

St Paul's Catholic College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125311
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340764
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Joanna Beckford-Hall 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	1,070
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Patricia Noons
Headteacher	Mr Simon Uttley
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 May 2007
School address	The Ridings Sunbury-on-Thames TW16 6NX
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors watched 33 lessons and observed 31 teachers in total. Meetings were held with students, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the college's work and looked in detail at college documentation, including assessment data, the college's improvement plan, department reviews, minutes of governors' meetings, college policies and scrutinised the marking of students' work. Inspectors analysed the questionnaires completed by students, staff and 137 parents and carers.

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

- how effectively target setting is raising overall achievement and providing stretch to more able and gifted and talented students
- the quality of learning and progress in lessons, looking particularly at the achievement of girls and students who speak English as an additional language, and whether achievement in mathematics is rising for all students
- how effectively assessment data are used for lesson planning and teaching
- the appropriateness and impact of the curriculum in raising students' achievement
- the effectiveness of leaders in driving improvement to raise achievement throughout the college.

Information about the school

St Paul's Catholic College is slightly larger than the average-sized comprehensive college with a sixth form. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above the national average, as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs include specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, emotional and behavioural difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The majority of students are of White British heritage, although the college has a higher proportion of students who are from minority ethnic groups than is found nationally.

The college achieved specialist technology status in 1996, holds the Silver Award for Food for Life and has recently received the Gold Award for the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard.

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 Paul's Catholic College provides a satisfactory standard of education. The college has taken important steps forward in the three years since it was last inspected. While the college's overall effectiveness remains satisfactory, there are distinct features of the college's work which make some outcomes for students, for example their personal development, good and occasionally outstanding. Even so, the rate at which students make progress is satisfactory and their overall attainment is broadly average.

The headteacher successfully leads changes at the college, guiding staff, students and parents and carers in tackling weaknesses which adversely affect students' performance. Many students and staff comment favourably about how much the college has changed, with good behaviour, a significant reduction in persistent absenteeism and a renewed energy so that the spiritual values of the college lead to good care, guidance and support and encourage better achievement. More students now choose to come to the college as their first choice for secondary education and the rising number of students on roll, including in the sixth form, reflects St Paul's growing reputation in the local community. Comments on parental questionnaires reflect such positive changes: 'strong leadership and an emphasis on achieving potential at the school'; 'the school has improved dramatically in recent years' and 'my children are proud to be educated at St Paul's'.

Students' contribution to the college and wider community is outstanding. Their understanding of staying healthy and safe is good, but their overall academic achievement is satisfactory. The college's examination results at Key Stage 4 for the past three years show a fluctuating pattern of achievement. Results in GCSE English in 2008 and 2009 were broadly in line with the national average for the percentage achieving A* to C grades but the percentage achieving grade C or above in mathematics has been inadequate. The college's assessment data indicate improvement and the large majority of students are now making the expected progress in mathematics. More stable staffing in the mathematics department this year has resulted in improvements in progress, evident in lessons. Tracking data indicate that results at Key Stage 4 are set to rise this summer and the percentage of students on track to achieve five A* to C grades including English and mathematics is at least 10% above the college's results in 2009.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are instances of good and outstanding teaching which really encourages students to make good progress

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because learning is well planned for students' levels of ability. However, this good quality is not yet embedded across the college. In some lessons, students do not receive enough challenge in order to make rapid progress and they do not know how to improve their work. Senior leaders are acutely aware that, to meet the college's vision of substantially raising achievement, a greater proportion of teaching must be outstanding. Good systems for monitoring teaching are gradually helping staff to share best practice and middle leaders are enormously positive about the support from senior leaders in evaluating their departments to firm-up the quality of teaching. Priorities in departmental action plans are linked to training sessions for staff, helping them to know how to raise the bar in their own teaching. The impact of this in improving classroom practice is emerging.

Leaders possess a good understanding of priorities for improvement. Over the last two years, actions taken as a result of good self-evaluation have secured much better behaviour for learning, systems to track progress of different groups of students and increasingly varied partnerships to enhance the curriculum, all contributing to the college's good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the very best practice in the college to develop greater consistency in the quality of teaching so that at least 75% of teaching is good or better by July 2011.
- Embed the use of assessment data more robustly across the college so that:
 - all teachers use assessment information more effectively in planning learning to secure good or better progress for all students
 - the consistent day-to-day use of assessment information ensures that lessons vary the pace of learning for groups of students, include different tasks for more able and less able students, and use a variety of resources adapted to suit different learning needs
 - all teachers provide high-quality written feedback to help students know how to meet their targets and how to continually improve their work.

