

St Wilfrid's Catholic School

Old Horsham Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 8PG

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school benefits from outstanding leadership and as a result, is good and rapidly improving. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, know the school well and their impact on improving standards, teaching and developing students' attitudes, values and beliefs is impressive.
- Students achieve well across all year groups and most subjects. Their progress is at least good and often outstanding.
- GCSE results have improved considerably from below the national average in 2010 to above average in 2012, as a result of carefully planned and motivational teaching particularly in English and mathematics, where progress is outstanding.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are an outstanding strength of the school. They attend regularly and model the school's values in everything that they do. They take evident pride in belonging to this improving school.
- Teaching has improved overall since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. Over time it is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are knowledgeable and very effective in helping students to develop a secure grasp of key subject knowledge and understanding.
- The sixth form is good and growing in numbers and courses offered. Results are average with some good progress from starting points on entry.

It is not yet an outstanding school because :

- There is some variability in the quality of teaching. Not all lessons challenge students to the full.
- Some students, particularly the more-able, are not being given sufficient opportunities in some lessons to develop the skills to enable them to gain the highest grades.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 41 lessons, with a number of briefer visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's development plan, its analysis of how well it does and current assessment information. They considered 75 responses to the online (Parent View) questionnaire and 52 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lesley Farmer, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alan Barfoot	Additional Inspector
Howard Jones	Additional Inspector
Christine Murrell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a school of average size.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals for which the school receives additional funding, (known as pupil premium funding) is below average.
- The large majority of students are White British with around a third from a variety of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is higher than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of students supported through school action, with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is broadly average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and ensure that more students secure the highest grades, particularly in the sixth form, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - probe students' understanding in their questioning more deeply and encourage students to give fuller contributions, for example in discussions
 - show flexibility of approach in adapting lesson plans to meet students' immediate needs and levels of understanding, and take advantage of unplanned opportunities to extend students' thinking and enquiry
 - make full use of the assessment information with which they are provided so that they plan and deliver lessons that challenge all students, especially the more-able and those for whom the school receives additional pupil premium funding
 - provide students with greater opportunities to work more actively, independently and in groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students make good or outstanding progress in Key Stages 3 and 4, some from exceptionally low starting points. As a result of well-targeted support, skilled teaching and excellent resources, they make significant gains to reach above average standards by the end of Year 11.
- There is very little difference in achievement between groups of students – from all ethnic heritages and from backgrounds of differing social and economic advantage. Extra money that the school receives to support the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals is being used to support them directly, resulting in some good progress for these students, although they are not yet progressing as rapidly as most of their peers in the main school.
- Students identified with special educational needs achieve well and some exceptionally so, given their starting points and their particular level of need. This is because work is set for them at the right level and guidance is accurately judged to ensure it makes a difference.
- Since 2010, GCSE results have improved at three times the national rate. Targets set by the school's leaders have been ambitious and progress towards them regularly checked, with help provided where necessary. Judicious training for teachers, particularly in mathematics, which in the past lagged behind, has been effective in improving their skills. Students, in turn, have been greatly motivated by the improvements in teaching and have risen to the challenge.
- Results at A and AS levels overall compare favourably with the national picture, although there is some variability in progress made across subjects and not enough of the more-able students are securing the top grades across all subjects. This is because teaching is not consistently challenging enough for these students.
- Students speak confidently and articulately, which is a notable strength. They are encouraged to read widely and they write well.
- Parents and students rate the school very highly and believe the school supports learning well. Inspectors agree with the views expressed by both parents and students.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching across the school is good and there is some outstanding practice. Lessons are typically calm and productive. Students say that teachers are always helpful and supportive and relationships are very respectful.
- Variability does exist and was seen by inspectors and described by students. Sometimes teachers stick too rigidly to their plans, missing opportunities to develop students' understanding further or challenge them to reflect at a deeper level. However, older students in particular, are clear that teaching has improved since the last inspection especially in mathematics and lessons are typically enjoyable and interesting.
- Students concentrate well in lessons and are motivated learners. They have well-developed social skills and work well in pairs and groups. At times, however, teachers spend too much time talking to the class, reducing students' opportunities to work more actively, independently, or with each other, thereby reducing the pace of their progress.
- Some teaching is outstanding. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, students made rapid progress in their abilities to blend colour within a specific design. Key to the success of the lesson was the teacher's very high expectations of each student to develop this skill to the full and the support and challenge that she provided to each individual. Her tenacious questioning and continual probing of all students on an individual basis ensured that everyone was fully engrossed in the topic and all students were kept 'on their toes' as they worked independently and she circulated around the room.

- Teachers focus sharply on ensuring that all students are able to grasp the key knowledge and understanding in each lesson. In the best lessons they use the school's 'Ten Strategies' (for effective learning), to good effect ensuring a range of stimulating activities both develop students' skills and learning and keep them motivated. However, some do not always take enough account of the needs of students of different ability when planning or delivering their lessons. This sometimes means that everyone does the same work and that the most-able students in particular do not make the progress they should.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Students understand the importance of supporting their own learning and that of others. They are eager to learn and show a keen awareness of the needs of others. During the inspection inspectors saw no incidents of poor behaviour at all. Students say that this is typical, disruption is very rare. This is borne out by the very low levels of exclusion over time compared to the national rates.
- The school helps students to have a very firm understanding of what constitutes bullying and the different kinds that can occur, such as homophobic or cyber bullying. Students are clear that bullying is extremely rare and almost never occurs, although this has not always been the case. The insistence on referencing the school's values by all adults within the school has made a significant difference in this regard and an atmosphere of mutual respect permeates the school.
- Attendance levels are high which gives testimony to the importance that students attach to their learning. They do not want to lose out on their learning or let their teachers down. It is a matter of personal pride.
- Around the school site students are calm and orderly. They appreciate the new building and show great respect for maintaining its pristine condition. In particular, they were keen to point out to inspectors examples of students' excellent art work, on display.
- Students say that they feel safe and very secure in school. This view was shared by parents' responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View. Students are exceptionally well-cared for and supported.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- This is an exceptionally well led school. The headteacher and leadership team provide strong and clear direction and the school is in an excellent position to continue its improvement.
- Well-developed and efficient systems and processes are in place to enable leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's results and the targets set for teachers. These are clearly linked to the pay and performance of all staff. The specific roles of senior and middle leaders in these processes are clear and unambiguous.
- Leaders observe lessons frequently to assess quality and identify potential areas for improvement. Joint observations conducted with senior leaders during the inspection were in complete agreement.
- Leaders have very effectively secured rapid improvement in results in the main school since 2010, when results were below average, by providing extra guidance and support particularly in mathematics. There have been significant changes in leadership of key roles and subject areas at all levels and to excellent effect. Rates of expected progress in English and mathematics are outstanding.
- In the sixth form although there is more variability in progress from starting points across subjects, there are also examples of outstanding progress, such as in information and communication technology, English literature, drama and media and film studies. Senior leaders have identified the need to increase the percentages of students achieving the higher grades of

A* and B to above the national average and an additional leadership role, dedicated to sixth form achievement has been created to this end, with effect from this September.

- The curriculum is very well designed to support students' good and improving progress. Much thought has been given to the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is exceptional. In addition to the subjects taught, the school provides a wide range of further experiences after school, during the breaks and over the school holidays. These combined with the school's focus on its values, in particular the ways in which students and adults communicate respectfully with each other, have resulted in a pervasive atmosphere of harmony between younger and older students and those of different ethnic groups, where the contribution of each individual is recognised and appreciated.
 - Pupil premium funding is being used effectively and most of these students are doing well and better than in the past. This year the extra money is being used to provide a dedicated computer- equipped room for these students, to improve their reading and writing skills and speed up their progress.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are tightly organised and focused on raising achievement. They are fully involved in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses and have supported the headteacher in addressing under-performance and the need to appoint new staff to key leadership roles. They visit the school regularly and set targets for improvement for the headteacher, which they monitor closely and link to his performance. They also monitor the school budget and check to see how effectively money is spent. Systems and processes that keep students safe, meet government requirements well.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126095
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402379

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	940
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Gidman
Headteacher	Jonathan Morris
Date of previous school inspection	30 September–1 October 2009
Telephone number	01293 421421
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