

Saint Cecilia's, Wandsworth Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132173
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	381450
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Carmen Rodney HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
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	920
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Johanna Hudson
Executive Headteacher	Mr Jeffrey Risbridger
Headteacher	Mr Niall Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 40 teachers teaching 39 lessons and met with senior staff, two groups of students and a few sixth form students, a small group of parents, and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the equality, safeguarding and teaching policies, the school improvement plan and the School Improvement Partner's report.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Students' rate of progress during Key Stage 4, particularly in English.
- The extent to which the school meets the needs of all groups of learners.
- The impact of the school's work to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in sustaining improvement.

Information about the school

Saint Cecilia's, Wandsworth is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Since opening in 2003 with 150 students, the roll has increased and the school is heavily oversubscribed. The school serves a diverse community with White British students as the largest ethnic group. The school has a high proportion of minority ethnic groups but few students are at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is average. Although a high proportion of students have a statement of special educational needs, the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The main needs are physical or medical and autistic spectrum disorder.

In 2009, the school entered into a soft federation with Blackheath Bluecoat Church of England School in the London Borough of Greenwich. This partnership will end in August 2012. The school has a main specialism in music with mathematics as a subsidiary.

The school offers a range of extended services and has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Saint Cecilia's, Wandsworth is a good and strongly improving school which offers a well-balanced provision for its students and sixth form students. The school not only consistently supports them very well to attain above average results, but to develop into thoughtful and mature young people who are confident about moving on to the next stage of their education.

Students and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the strong ethos and values of the school; they value its reputation in the local community and beyond and hold it in high regard. A new Year 7 student said, 'I feel at home' while others described it as 'friendly', 'diverse' and 'inclusive'. These comments accurately illustrate the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support provided. They also confirm the high levels of confidence parents and carers have in the school and the outstanding partnership the school has with them.

Leadership and management are good. The senior team drives improvements in a structured way so that all staff have a clear understanding of the strategic vision to accelerate students' progress and give them high quality experiences. Students therefore enjoy coming to school and their attendance is exceptionally high. The good quality teaching, students' positive approach to learning and their good behaviour with impeccable features are important factors that contribute to them achieving well. That said, inconsistencies in teaching remain, which is not always inspiring enough to stimulate a buzz and increase independent thinking. Homework and marking are not set consistently nor with detailed comments to help students to reach a higher level. Furthermore, although assessment and tracking are good, the information is not always used to match work to the needs of individuals and different ability groups.

The school's main and subsidiary specialisms are used well to develop staff expertise and share good practice within the school and beyond. In particular, both subjects are used to support and develop partnership work very well particularly in primary schools and the local community.

Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in tackling the areas for development. In particular, the sharp focus on broadening the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has led to students receiving a range of pathways suitable to their needs. Provision for students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding; it underpins community cohesion and supports the tightly knit school

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community that is responsive to corporate needs and those of individuals and groups.

The strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluating outcomes is integral to the school's development. However, the school is aware that there is still more to do when using performance data to identify students that are potentially at risk of underachieving and in ensuring that provision is carefully tailored to needs to accelerate progress further. Strong leadership and the sustained and strongly improving outcomes mean that the school's capacity for improvement and value for money are good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to accelerate the progress of all groups further, ensure that teachers:
 - use assessment information to match work to the needs of students
 - deliver inspiring lessons that stimulate and promote thinking and increase participation
 - regularly mark work and homework they have set in line with policy, and give students detailed comments to help them improve their work.
- Build on the existing comprehensive tracking information on students' progress to:
 - monitor and evaluate the progress of all groups, in particular, those at risk of underachieving
 - embed more fully decisions about how to adapt provision to meet the needs of individuals and groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students' achievement is good. They enter the school with average attainment but by the end of Year 11, because of good teaching, their high attendance and sheer enjoyment of learning, they attain above average standards and consistently achieve highly in mathematics, English, literature, science and modern foreign languages. The upward trend in results has been sustained over the last four years with the large majority of students gaining five or more GCSE A* – C grades. There was a significant increase in the 2011 unvalidated GCSE results, when the school achieved its best results ever with over 80% of students achieving the higher grades. However, these results mask the variability across subjects and the rate of progress of different groups of students. For example, students consistently make faster progress in mathematics than in English and over one third obtained GCSE grades A*/A in both English literature and mathematics. While students known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve better grades than might be expected nationally, the school is aware that lower attaining girls and some of the very few of mixed heritage and those of Caribbean heritage make slower progress than their peers. The school has identified that the additional curriculum time allocated to mathematics, as a second specialism, is leading to students making faster progress than in English. While the overall trend

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of improvement is strong, learning intervention programmes have been developed to tackle potential underachievement.