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

The large majority of students apply themselves well in lessons. Students comment that they enjoy lessons when teaching uses different practical tasks and when teachers make them think critically about what their learning. Despite this, some groups of students have made less than expected progress during their time at the college. Progress of all student groups is now rapidly improving and the college's assessment information shows that the progress of most groups of students has accelerated. Students are now making at least the expected progress. Students with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with their peers. There is no significant difference in the achievement of students from different minority ethnic groups and the college is successfully closing the gap between some underachievement of girls compared with the achievement of boys.

Students feel safe at college. They understand current issues such as staying safe from knife crime, and have a very good understanding of e-safety. While relationships between students are largely positive and students themselves comment about the good student community, there are instances of bullying. Students know this is not tolerated at the college and senior leaders take prompt and firm action to deal with any issues that arise.

The college’s extremely hard work to improve attendance has successfully reduced persistent absence and as a result, attendance is satisfactory and improving. There are, however, too many students in some year groups, such as Year 8, whose attendance fluctuates.

Students make an outstanding contribution to the life of the college and its wider community. Students flourish in leadership roles as sports captains, technology college leaders and international leaders leading events across the college and in partner schools. Students develop good work-based skills for their future economic well-being as a result of these leadership roles and through technology and enterprise events. They apply literacy, numeracy and often good information and communication technology (ICT) skills to various entrepreneurial projects and achieve well in designing products, as well as learning how to market and finance their ideas. Students have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and the Food for Life project has particularly enhanced their understanding of nutrition.

Students possess a good understanding of social, moral and cultural issues in their own community and through the well-developed international links with, for example, three schools in Tanzania, Italy and Spain. Students’ spiritual awareness is outstanding, a direct result of how the spiritual life of the college underpins the ethos and ways of studying at the college.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2

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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The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection, and although still satisfactory, the proportion of good and outstanding teaching is steadily rising. Good and outstanding lessons were seen in modern foreign languages, drama, English and science. In an outstanding Spanish lesson, the pace of learning was invigorating, setting high expectations and challenges for all students. Students made good progress by quickly applying Spanish vocabulary in games and paired tasks, fully supporting their confidence in learning a new language. In other good lessons, effective use of ICT and varied teaching methods help students to consolidate new knowledge and use it well in problem-solving tasks. Students who speak English as an additional language receive good support from teaching assistants and most make progress in line with their peers.

In satisfactory lessons, students' progress is hindered by too many teacher-led activities, limited use of probing questions and teaching which is not rigorously matched to the needs of students. While some good quality marking supports students' progress through detailed comments about how to improve work, the overall quality of marking across the college is too variable. Such variability means that, while students know targets, they struggle to describe what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum provides good breadth, balance and stimulating opportunities for students to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. Technology status and a vibrant virtual learning environment enable students to develop good skills with various digital applications. Students particularly enjoy the online home-learning projects because they have ownership of how they structure their time to meet homework deadlines. The revised curriculum at Key Stage 3, with themed clusters of subjects in creative arts and humanities alongside core subjects, is having a good impact on students' engagement and is developing thinking and performance skills.

A model of options in four pathways for 14 to 19 qualifications successfully meets the interests of students. Diplomas in engineering, performing arts and digital applications, available in partnership with local schools and colleges, give good access to options, which have improved attendance and supported students who find committing to education more difficult.

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This caring college provides good support for all students and effectively identifies and addresses the needs of vulnerable students. Good working relationships with home-school link workers and local authority specialists support those students who are in care. Transition arrangements from Year 6 to Year 7 are very good, helping students and parents and carers quickly to become part of the college community. Staff know students very well. Students are confident that the college does its very best to guide them in their future career choices whether remaining in the sixth form or seeking employment and further education and training.

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?

The enthusiasm of staff for change is testament to the ambitious plans for the college. Staff describe the headteacher as inspiring and a visionary. Clear, realistic and measurable priorities for improvement planning, coupled with detailed department reviews, are sharpening how all leaders are held to account for raising achievement.

Governors are forthright in asking challenging questions of senior leaders and have fully supported the college through a difficult period to stabilise the mathematics department. The work of link governors with individual departments is giving clearer insight into exactly where there is strength and weakness in teaching. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties and closely monitors how the Every Child Matters agenda is met through college policy.

The college has achieved outstanding engagement with parents and carers, working exceptionally hard to capture their views about the college and giving them a voice in how students learn at the college. The Parent Focus Group is influential in designing and reviewing the parent portal. The large majority of parents and carers endorse the success of the portal for monitoring their child's progress, attendance and effort grades, all uploaded in 'real time'. Training of parents and carers in using the portal, very good support for parents and carers who speak English as an additional language and for parents and carers who may not have access to computers at home, ensure that the college is meeting the needs of different groups of parents and carers.

Equality of opportunity is successfully promoted through whole-college policy, the

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Disability Equality Scheme training for all staff and through restorative justice to resolve any student conflict. The gold award for the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard exemplifies the impact of both the college’s curriculum work and outstanding community cohesion. Leaders have carefully evaluated the characteristics of the local community and established highly inclusive relationships with parents and Parish community groups. The college makes judicious decisions in determining how best to use the international school links and links through faith to enrich the curriculum and wider community involvement for all students.

Good partnerships with business, welfare agencies and local schools and colleges successfully support students’ learning and well-being. Particularly impressive is the college’s work in leading developments in digital learning in 53 secondary schools across Surrey. The impact of some partnership work for vocational courses has yet to raise overall achievement substantially.

The safeguarding of students is good and the college strives to ensure it is informed about developments nationally in child protection. Systems are reviewed regularly and the college meets statutory requirements in the safe vetting of its workforce.

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 tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The new head of sixth form is diligently leading change in the sixth form including more rigour in teaching and the tracking of students’ progress to raise achievement. Leaders have made judicious decisions about which courses to remove and which to retain, better serving the needs of students through a breadth of vocational and academic courses.

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Students’ achievement has been a concern over the last two years and rates of progress across subjects have been variable. The college recognised this and, following a full review of achievement and teaching by the new head of sixth form this year, attainment and progress are rising and students are making at least satisfactory progress in both Year 12 and Year 13. Staff increasingly scrutinise sixth-form performance data and act quickly to remedy underachievement. The college’s own data, coupled with the progress inspectors saw in lessons, indicate that post-16 results are set to rise this year. There is some good teaching but not enough that is maximising students’ higher-order thinking and evaluative skills to develop the skills and knowledge they need to reach the higher A and B grades in AS/A2 examinations and distinctions in vocational courses.

Students are well supported and this mirrors the good care, guidance and support in the rest of the college. Sixth-form students enjoy taking leadership roles and work very well as peer supporters for younger students. Students feel safe and the voice of the sixth form is heard through work of the Sixth Form Presidential Team whose leader also attends governing body meetings. Students are aware of improvements in the sixth form and talk proudly about how much things are improving.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
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

Views of parents and carers

Of the small proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority judged that the college is led and managed well with particular strengths in communication, keeping their children safe and positive views about students’ healthy lifestyles. Several parents and carers chose to write comments which expressed their positive views about how much the college has improved in recent years. The inspection team supported these viewpoints. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about needing more information about their child’s progress but inspectors judged that communication is a key strength of the college.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's Catholic College 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1070 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	45	72	53	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	47	71	52	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	67	49	63	46	4	3	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	41	70	51	9	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	28	89	65	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	31	71	52	18	13	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	35	78	57	5	4	2	1
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)	56	41	67	49	6	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	31	82	60	7	5	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	42	68	50	7	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	26	72	53	15	11	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	63	46	66	48	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	53	56	41	7	5	0	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	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 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.

25 June 2010

Dear Students



Inspection of St Paul's Catholic College, TW16 6NX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited St Paul's recently. We enjoyed seeing your work in lessons and talking to some of you in meetings. We were pleased to hear so many positive views of the college.

We have judged that St Paul's provides you with a satisfactory standard of education but there are aspects of the college's work which help you achieve some good and outstanding outcomes. We would like to share with you our main findings.

- The college provides excellent opportunities for you to enjoy leadership roles and you make an outstanding contribution to your college and wider community. Your behaviour is good and you told us you feel safe in college.
- You appreciate the range of courses in the good curriculum and the technology specialism is supporting you well in developing ICT skills for the future.
- While there is some good and outstanding teaching, there is too much that is satisfactory. This is not helping you to make enough progress in lessons and throughout your time at college. For this reason, your overall academic achievement is satisfactory and we consider that you could receive more challenge to help you make better progress.

We have asked your headteacher and senior leaders to help you achieve higher standards in all subjects, by ensuring that:

- more lessons are good or better so you can reach your potential in lessons and ultimately achieve higher results at the end of Year 11 and Year 13
- all teachers plan learning which successfully caters for the needs of all students and gives you time to work on different levels of tasks
- all teachers provide high quality marking so that you know how to meet and exceed your targets.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector

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