

St Mary's College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118117
Local authority	City of Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	339147
Inspection dates	07–08 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Tanya Harber Stuart HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,584
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Day
Headteacher	Mr Ged Fitzpatrick
Date of previous school inspection	February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Observations of 37 lessons were made; 37 teachers were seen. Of these observations 18 were carried out jointly with members of the leadership team. Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors, members of staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, governors' minutes and data concerning the levels of attainment and achievement of students. The 261 responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire were considered, with the 107 responses from staff and 152 responses from students to their respective questionnaires.

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

- how effectively teaching, the curriculum and the care and guidance support the growing proportion of students who speak English as an additional language
- the impact of the specialist sports status on the school
- how effectively the leaders and managers at all levels have dealt with the areas for improvement since the last inspection.

Information about the school

St Mary's College is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic Church school. It is a much larger-than-average school and mainly serves the wards of Beverley, Orchard Park and Greenwood, University and Avenue. However the catchment area of the school does encompass the East Riding of Yorkshire and many students travel to the school by bus. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average and has been increasing over the past three years. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average but the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. St Mary's is a training school, it holds Investors in People status and has specialist sports college status. The college has the International School 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Mary's College provides its students with an outstanding education. The outstanding care, guidance and support, good teaching and excellent curriculum combine to enable all students, regardless of their academic ability, to make outstanding progress. The Roman Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of the school. The school is, as one member of staff said, 'a team' working to ensure the best possible outcomes for students.

In 2009 the students left Year 11 with levels of attainment which were significantly above the national average in terms of the proportion of students who gained five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Given the starting points of the students this represents outstanding progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities made equally excellent progress and their levels of attainment were significantly above the national average. Students who speak English as an additional language are supported well in lessons. These students, many of whom join the school after the start of Year 7, are supported very well in both their English language development and their academic studies. These students make exceptional progress at the school. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that these high levels of attainment are continuing. The students meet, and often exceed, the challenging targets set for them and make outstanding progress by the time they reach Year 11.

Students are supported to make this exceptional progress through good teaching. In the best lessons seen by inspectors students made outstanding progress and members of staff used assessment data pertinently to ensure that the learning activities were appropriate to each and every student. However, this practice is not consistent. The specialist sports college status has had a positive impact on the school. The specialist status has led the curriculum developments which mean that the curriculum meets effectively the needs and interests of the students and is outstanding.

Leaders and managers in the school, and especially the headteacher, have a very clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors are fully involved in the school. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Since the last inspection the areas for development, in particular the requirement to raise attendance, have been dealt with very thoroughly. The school is in an excellent position to make further improvements and has outstanding capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is continuously improved and becomes outstanding by:
 - developing the consistent use of assessment in lessons so that all the learning activities meet the needs and interests of the all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students make outstanding progress during their time at the school. They enter the school with levels of attainment which are broadly in line with the national average and leave, at the end of Year 11, having reached levels of attainment which are significantly above the national average. The students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same outstanding progress as their peers. In part this is because of the good support which they are given in lessons by teaching assistants. In the past few years the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language has risen. These students are supported exceptionally well in lessons and in their one-to-one lessons. This enables them to make excellent progress. In the majority of lessons observed students made good progress. Good teaching, and the outstanding curriculum and care, guidance and support enable all the students to make outstanding progress. In lessons where teaching is good students are able to develop independent working skills and their behaviour makes a very positive contribution to their learning.

The contribution students make is outstanding. What is particularly appreciated by the wider community is the work students do to produce a CD of newspaper articles for people with visual problems. In addition, many students are working with a local drop-in centre and visiting house-bound people. The Roman Catholic ethos of the school is pervasive. It enables students to develop exceptional social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. Behaviour is outstanding both around the school and in lessons. Attendance, an area for development in the last inspection, is now high. This is because of the rigorous policies and procedure put in place and the support students are given through their tutors.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1

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

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
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 good. In the best lessons teachers use assessment data very well to ensure that the activities provided are suitable for all the students in the group, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. In these lessons there is a fast pace, questioning challenges the students to think, and teaching assistants are effectively managed to make an outstanding contribution to students' achievement.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Of particular note is the exceptional support students receive when they join the school from their primary schools. This, and the high-quality support given throughout the school, means that the students are happy, feel safe and achieve very well. The curriculum is regularly altered and is flexible to the needs of the students. The new courses are having an exceptional impact on students' outcomes, in particular their attendance and academic achievement.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective. The headteacher has a very clear vision for St Mary's College and this vision is shared effectively with the staff, students, and parents and carers. He has exceptionally high standards and staff rise to the challenge. The leadership and management of teaching are outstanding and have ensured that teaching is improving and the progress students make is increasing. Rigorous monitoring, evaluation and review are embedded within all the school's work.

Governors are exceptionally knowledgeable about the school's work. They support the school highly effectively and are fully involved in self-evaluation. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are highly effective in promoting equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting community cohesion. The results of this are shown in the outstanding progress made by all groups of students.

Safeguarding is good. Effective policies and procedures are in place and the school takes very seriously its commitment to keeping its students safe. As a result, the students feel very safe in school. The vast majority of parents and carers also stated that the school kept their children safe.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Sixth form

Students attending the sixth form come from a variety of schools. The support which students receive when they enter the sixth form, whether from St Mary's College or other educational establishments, is outstanding. Students are exceptionally well prepared for their futures because of the help and guidance they are given at critical times such as when they join the sixth form or when making decisions about what to do after sixth form. The curriculum offered is flexible and is being constantly evaluated to make sure that it meets the needs and interests of the students. Teaching is good with outstanding features. In many lessons students are given the opportunity to evaluate their work, and that of others, which students do very sensitively. The outstanding curriculum, good teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support mean that students make good progress, and some make outstanding progress, during their time in the sixth form.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. Actions taken are based on a thorough review of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form. Robust plans are in place and these have already had an impact on the curriculum and improved the amount of progress students make.

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	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the standard of education provided for their children. Although a few parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour, the team judged that overall behaviour was outstanding. In particular, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers stated that the school kept their children safe and that their children enjoyed school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's 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 261 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,584 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	127	49	124	48	8	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	149	57	105	40	5	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	146	56	106	41	5	2	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	124	48	126	48	8	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	122	47	124	48	7	3	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	106	41	123	47	21	8	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	96	37	135	52	23	9	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)	136	52	110	42	8	3	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	119	46	126	48	9	3	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	127	49	112	43	13	5	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	91	35	128	49	25	10	6	2
The school is led and managed effectively	122	47	119	46	11	4	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	146	56	100	38	11	4	2	1

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.



09 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Mary's College, Hull, HU6 7TN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me and my team when we visited your school recently. We were very pleased to receive your views, and those of your parents and carers, through the questionnaires which were filled in, and the interviews that some of you attended.

St Mary's is an outstanding school. You feel very safe in school, and your parents and carers agree that the school keeps you safe. You make outstanding progress during your time at the school and you achieve results which are above the national average. Those of you in the sixth form make good progress. You are very well prepared to make decisions about what you want to do at the critical times such as when choosing options. The excellent care, guidance and support you receive support you to do this, and also to settle quickly in the school.

To make St Mary's College even better we have asked the school to make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best ones and that the activities you are asked to do in lessons are suitable for your needs.

You can play your part by continuing to attend school and behave as well as you do.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart
Her Majesty's Inspector

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