

St Cuthbert's RC Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105845
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	336569
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Palmer 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	1396
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Martin Collins
Headteacher	Dr C Meehan
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
School address	Shaw Road Rochdale Lancashire OL16 4RX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 36 part-lessons and 36 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including policies and records relating to the safeguarding of students. They analysed the responses to questionnaires from 103 parents and carers, 121 students and 64 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and progress at Key Stage 4, particularly in mathematics
- the quality of teaching and learning and how well planning meets individuals' needs
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve behaviour and attendance
- attainment and progress of girls in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

Information about the school

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Business and Enterprise College is a larger than average comprehensive school. Approximately three quarters of the students are of White British heritage; the ethnic mix in the school has increased in recent years with African and Polish heritage students comprising the largest minority ethnic groups; the proportions who speak English as an additional language is lower than the average; currently 163 speak English as an additional language and 58 are at an early stage of learning English. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has achieved several awards including Artsmark, Sportsmark and Leading Aspect awards for transition, enterprise and science tracking.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Cuthbert's is a satisfactory and improving school where most students feel safe and those whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable are well supported and cared for.

Students' academic achievement is broadly satisfactory. Their success in gaining five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average, although there was a dip in 2009 due to poor performance in mathematics. In English progress is exceptionally good but in mathematics it is below expectations. Students from more disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive particularly good care and support.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school rightly identifies teaching as a key priority for improvement and has put in place a range of strategies to support this, particularly in mathematics. These interventions have met with some success, including in mathematics, but improvements in teaching and learning are not sufficiently well embedded in all subjects to ensure that most students make good progress. Students' progress is monitored at all levels but this information is not sufficiently well analysed and used to ensure that teaching is appropriately challenging and provision meets students' needs. In some subjects marking and feedback is good but this is inconsistent and students are not always aware of their targets or how to improve.

Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and disadvantaged students, including those who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive good care, guidance and support. Strong collaboration with key specialist services ensures that students whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable are able to attend school regularly and thrive. The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. A good range of enrichment and extra-curricular provision enhances the curriculum and supports students' personal development. The school has addressed the achievement gap between different groups and this has been met with some success, except in the case of girls who continue to achieve less well than boys in the school and in the sixth form.

The headteacher and governors have a clear and ambitious vision to move the school in the right direction. However, this is not fully embedded at all levels. Overall, self-evaluation is sound, although the monitoring and evaluation of the work of subject departments by middle leaders is inconsistent. Strategic appointments have been made to tackle areas of identified weakness and the governing body is effective in both supporting and challenging the school; hence, capacity for further improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - using information from the assessment of students' progress to ensure that work in lessons meets all students' needs, particularly those of girls
 - increasing the level of challenge in lessons
 - improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback so that students understand clearly what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders consistently and rigorously monitor the quality of provision in their subjects
 - thoroughly analysing tracking data and using this to inform improvement planning in the school and in the sixth form.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

When students arrive at St Cuthbert's in Year 7 their levels of attainment are just below the national average. Since 2007 the percentage leaving school with five or more A* to C grades at GCSE has been broadly in line with the national average. This represents satisfactory progress. Students report that they feel safe and secure in school. Attendance has improved and is now above average but too many students arrive late to lessons. Most students behave appropriately. However, in lessons where they are insufficiently challenged or engaged, low-level disruption slows down learning. Students understand the importance of healthy lifestyles; they participate well in extra-curricular sports but not all choose healthy options in the canteen or bring healthy snacks to school; a few expressed concern that there were not enough healthy options available in school. They contribute to the school and wider community through charity fundraising activities, drama and musical productions but the work of the student council has a low profile and its impact on the life of the school is limited. Students develop their workplace skills through enterprise activities and the great majority leave school to enter the world of work, training or further education. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They engage well with each other regardless of background or ethnicity and they are enthusiastic participants in artistic and sporting activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons teachers use information from the tracking of students' progress to ensure that work meets their needs; they use questioning well to build knowledge and understanding and employ information and communication technology effectively to add pace and interest. When lessons are less effective, able students are not asked to do enough, while for others the work set is too difficult. When this happens, the pace of learning slows; students' attention wanes and they become unsettled. Teachers' assessment of students' work is variable; marking does not always make clear what they need to do to improve.

