

# The Holy Family Catholic College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103106
<b>Local Authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	308223
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gill Close HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1074
6th form	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs V Fawcett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr A Stone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	1 Shernhall Street Walthamstow London E17 3EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8520 0482
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8521 0364

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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

Students come from a wide catchment area within Waltham Forest and beyond. Three quarters of them are from minority ethnic groups, of which Caribbean and African are the largest, each comprising about one sixth of the students. One quarter of students speaks a first language other than English, and about 50 of them are at an early stage of learning English. While students come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, an average proportion is eligible for free school meals. A smaller percentage than is common has learning difficulties and / or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs. These relate predominantly to dyslexia or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school population is stable with a higher proportion than nationally remaining at the school from ages 11 to 16.

This is a Catholic school that has been a specialist technology college since 2000. It is based on two sites 450 metres apart and is actively involved in planning for a new building on one site. Following a period with an acting headteacher, a new headteacher joined the school this term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The Holy Family is a good school in which many parents have great confidence. The good teaching and support enable students to make good progress and do well in their examinations and tests. They reach above average standards at Key Stage 4, which rose in 2007, representing substantial improvement for boys and students with Caribbean or African heritage. All groups of students make good progress.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the outstanding attendance in the main school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They feel extremely safe from bullying. Behaviour is good although students report some off task behaviour in some lessons. Students understand well how to stay healthy. They contribute to the community but want more account taken of their views. Although they develop some workplace skills well, they do not build the skills of independent learning, such as self-assessment, as effectively. Teaching is good, with many interesting active lessons that challenge students well, but some that are satisfactory and a few that are inadequate. Teachers do not use assessment consistently well to plan lessons that challenge all students. Students work hard and learn well from the lessons and range of support clubs the school offers, in particular prior to examinations. They also benefit from the good care, guidance and support the school provides. Learning mentors assist vulnerable students effectively. Year leaders and curriculum leaders use a range of assessment information to identify and support students at risk of not meeting national standards. The school has rightly recognised a need for its tracking system to provide greater consistency, efficiency and focus on students' progress and has begun to introduce improvements. The curriculum meets students' needs well through a good range of courses, extra-curricular activities and support for those with learning difficulties and / or disabilities or at early stages of learning English.

The good leadership and management are renewing the vision for the school and have accurately evaluated its effectiveness, strengths and areas for development. The school has correctly identified that there is room for a sharper focus on students' progress in the monitoring of lessons and self-evaluation. Together with improvements since the last inspection, these indicate good capacity to improve.

The school's specialism in technology has enriched the curriculum and improved resources for information and communication technology, some of which are used in other subjects such as music and performing arts. Targets have been exceeded at Key Stage 3 and nearly met at Key Stage 4. Links with local schools are good, and include helping a special school to set up a technology department and making bread with children from a primary school.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Students with a wide variety of previous attainment are welcomed and numbers have been rising steadily. Students make satisfactory progress and become mature and confident young people ready to move on to higher education or employment, with the vast majority of those who stay on to Year 13 going to university. Students join the sixth form with attainment slightly below average, and reach standards that are broadly average at AS level and below average at A level. Their performance across subjects and different qualifications is variable. Their low rates of attendance and punctuality are likely

to impair their progress. Although sixth form students do contribute to the school, for example through a reading scheme with younger students or being prefects, they feel strongly that their voice is not heard enough. Teaching is satisfactory. Students believe they are well supported by their teachers and can approach them for help at any time. However, not all lessons offer adequate challenge or develop independent thinking. The curriculum is satisfactory, offering a broad range of subjects to higher achieving students, but there are too few options for those who are not yet ready to study A levels or who want to take vocational courses. The school is aware of this and is planning to meet these needs. Links with a local college extend opportunities and are being further developed. Extra curricular opportunities are very limited and sixth form facilities are in need of improvement, both in quantity and quality. The leadership and management structure for the sixth form is satisfactory and the school has identified a need to review it.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Use sharper monitoring and self-evaluation to raise the quality of teaching, increasing the focus on students' progress.
- Enhance students' independence and contribution to their own learning and school development.
- Increase the consistency, efficiency and focus on students' progress in assessment and tracking to inform teaching and intervention throughout the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Achievement and standards are good. Students enter the school with broadly average attainment and make good progress during Key Stages 3 and 4. The school has successfully worked hard to continually raise standards at Key Stage 4 where they were significantly above average in 2006 and 2007. It has closed the gap between girls' and boys' attainment and between attainment of students with Caribbean or African heritage and others. In some subjects, students are stronger in knowledge and recall than they are in practical skills and understanding, and do not display the independence that underpins success in more advanced studies.

