average. All groups of students make good progress, including those with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Students make good progress because of good teaching and an effective curriculum. The best teaching is well planned and involves students fully in their own learning. The curriculum for older students is especially strong and now offers a range of choices, combining academic and vocational courses. Students who might otherwise have become disengaged are motivated by this programme and this is reflected in improved attendance. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is more limited and does not motivate the students as much.

The college has a very positive ethos for learning. Behaviour is good and students respond sensitively to others. Relationships are very good. Bullying is not a significant factor in the school and is well dealt with when it does occur. Parents support the school well: for instance, nearly all of them attended the target-setting day this term. Students are very well cared for. The college monitors their performance systematically and uses this data to provide extra support, when needed. However, students are not clear enough about how to improve their work and the quality of marking and the learning targets identified by teachers should be better.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The college is very well led by the headteacher, ably supported by a good management team and a knowledgeable governing body. The role of middle leaders has developed significantly and they are now much more involved in monitoring performance within subjects. The specialist status of the school has contributed to improvements in the curriculum, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and resources. There are very good links with other schools, organisations, parents and carers. There is no complacency despite much improved standards. The college is open and honest about its achievements and, as a result, the capacity to make further improvements is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop students' understanding of how to improve their work through better marking and clearer learning targets.
- Enhance the curriculum for students at Key Stage 3 in line with existing strengths at Key Stage 4.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to the college are below average, especially in literacy. Many students lack self-confidence and need support, particularly in developing independent learning skills. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 remain below average. However, they have risen steadily in recent years and more than the national trend. The unconfirmed 2006 results are the school's best ever and are close to the national average. At Key Stage 4 standards have risen substantially. In 2001, 24% of students achieved five or more A* to C GCSE grades: by 2005 this had risen to 53%, in line with average figures. The unconfirmed results for 2006 are not quite as good but remain close to the national average.

Achievement is good. The evidence available is variable but mostly confirms good progress by students. For instance, the progress made by Year 11 students last year placed the school in the top 25% of schools nationally. The school sets challenging targets and usually achieves them. No group of students performs less well than any other. For instance, the gap between the boys' and girls' results at GCSE is less than average and evidence from lessons and performance data confirms that students with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities also do well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students is good with some outstanding features. The school's very strong ethos has a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of students. Students enjoy learning, especially at Key Stage 4, and want to do well. The improvement in attendance, which is now in line with the national average, reflects these broadly positive attitudes. Students feel very safe and secure, partly as a result of the high quality of care.

As a result of numerous initiatives by the college, students develop a clear understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise. The year group councils provide students with an important voice in the life of the college. Students play a role in the college in other ways. For instance, a very effective initiative, proposed by the students themselves, is the 'Changes Group' which provides support and guidance to students who need it. Older pupils have a wide range of opportunities to engage in tailor-made work experience, enterprise projects and careers guidance which add significant support to their future economic well-being.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and embodies the Catholic heart of the college. Students exhibit a healthy respect and tolerance for others. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Relationships are very good. Students contribute to the local and wider community in a number of ways. Their awareness of others is shown by the fact that they have raised a significant amount of money to help build a dining room for a school in Tanzania.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall. Students are positive in their attitudes towards learning. They are keen to learn and well motivated, especially the older students. However, many younger students lack self-confidence and need support to develop their learning skills.

The strengths of good teaching are clear. The best lessons are well planned with a range of activities that promote good pace. Lessons begin smartly with lively activities that engage pupils and make them want to learn. The most effective teachers set high expectations and challenge pupils, including the higher attainers, to extend their learning. Teaching for students with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and well matched to their individual and extremely varied needs. The lessons observed that were satisfactory had weaknesses in planning with too little emphasis on clarifying and reviewing students' learning.

The college involves students productively in giving feedback on teaching and learning. It is currently seeking to improve assessment. There is evidence of successful practice within good lessons. Students know about their current levels of performance and their predicted grades. However, most pupils do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in subjects and how to improve. This partly stems from weaknesses in marking. Teachers mark in quite different ways both across the school and within departments and too little marking gives clear feedback on areas for development and next steps for students. A few departments have begun to set curricular targets but the quality and value of these targets varies greatly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall, with particular strengths at Key Stage 4. It is broad, balanced and regularly evaluated. The curriculum has developed since the previous inspection, especially in ICT and vocational education.

As students move up the school, opportunities widen and in Years 10 and 11 there are flexible pathways that help them to pursue courses that are appropriate to their personal needs. Students respond positively to this curriculum since it matches their needs well. The good range of extra-curricular opportunities, especially in sport and the arts, makes a positive contribution to personal development and healthy lifestyles.

The specialist technology college status has helped the college to improve its vocational and work-related courses, allowing older students to choose from a range of courses. The vocational pathway remains open to all. The most able students can select a wide range of academic courses that enable them to achieve well. There are good enrichment activities, especially for gifted and talented students. The curriculum is flexible enough to meet the needs of all students at Key Stage 4 and those students who attend the specialist unit have a curriculum that is especially well shaped to develop their abilities.

Students respond more enthusiastically to the curriculum at Key Stage 4. The curriculum provided for younger students lacks the breadth and personalised learning provided for older students and links with primary schools to improve literacy skills are underdeveloped.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall with some outstanding features. The school receives a wide range of pupils with different needs. Parents confirm that the quality of care for all students is very high. Students also recognise this. As one student said, 'Teachers and pupils have a special bond at Corpus Christi so everyone works for each other.' Students who attend the specialist unit are well integrated into the college and provided with effective support.

Health and safety procedures and child protection systems are fully in place: staff have been appropriately trained. The provision for students' personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good and plays a significant role in their personal development. The college tracks students' progress systematically and well. It knows how well individuals and groups are performing and acts accordingly. Underperformance is quickly identified. Students receive good advice about courses and careers.

This means that some aspects of care and guidance are excellent. However, the good practice in analysing data has not yet been extended to help students understand how to improve their work at subject level. In addition, although the college has improved its pastoral curriculum for older students, form tutor time is not always well used.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Standards have improved markedly over recent years. The college understands its strengths and weaknesses well. Development planning is comprehensive and effective. The focus on self-evaluation has helped to improve middle leadership. The performance of students, teachers and departments is very well monitored.

The governors, who are very well led by an experienced chair, are able to challenge senior managers because of the high quality of information they receive. The whole process of action planning involves governors well and this gives them a detailed insight into the school. Managers have improved accommodation and ICT resources

considerably since the previous inspection. However, many classrooms are small and facilities for sports and physical education, including dance and drama, are limited. The technology specialist status has helped ensure that workshop accommodation and resources for ICT are very good. The college collaborates very effectively with local schools, colleges and the parents.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The leadership of the college by the headteacher, ably supported by his senior team, is very good. The college's financial management is prudent and students' achievement is high. Consequently, value for money is good.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

My three colleagues and I very much enjoyed meeting you during our recent inspection.

Thank you for being so friendly and for talking to us so openly about the college.

We were pleased to see Corpus Christie is a good school with some things that are outstanding. Most of you behave very well and are keen to do your best. We thought you were very polite and respectful. You told us that you like coming to school and feel safe.

Examination results have improved a lot over recent years. All of you make good progress. This is partly because you are so keen to learn and partly because most of the teaching is good. You do especially well in lessons where teachers involve you in learning and make you think. However, many students are not very sure how to improve their work. We were pleased to see that students from the specialist unit also do well. The school is successful in providing a good curriculum for you, especially at Key Stage 4 where there is a good choice of courses, including some outside school.

The school is well managed and parents and carers are very appreciative of the hard work of all members of staff. They say that you are especially well looked after and that staff care for you well. Some of the students play an important role in the school, like those students we met in the 'Changes team'. We were also impressed with the help you have given for a school in Tanzania and the money you raised for them. Well done. The inspection team is confident that the headteacher and his colleagues know how to make the school even better. We have suggested that the college might be able to improve two things:

- better marking so that students know how to improve their work, and
- the range of the Key Stage 3 curriculum (to make it as good as the curriculum for older students).

Thank you for your help in the inspection and for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you.