The school's specialism is beginning to have a positive impact on curriculum provision. Collaboration with primary feeder schools through enterprise education is highly valued by staff and students; the projects help students to take responsibility and develop their workplace skills. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is enhanced by the offer of three diplomas and an 'alternative curriculum' is available to meet individuals' needs. There is a wide range of clubs and activities that support students' personal skills. These include several bands, a choir and dance clubs; and outdoor pursuits, theatre visits and overseas trips such as to the battlefields of Belgium and the site of the Large Hadron Collider at Cern in Geneva.

Excellent transition arrangements ensure that students who join Year 7, or at other times, settle into the school quickly and smoothly. Case studies for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable demonstrate good arrangements with external agencies, and parents and carers, to support individuals' needs. Good careers advice and guidance helps students to follow their aspirations and contributes well to the very

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low numbers who leave the school without access to work, training or further education. Although most students told us that they enjoy school, a small minority reported that they were unhappy and did not feel that teachers cared for them or listened to their views.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and governors are committed to the school and have worked hard to improve outcomes for students. The headteacher's ambitions for the school are clear to all of the staff and are responded to by most. Monitoring is a regular feature but does not always bring key issues and priorities into sharp focus. Middle managers show growing confidence and skill in their roles. However, for some, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision is at a developing stage. Leaders and managers are effective at tracking students' progress, including for different groups, but are not consistently analysing the data and using this to inform strategies for improvement. Strategies are in place to narrow the gap in progress between different groups and there is evidence of improvement in some areas where the school has targeted its actions.

Parents and carers are broadly appreciative and supportive of the school, although some feel that communication about their children's progress is infrequent and unhelpful. The school has developed partnerships that have led to improvements in curriculum provision and work with outside agencies has had a positive impact on the care and support of students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school has analysed its role in assisting community cohesion. There is active liaison work within the local community and some overseas links but fewer opportunities for students to relate to the range of different groups within the United Kingdom. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Individual roles are targeted to the specific expertise of governors and they are effective in their safeguarding of staff and students. The school has sound finances and is providing satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with attainment levels that are broadly in line with the national average and they make satisfactory progress. There has been a decline in performance since 2007 and this has prompted the school to develop a more objective and systematic analysis of performance. Results are better in Year 12 than in Year 13 and there is some inconsistency in performance in different subjects. Girls achieved less well than boys in 2009. Students develop sensible and mature attitudes during their time in the sixth form.

The curriculum and programme of extra-curricular activities meet the needs of most students. The care, guidance and support on offer are highly valued by students and help to prepare them well for their next steps. Teaching and assessment are sound with no major weaknesses. Leaders and managers know the strengths and areas for development and have plans in place aimed at improving students' outcomes. However, current monitoring and evaluation procedures are not sufficiently systematic or rigorous to ensure that this will happen quickly.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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Views of parents and carers

Approximately 7% of parents and carers gave their views and most responses were supportive of the school and its management. However, 16% of respondents did not feel that the school met their children's particular needs. A similar number did not feel that their children were making enough progress at the school and that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. Of those who expressed a view, 88% were happy overall with their children's experience at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at St Cuthbert's RC Business and Enterprise School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,396 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	38	56	54	7	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	37	59	57	6	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	55	33	32	11	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	36	50	49	13	13	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	32	31	61	59	7	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	27	59	57	11	11	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	27	60	58	9	9	3	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	36	52	50	10	10	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	30	55	53	14	14	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	40	48	47	8	8	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	32	53	51	8	8	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	44	43	49	48	7	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	49	40	39	7	7	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



02 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Cuthbert's RC Business and Enterprise School, Rochdale, OL16 4RX

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school recently. We were pleased to hear that most of you enjoy school and appreciate the opportunities to join in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection with more options at Key Stage 4 to meet your needs. Your attendance is above average but too many of you arrive late to lessons. Most of you feel safe and secure in school and most of you behave appropriately. However, some lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour and this affects your learning and progress.

At the end of the visit we decided that your school needed to improve certain things in order to be more successful. We have asked the school's leaders to make improvements so that you make faster progress and achieve higher grades. You enjoy many of your lessons but for some the work is too difficult, so that you need more support; or not challenging enough, so that you become disinterested. You told us that you learn best when lessons are lively, when your understanding is checked and you are shown how to improve your work. We have asked the school's leaders to check that lessons meet your needs and that you are helped to make good progress.

We want the school to be more involved in checking how well it is doing so that any further improvements can be made to support your progress. You, too, can help the school to improve further by continuing to attend regularly and by arriving to lessons on time.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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