Students' understanding of personal safety is outstanding. They are constantly assured about their safety because of the visibility of staff around the school. Students have a strong sense of unity between the different ethnic groups and very much enjoy being part of a small school that advocates moral principles. Relationships are therefore strong. As a result, bullying and racist incidents are rare. Students develop a range of skills that contribute to developing their self-esteem and to them being well informed and involved in local community events and further afield. For example, in 2010, their confidence and clarity in using discussion skills led to them winning the BBC Question Time Award. Personal development is therefore finely balanced with students' academic progress.

Academically, students are well prepared for the next phase of their learning because they use information and communication technology (ICT) adeptly and acquire a good range of business and financial skills. Students have well-developed social skills, are outward looking, and are very keen to explore beyond their given responsibilities. Although they have begun to influence decisions, the school council does not have a budget and their voice does not permeate all aspects of provision.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is effective in helping students to make good progress. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and skilful questioning are used expertly to engage students in

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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their learning. The positive learning ethos is a key factor to very good classroom management and students' responsive approach and often impeccable behaviour in lessons. All teachers have high expectations of their students, though in a minority of lessons, they do not give students enough opportunities to use talk to approach their learning and this tends to stifle independent thinking and creativity. Furthermore, assessment is not always used well to challenge the more able students and pace is too moderate. That said, teachers know their students very well and are very supportive. In outstanding and good lessons: planning is very well structured with timed activities; demonstrations are used very well to illustrate the skills students are expected to achieve; there is readiness to using talk to review and explore learning; assessment underpins learning, and students know what to do to make better progress. In addition, a range of group work is used and resources, including ICT, are skilfully used and matched to learning objectives.

The clear marking policy is not always followed and as a result, there are inconsistencies in marking class work and homework regularly with detailed comments and clear guidelines to help students improve their work. In lessons, peer assessment and questioning are used often to review and consolidate learning.

The curriculum is kept under scrutiny and since the previous inspection, it has been broadened to meet the needs of students and accelerate their progress. The range of courses offered at Key Stage 4 and the breadth of enrichment activities have led to increased personalisation of the curriculum. Nevertheless, students and parents are keen to have more pursuits linked to sports.

Students, like their parents, feel that the school is highly supportive of their learning and personal development. Strong links with external partners and outstanding pastoral care mean that the school is highly responsive to meeting the needs of all students within its care. Exemplary guidance, combined with strong ethos and moral values, is used very well to provide support during crises, as occasioned during recent bereavements. The well-targeted support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable contributes to them achieving well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The joint leaders provide strong leadership and have formed around them a coherent and loyal team that articulates the vision of high achievement. There is a clear focus on accelerating students' progress and raising standards. As such, teaching and learning are monitored regularly and rigorously, and there is emphasis on developing practice and using training as well as good practice to improve provision.

The school knows how well it is doing, primarily because the quality of care and guidance, including the monitoring and evaluation of performance data, has improved since the previous inspection. Actions, including performance management, have been taken to begin building on more fully the detailed tracking systems to identify how to intervene and support all groups of students. This is leading to the gap between different groups narrowing each year. It is also ensuring that equality of opportunity underpins all that the school provides for its students. Excellent engagement with parents as partners contributes to effective learning. Parents are responsive to working with the school and their high attendance at planned and informative sessions on provision has increased their knowledge and understanding of how to support and work with their children to achieve better outcomes. This high level of partnership work extends to external partners within the community and beyond, serving to strengthen all aspects of community cohesion, in particular, aspects of faith, working with different ethnic groups and understanding different social and economic situations.

Members of the governing body work very well with the school and are committed to improvement; they ensure that all aspects of safeguarding requirements are fully met; they keep the school's work under scrutiny and work very closely with the joint headteachers. Accountability is therefore a strength and robust procedures are used well to hold staff to account. The school uses its resources well. In particular, planning for improvement is well thought out; it uses its partnership work with others to raise attainment further and develop the skills of aspiring leaders and managers. The school does not stand still; its strategic vision for improvement and the good outcomes provide good and improving value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	2

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tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Sixth form students speak highly about the quality of provision, which is never less than good and supports them in making consistently good progress. The vast majority of Year 11 students stay on in the sixth, which is not only oversubscribed but is seen as a popular destination of choice. The retention rate is exceptionally high. The staying power of students contributes to them achieving examination results that are marginally better than those found nationally enabling the vast majority to go on to higher education, with an increasing number successfully gaining offers to Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

The comprehensive care, guidance and support available in the main school continues in the sixth form so that students are very well prepared for future pathways, prior to entering Year 12 and when preparing applications for universities. Students appreciate the high level of guidance received from their teachers' expertise in supporting them to select routes, guiding them throughout the courses and inducting them into the sixth form. In lessons, students apply themselves earnestly by grappling with difficult concepts when fully challenged to master their work. However, as in the main school, teaching does not have sufficient personalisation and at times, it is overly directed by teachers

Students benefit from a curriculum which offers a wide range of academic and vocational subjects with opportunities to pursue courses of their choice and/or receive specialist and additional support from a partner school. Students are very positive about their experiences and opportunities available to them to develop their leadership skills and talents and work with younger students. Good leadership of the sixth form keeps performance under review and is ensuring that monitoring is developed further to improve outcomes further.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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Views of parents and carers

Almost one quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The responses show that the overwhelming majority are supportive of the school and the small sample of 15 parents and carers spoken to expressed similar views. Just a few did not agree that the school helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence confirms that the school intends to review the provision for enrichment activities, in particular sports, to meet the wishes of parents and all students.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint Cecilia’s, Wandsworth Church of England 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 244 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 920 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	139	57	97	40	5	2	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	154	63	87	36	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	119	49	102	42	12	5	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	89	36	128	52	13	5	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	98	40	128	52	6	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	82	34	129	53	16	7	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	75	31	139	57	21	9	1	0
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)	90	37	119	49	12	5	3	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	75	31	140	57	12	5	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	112	46	114	47	6	2	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	68	28	134	55	17	7	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	137	56	97	40	5	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	140	57	97	40	2	1	1	0

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.

7 October 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Saint Cecilia's, Wandsworth Church of England School SW18 5JR

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to thank you very much for taking part in the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and discussing your views with you about your education. We were impressed with your warmth, politeness and thoughtful comments.

There is no doubt that Saint Cecilia's, Wandsworth is a good and strongly improving school. This is a view that you and your parents share and the inspection evidence fully supports this perspective. The GCSE results obtained in 2010 were above average but in 2011, higher results were attained with 81% of Year 11 students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* – C in all subjects. This is indeed a testament of the school's motto and determination for all of you to achieve good results. The inspection team is confident that the year-on-year improvement will continue.

Your enjoyment of learning is so evident in your attendance, which is exceptionally high. In lessons, time is not wasted. You respect your teachers and respond very well to instructions and even if the pace of lessons is slower than expected, you are still determined to learn. Your behaviour is good and at times it is impeccable in lessons. The staff work very hard to support you and they provide outstanding care and guidance. The diverse community gets on well together and your school is very inclusive. You and your parents are rightly proud of this strength.

Your school is determined to give you a high quality education. We have therefore asked the school to ensure that all aspects of teaching stretch you and support you in making even faster progress through teachers consistently delivering inspiring lessons and marking your work with detailed comments. In addition, we are also asking the school to monitor and evaluate performance data with even more rigour so that all groups can achieve better results.

We are confident that because you hold your school in such high esteem, you will continue to work with the staff to take it to the next level. We wish you and your school all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector

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