Students who enter the sixth form have slightly below average attainment at Key Stage 4. They make satisfactory progress and reach average standards at AS level, and below average standards at A level. There is wide variation across subjects in the progress they make. In some, they have difficulty synthesising their knowledge and applying it, skills which are needed for higher levels of performance.

Students with language difficulties receive good support in developing their reading, and mentors work closely with students with emotional and behavioural difficulties to help them do well. Early learners of English are supported well and make good progress in learning English and overall.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development and well being are good. Attendance is outstanding in Key Stages 3 and 4 and demonstrates how much students enjoy coming to school. Attendance, although improving, is only satisfactory in the sixth form. There is also poor punctuality to some sixth form lessons.

Students feel extremely safe and secure in school. They know where to find help if they have a concern and regard staff as approachable and supportive. They are confident that the small amount of bullying that occurs is dealt with promptly and appropriately. One student summed up the views of many by saying and;quot;This is a really friendly place where I feel totally safe and very happy.and;quot; Students are polite and courteous and work cooperatively with each other. Although some parents expressed a concern about behaviour and students spoke of some off task behaviour in lessons, the inspection team found behaviour overall to be good with positive relationships between students. However, the number of students excluded from school, although declining, is still high.

Students have a particularly good understanding of how to stay healthy, but students in Key Stage 4 have only one hour per week of physical education and this year those in the sixth form have no opportunities to take part in physical activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good, with students making excellent spiritual development. Students contribute to the school's caring and supportive community for example through the prefect and peer mentoring programmes. The school council is involved in some decision making. Comments from some parents and students indicate that they would like more account taken of their views. The school has recognised that all students are not given sufficient opportunity to participate in the democratic process and school improvement, and has set this as a priority. Students develop some valuable skills for future work and employment as a result of the successful work related learning programme. However, the skills of independent learning and problem solving that they need for their long term success are less well developed.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

In the main school, teaching is strong, particularly in how well students are prepared for examinations and tests, supported by numerous homework and revision clubs. Students learn well because they work hard, are generally attentive in lessons and are determined to achieve good grades. In many lessons, teachers are skilled at engaging and challenging students who, as a result, participate well and are confident and enthusiastic learners. These lessons are well-organised, with a range of interesting activities from which students learn at a lively pace. There is excellent, imaginative teaching in some subjects, but there is also some satisfactory and inadequate teaching, including on occasions when the regular teacher is not available. This often involves work that is too easy or too hard for some students, is not well enough explained or is not given to the students soon enough because the teacher talks for too long. On some

occasions, it leads to some off task behaviour but students usually behave well and relationships with teachers are good.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory. Students have identified that they are not pushed as hard in the sixth form and that they lack the skills to fully utilise the private study time made available to them. In some lessons, particularly in the second year of A level, the teaching does not provide them well with the understanding and skills they need so they make below expected progress.

There are some good examples of students using self-assessment to understand the quality of work they are aiming for. Nevertheless, opportunities are missed in lessons and in homework to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and assessment, and develop independent learning skills. The quality of marking is variable, ranging from helpful, constructive comments to a few ticks, and assessment information is not always used effectively to plan lessons. Learning support assistants help students with English as a second language or learning difficulties and/or disabilities well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school provides a good curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. It works effectively with students and their families to meet each student's needs. There is an increasing range of vocational, applied courses as well as traditional subjects for students to select at age 13 and a strong, accredited, work related strand for all students.

Highly effective additional support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language is given through timetable options and extra-curricular provision. As a result of its specialist status, the school offers a good range of design and technology options for all students. The introduction of citizenship taught by form tutors has been effective, although in Key Stage 4 it has been at the expense of time for personal, social and health education. There is room for more training and monitoring to ensure consistent delivery of these two subjects.

Participation in enrichment activities is high. Students value the wide variety of opportunities in sport, music and drama. They include the vocal club that is the weekly highlight for one student who said, and;quot;it's just brilliant and one of the best things I doand;quot; and the breakfast club which has had a significant impact on punctuality across the school. Students use well the clubs and facilities that support their studies, especially in preparation for examinations and tests, such as homework support and study clubs.

In the sixth form, however, the range of curriculum opportunities is narrower, although improving, and there are few enrichment activities beyond those within students' selected subjects. There are also few opportunities provided for all students to systematically and regularly acquire the skills they need to become successful, independent, life long learners or to contribute more fully to the community.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school's reputation for good care, guidance and support is commented on by many parents who select the school for its caring ethos and consistency of spiritual guidance. Students are well cared for and receive very good and inclusive support. Teachers know them well and the pastoral system of year leaders and form tutors works effectively to monitor and enhance students' welfare and personal development. Many parents praise the communication with the school about their child, but a few cite occasions where this has not worked as effectively as it should. The induction process quickly enables new arrivals to settle in. The school links very well with a range of external agencies to provide support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good intervention from learning mentors ensures that timely short-term provision meets the immediate needs of more vulnerable students who are then supported through any difficulties. Suitable procedures for child protection and checking of staff are in place. A school governor has recently undertaken child protection training to assist in this area through monitoring. Students are well supported in maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Academic guidance is satisfactory overall, with some strengths linked to the provision of additional support to identified students. An achievement project focusing on raising boys' overall academic outcomes has been successful over the last year. Curriculum leaders and year leaders use attainment information effectively to identify students who are not meeting national standards and provide support, particularly as they approach examinations. The wide range of support and revision classes helps them do well. The school correctly identified that systems for recording and tracking progress needed greater consistency, efficiency and focus on progress to ensure that all students are challenged. It has begun to make improvements, including in the information stored centrally and provided on reports to parents.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The new headteacher is successfully creating a renewed vision for the school through consultation and team building. The leadership team and governors are working well together to carry this through to development planning. It builds well on the improved self-evaluation systems put in place by the acting headteacher. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It has correctly identified key areas for development, and led to improvements. Subject departments and year groups have each provided an annual self-evaluation of performance and consequent action plans, although they are not consistent in quality. Targets and intervention have been used well to close gaps in attainment. Teachers are observed in the classroom and underperforming curriculum areas are supported in securing improvement. Nevertheless, there is room for a sharper focus on students' progress in monitoring and self-evaluation to raise the quality of teaching and improve progress.

The governing body has worked hard on plans for a re-built school on a single site, and on the curricular and health and safety issues arising from the delay in securing new accommodation, including lack of disability access to some rooms. It has sharpened its role of challenge and

support. Although the school has faced recruitment challenges, particularly in some subjects, it is fully staffed and deploys its resources effectively to provide good value for money.

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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	3
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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
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	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
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	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

29 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Holy Family Catholic College, London, E17 3EA

Thank you very much for welcoming us when we visited your school, and for all of the helpful information you gave us. We found that your school is a good school and the sixth form is satisfactory. You make good progress to reach above average standards at Key Stage 4. You work hard and attend the many study and revision sessions the school provides. The teaching is good with many interesting lessons, but some that are not so good where some students sometimes become restless. In some subjects, you have good knowledge but do not develop the understanding and independent learning skills that you need for future success. In the sixth form you do better in some subjects than others and make satisfactory progress overall because the teaching is satisfactory.

Your attendance is outstanding in the main school, but satisfactory in the sixth form. You told us that you feel extremely safe from bullying and enjoy school. You understand very well how to stay healthy, although you have only one hour of physical education in Key Stage 4 and no opportunities for physical activities in the sixth form. You told us that you would like more account taken of your views. The school cares for you well so your well-being and personal development are good. It has improved the way it keeps track of your attainment and reports to your parents but knows that further improvement is needed to help you all make better progress throughout the school. You have a range of courses, support and clubs that is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form.

Your school is led and managed well. The headteacher and senior staff have a clear view of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. We have asked them to:

- improve teaching by focusing more on the progress you make when they check lessons and evaluate the school's performance
- help you to become more independent and contribute more to your learning, such as through self-assessment, and to the development of the school
- increase the consistency in assessment and its focus on your progress to help you all to make better progress in lessons and throughout the school.

You can help by thinking hard, taking more responsibility for your learning and deciding how well you are doing in each lesson, and telling staff when you find work too easy or too hard. I wish you success at school and in helping it to get even better.

Yours sincerely

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector