



The St Philip Howard Catholic High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 126102
 Local Authority West Sussex
 Inspection number 293473
 Inspection dates 10 January 2007
 Reporting inspector Gehane Gordelier HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Elm Grove South
School category	Voluntary aided		Barnham
Age range of pupils	11-18		Bognor Regis
			West Sussex PO22 0EN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01243 552055
Number on roll (school)	751	Fax number	01243 552900
Number on roll (6th form)	138		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs E Bedford
		Headteacher	Mr D J Todd
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002		

Age group	Inspection date(s)	Inspection no.
11-18	10 January 2007	293473

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The St Philip Howard Catholic High School is smaller than the average comprehensive school although the number of students on roll is increasing steadily. A relatively low proportion of students are eligible for free school meals. Few students are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is high, although the percentage of students with a statement of educational needs is below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school **Grade: 2**

This is a good school with a Christian ethos in which students develop well academically, socially and spiritually. Leaders and managers make very effective use of self-evaluation procedures to ensure they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and those areas which would benefit from further improvement. Consequently, good leadership and management have led to improved curriculum provision as well as the quality of teaching and learning being good overall. As a result students make good progress and standards are above average by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. The results for 2006 show that by the end of Key Stage 4 students made outstanding progress. One parent stated 'I have been impressed with the standard of teaching and learning across the curriculum and throughout various year groups. The caring ethos of the school is constantly apparent in how pupils are treated and how they are encouraged to treat others.'

The good relationships amongst staff and students contribute to students' enjoyment of school. There are also high levels of care, guidance and support, and pastoral care is particularly strong. However, the quality of academic guidance is not always equally high, as marking varies too much throughout the school and teaching does not always take sufficient account of the most effective teaching and learning styles.

The good links with parents, outside agencies, other schools and a local college are used effectively to support students' personal development and well-being as well as their academic needs. There is particularly good support for those who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties and disabilities. As a result these students feel well cared for, receive helpful guidance and make good progress.

The vast majority of students are very polite, tolerant and respectful and their personal development is good. The school is developing effective strategies to help meet the needs of the small number of students who at times find it difficult to behave.

The improvements made since the last inspection show the school has good capacity to make further progress. The Key Stage 3 and Secondary National Strategy training materials have been used effectively and there are more opportunities to follow vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Although rates of attendance have improved and are broadly in line with national averages these could be better and the rate of authorised absences is still too high. The school has done everything within its means to improve the quality of accommodation; although some areas still require further refurbishment. The school is fully aware of this and has put forward bids to gain additional funding.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form Grade: 2

The sixth form is an integral part of the school; it is well led and well managed and its overall effectiveness and efficiency are good. There is a suitable range of A2 and AS level courses. Good and developing links with other local providers enable the school to offer a wide range of other academic and vocational courses. Students benefit from good quality teaching and a sympathetic individualised approach to learning. This has helped results to improve steadily since 2001 and these are now in line with national averages.

There is a constructive and realistic programme of induction and highly effective pastoral support. The latter includes close monitoring of work and attendance, guidance on university admissions as well as regular home-school contact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance and reduce the number of authorised absences.
- Embed the use of different teaching and learning styles and ensure greater consistency of marking throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Their progress is good overall and is outstanding by the end of Key Stage 4. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are well above average and improving, especially in English and science. Students make excellent progress in Key Stage 4 and GCSE results are now well above the national average compared with similar schools. The 2006 results show a significant improvement on previous years with the school easily achieving its target of five or more A*-C grades.

Students' progress is effectively tracked and monitored to identify those at risk of underachievement. The special educational needs co-ordinator analyses the progress of students and where necessary liaises with teachers and teaching assistants to provide additional guidance and good levels of support. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are making good progress.

While the attainment of students in the sixth form is satisfactory overall, many meet or exceed predictions based on their performance at GCSE. Their rate of progress has steadily increased since 2004 and results at AS and A2 level are in line with national averages. However, the school acknowledges that the level of course completion continues to be an area for development.

Vocational AS results for ICT were well below average in 2005 but these improved in 2006 following the implementation of strategies to improve performance.

Personal development and well-being Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students learn about personal relationships, how to keep themselves safe and the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse. They demonstrate a growing understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Students' moral, social and cultural development is good and their spiritual awareness is developed to a high level. In a very good assembly, for example, students were encouraged to consider how the presence of God is like having a good friend by our side who helps us to feel happier, safer and at times more courageous.

Students have developed a well-rounded understanding of other cultures and faiths through many aspects of the curriculum; a good example is the work done in art which is linked to Islam. Students know what it means to be a good citizen. A good example is the unit of work about bullying which is well linked to students' appreciation of treating others as you would want to be treated. Whilst the majority of students are well behaved and treat others with respect a very small minority display undesirable behaviour. The school is developing strategies to meet the needs of these students and to help reduce the negative impact they sometimes have on others.

All learners are given the opportunity to be a school council member and actively take part in decision making for the school, including the selection process of appointing staff. The school is actively promoting the development of work-related skills to support students' future roles in employment.

Levels of attendance are broadly satisfactory. However, the rate of authorised absence is too high. This is mainly due to parents taking their children out of school during the course of the school year.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well structured and well planned, and teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge. They make effective use of questioning skills to encourage students to think and extend their learning. Although teachers are using interactive whiteboards well to enhance their teaching, students would welcome more opportunities for

them to use computers as a learning tool to support their own work across the curriculum.

The use of different teaching and learning styles is not yet firmly embedded throughout the school. Furthermore, in a small minority of lessons, which although satisfactory are less effective, there are at times limited levels of challenge for the brightest students and occasions when students sit passively for extended periods of time.

The additional support provided for students with learning difficulties and disabilities takes good account of their individual needs. This is contributing effectively to these students making good progress. There is also good additional tuition for some of the students who speak English as an additional language.

Students welcome the feedback they receive from their teachers and they know what level they are working at and the level they are aiming for. However, many are unaware of what the different levels represent, even though they are usually aware of the small steps they need to take to improve their work. Furthermore, the quality of marking throughout the school although satisfactory, is variable and from the inspectors' observations much is merely cursory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is good curriculum provision throughout the school. All departments have reviewed and evaluated their programmes of work. At Key Stage 3 this has led to a more varied and flexible curriculum which takes account of the Secondary National Strategy. The school has also made good progress in developing alternative provision at Key Stage 4 using external providers. There is now a good balance between the needs of the more academic and those who wish to pursue more vocational options.

The rise in numbers of students in the sixth form reflects how the increasingly effective sixth form curriculum meets the needs of all students. The school is realistic about what it can provide and what is best offered elsewhere. Those who choose to stay at the school benefit from a curriculum that is as personalised as the school can make it. The school has correctly identified areas that would benefit from improvement, including the further development of the collaborative network of schools and colleges offering joint post-16 courses.

The school recognises the need to increase provision for physical education and games. However, the extra-curricular sporting activities provide good additional opportunities for students to engage in regular exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students have access to a range of adults at the school who provide them with helpful guidance about courses and career progression. There is good provision for counselling and personal support. Students who have experienced personal difficulties feel particularly well supported. Vulnerable students are well supported and the school tracks and monitors their progress well. The good work with outside agencies helps to meet their personal needs very effectively. The school acknowledges that the level of academic guidance and support is not always as strong as the level of pastoral guidance, and has identified this as an area for further development.

Students also welcome the sixth form mentoring scheme as well as the buddy system which helps new students to the school to settle quickly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The overall quality of leadership and management is good and the school is very well led by the headteacher and leadership team. This provides the school with clear direction and purpose and an appropriate focus on those areas which can be further improved. Senior leaders and heads of department use a good range of strategies to evaluate and review the quality and impact of the school's work and these have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning as well as curriculum provision.

Assessment data are used well to challenge and guide action planning by heads of department. As a result, standards are rising and parents have noted the improvements in the school, particularly in the last couple of years. However, some teachers would welcome longer notice of how and when agreed areas for improvement will be addressed and reviewed.

Leaders and managers ensure there is equality of opportunity for every student so that all feel included. They also ensure the school provides good value for money when allocating resources. Despite the good progress made to improve some of the school's accommodation some parts of the school still remain substandard and require significant refurbishment.

The extensive links with the local community, outside services and other organisations contribute well to the school's high levels of pastoral care. This also enhances the good provision for students' personal development and well-being as well as the contribution they are able to make to the local community.

The governing body discharges nearly all of its responsibilities well and provides the school with a good level of support and challenge.

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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	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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
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	

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	



12 January 2007

Dear Students

The St Philip Howard Catholic High School
Elm Grove. South Barnham, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO22 0EN

I am writing to thank you for contributing to the inspection and to share some of our findings. My colleague and I enjoyed the discussions that we had with some of you and were impressed by the work of the school. We agree with you that you attend a good school and that the good relationships you have with staff contribute to your enjoyment of coming to school.

The school has worked hard to make the curriculum interesting and relevant to your needs. You are well taught and are making good progress. The results of those students, who took their GCSE exams in 2006, show that they have made outstanding progress. The effective levels of care, guidance and support are contributing well to your good levels of personal development and well-being. This includes good opportunities for you to contribute to the local community and the development of a good range of skills that will serve you well in later life. You also know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe and receive very good spiritual guidance. Many of you spoke very positively about how well the school has supported you during times of personal difficulty.

The school is well led and managed and as a result those who have key leadership roles are well aware of those areas which would help to make your school even better. A good example is that while the vast majority of students are well behaved and respectful, the school recognises the importance of supporting the needs of the small minority of students who at times find it difficult to behave.

Although the overall quality of teaching is good the school has yet to ensure that all lessons include teaching approaches and strategies that will help you to do as well as you possibly could. In addition, the marking of some of your work is not as helpful as it could be.

While most of you attend school regularly this is not the case for all students and the rates of attendance for some students need to improve.

My colleague and I wish you every success and happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely

G Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector