

All Hallows Catholic College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111458
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	356920
Inspection dates	05–06 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Shirley Gornall 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	1,113
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen O'Sullivan
Headteacher	Anthony Billings
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
School address	Brooklands Avenue Macclesfield SK11 8LB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 41 lessons taught by 41 teachers and held meetings with staff, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. They observed the college's work, and looked at a wide range of documents including planning, assessment records, monitoring reports and the college's self-evaluation. They analysed 450 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 81 from staff and 154 from students.

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

- The extent to which different groups of students, particularly the more able, make progress in their learning.
- The impact of the college's business, ethical enterprise and languages status on students' experiences and outcomes.
- The consistency and effectiveness of the work of subject leaders in raising students' achievement.

Information about the school

All Hallows Catholic College is a larger-than-average 11-18 school serving a wide geographical area of East Cheshire. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, as is the proportion whose first language is not English. The proportion of students with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than average but increasing. The proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The number of students in the sixth form has increased considerably since the previous inspection. All Hallows was redesignated as a Business and Ethical Enterprise College in 2010 when it introduced an additional specialism for modern foreign languages. It holds numerous awards including Artsmark Gold, International Schools Award, Inclusion Quality Mark, Fair Trade School, Excellence in Enterprise Education, Sports Mark and ICT Mark.

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

All Hallows Catholic College is an outstanding school, characterised by a palpable ethos that combines gospel values, ethical enterprise and aspiration for all students to be the best that they can in all dimensions of their lives. Under the dynamic and principled leadership of the headteacher, there has been strong improvement in provision and outcomes since the previous inspection. Students enjoy the wealth of opportunities provided by the college and their achievement is outstanding. Attainment is high in the majority of subjects and is improving rapidly in those where results have been closer to the national average. Students make good progress from their starting points. Higher-attaining students, whose performance was identified as an area for improvement in previous inspections, now make strong progress, leading to a notable increase in the proportion of A* and A grades achieved at GCSE level. Achievement is good and aspirations are high for students in the sixth form. Their attainment is above the national average in several subjects and is particularly strong in mathematics, English and business studies. Sixth formers make an effective contribution to the running of the college and are respected role models.

The college's mission underpins its work as an inclusive, harmonious community where all students are known, nurtured and treated as unique individuals. Students' behaviour is outstanding, evidenced by caring, compassionate attitudes, a strong sense of pride in the college and an eagerness to learn. Students feel extremely safe and speak appreciatively of the considerable efforts made by staff to ensure their health and well-being. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average. The college's specialism in business and ethical enterprise makes a powerful contribution to students' experiences and outcomes. They develop entrepreneurial skills in a rich variety of contexts that have earned them national recognition. Their development of basic skills is outstanding, as is their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They show an impressive degree of empathy for people in different communities and take effective action to support them in practical ways. The college has recently expanded its specialist status to incorporate modern foreign languages but as yet it is too early to see the impact of this decision.

As a result of focused leadership, coaching and action research, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good overall; an increasing proportion is outstanding and a diminishing amount is satisfactory. Lessons are planned and delivered according to a consistent framework that enables students to learn sequentially and reflectively. Relationships between staff and

students are excellent and most lessons are very enjoyable; some teaching is inspirational. On a few occasions, the degree of challenge provided to individuals is insufficient to promote achievement at the highest level, whereas in a few other instances the structure of tasks does not best meet the needs of students with lower level literacy skills. Teachers' assessment of students' work is generally very accurate but there is some inconsistency in the quality of marking. An excellent curriculum has been developed enabling students to pursue their interests and develop wide - ranging skills. Outstanding care, guidance and support, including that provided for individuals through partnership with a variety of agencies, contributes greatly to students' happiness, security, self-esteem and their good progress.

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide intelligent, outward-facing leadership. They are innovative, creative and continually seek to compare the college's practice with best-quality benchmarks. Their powerful vision of excellence is understood and subscribed to by students, staff and parents. In partnership with a highly skilled and supportive governing body, leaders at all levels ensure a climate in which students' success is fostered and celebrated. The college's self-evaluation is rigorous, insightful and leads to well-planned actions. Community cohesion is outstanding, characterised by a range of partnerships and initiatives where the college is at the hub. Equality of opportunity is continually assured in all aspects of the college's work. There is a clear track record of improvement since the previous inspection. The college's success in raising achievement, combined with its intuitive management systems, spirit of innovation and avoidance of complacency mean that it has outstanding capacity to sustain further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by making maximum use of the college's expertise within business and enterprise to develop its new specialist dimension of modern foreign languages.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding still further by
 - ensuring that the needs of individual learners are met by refining tasks to match their prior attainment and skills
 - ensuring that the literacy skills of lower attaining students are consistently supported in all lessons.
- Further refine marking to establish consistency across all subject areas so that students are able to take appropriate steps in response to teachers' feedback.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students relish the opportunities provided for them by the college and achieve outstandingly well from starting points which vary year-on-year from broadly average to above average. Attainment has risen steadily since the previous inspection. In 2010, the proportions of students gaining five or more GCSE qualifications at A* to C grades was well above average, as was the proportion gaining five good qualifications including English and mathematics. Performance was particularly strong

in English, mathematics, science subjects, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. Attainment was lower, although improving, in modern foreign languages and design and technology. The proportion of students gaining A* and A grades, identified as an area for improvement at previous inspections, has significantly increased because higher-attaining students are now making very good progress from their starting points.

College data and lesson observations confirm that students make good progress, particularly in English where rates of progression exceed those found nationally. The proportion of students meeting ambitious targets across the range of subjects has increased as a result of well-considered measures, including altering the length of taught lessons to enable longer periods of reflective learning and skills application. Students report that their enjoyment of learning has been enhanced by opportunities to engage in collaborative work and projects which have relevance to their own lives and interests. The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers due to high-quality support which is carefully matched to their needs. Students behave exceptionally well, arriving punctually and smartly attired to lessons and demonstrating high levels of concentration. They are cheerful and courteous, giving feedback on each other's performance in a sensitive and constructive way when working in groups. They report unanimously that incidents of inappropriate behaviour or bullying are very rare and are dealt with immediately and effectively. They feel extremely safe in college and consider that the college's measures to encourage healthy lifestyles are highly effective.

During their time at All Hallows, students develop attitudes and skills that equip them exceptionally well for the world of work. Attendance has improved and is now above average. Many students develop entrepreneurial skills directly as a result of specialist status, including through work experience in the college's iconic Romero Business Centre, an impressive facility which encapsulates its mission. Crucially, students have a well-developed moral sense and readily articulate the principles of fair trade; through their business activities they have generated considerable funds to support the building of a clinic in India. Their spiritual sense is exemplified in their willing contribution to acts of worship. They have excellent awareness of the beliefs of people from other cultures, ethnic backgrounds and religions. Many students make a valuable contribution to the community, for instance, by working alongside students from a neighbouring special school in growing vegetables for use in the college kitchen and by a local care home and caring for the college chickens in the 'henterprise' initiative. The college's various councils are influential in determining and evaluating policies.

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	2

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

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection due to the college's impressive action research work that has focused on determining, modelling and implementing a unique framework for teaching and learning. Lessons are consistently planned and include a wide variety of activities that motivate students and extend their thinking. The most effective lessons are characterised by skilful questioning that engages and challenges students. This was the case in an outstanding mathematics lesson where students made excellent progress in solving quadratic equations due to the teacher's ability to build their confidence through structured dialogue that required them to articulate their thinking. Similarly, in a music lesson students made exceptional progress in understanding elements within a classical music composition because of the teacher's ability to engage and deepen their understanding. Students respond well to opportunities to take on specific roles in group work, such as in a very successful French lesson where 'scribes' 'linguists' and 'fast walkers' had to work together to interpret, classify and evaluate statements relating to smoking. On a few occasions, there is insufficient challenge to individual students to make the best possible progress and in other instances, the literacy skills of lower-attaining students are not fully supported through structured tasks. Teachers have an accurate picture of students' progress. Marking is undertaken regularly and is often of a high quality, such as in art and English where students are provided with clear developmental feedback. In the best practice, teachers pose questions to students when they mark and have a clear expectation that students will respond to these, however, this excellent practice is not consistently embedded. There is a keen sense of professional dialogue within the college; teachers are reflective and eager to share their practice. All teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and relevant to students' own interests and experiences. The college environment is conducive to high achievement. It is immaculately well-presented, with many examples of students' work displayed and celebrated. Quotations from distinctive cultural and spiritual leaders enliven corridors and generate debate.

The college's outstanding curriculum is continually reviewed and developed to meet the needs of students. Business and enterprise has an important role in shaping the curriculum offer, with accredited opportunities for students to develop skills that will be valuable in the workplace. At Key Stage 4, students can select from a broad range of traditional academic qualifications, complemented by applied learning courses. Cross-curricular skills, such as literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills, are clearly embedded in all subjects. Students agree that the quality of care, guidance and support they receive is a major strength of the college, commenting in discussion

that 'staff really know us well and are always there for us.' They are particularly appreciative of the help they receive at transition points from primary school and leading to higher education or employment. Students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are exceptionally well-supported and nurtured so that they can enjoy all aspects of college life. Partnerships with external agencies enable students to access a range of services to help them make choices with regard to their own lifestyles and futures.

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?

Under the headteacher's innovative leadership, provision and outcomes have improved significantly since the previous inspection. He is fully supported by a skilled and experienced senior leadership team who exude passion for their work. Departmental leaders work consistently and enthusiastically to raise standards in their areas. Several of them have been appointed since the previous inspection and they have benefited from well-considered coaching and induction programmes. College leaders at all levels are committed to raising achievement and have developed clear, consistently implemented systems, including highly effective quality assurance processes. The college continually tests itself using best-practice benchmarks and systematically evaluates and reports on all aspects of its work. The governing body provides very effective support and ask challenging questions to ensure that strategic decisions are thoroughly considered. It is fully involved in the life of the college and makes a significant contribution to its insightful and accurate self-evaluation, including through the structured review of its own effectiveness.

Equality of opportunity is ensured, for example, through the college's curriculum policies and through interventions that support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in accessing all that is provided by the college. There are no significant differences in performance between different groups. Students are adamant that discrimination in any form is not tolerated and they display very thoughtful and considerate attitudes to each other. All safeguarding duties are met. The college is at the hub of many partnerships with local schools, voluntary organisations, higher education providers and educational development networks. These partnerships are carefully selected and their impact is fully evaluated. The views of parents and carers are regularly sought through wide-ranging ways including an e-forum which is proving to be very popular.

The college is fully aware of its own context and makes an outstanding contribution to its immediate community, for example, through its 'spade brigade' initiative involving local volunteers in its vegetable garden, and in numerous projects related to its business specialism and faith foundation. Relationships have been forged further afield including through the college's impressive international charitable work.

The college is well-placed to maintain its strong trajectory of improvement; morale is high, direction is clear and guiding principles are steadfast.

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 enjoy the varied courses and opportunities available to them in the sixth form and achieve well from starting points which are typically above average. They are particularly successful in subjects related to the college's specialist status and in mathematics and English. Students following BTEC courses in business and ICT benefit from the colleges' status as a Careers Academy School by taking up internships with major businesses. The proportion of students completing courses is higher than average and there is a track record of success in terms of progression to universities. Through initiatives such as 'random acts of kindness' and 'Pay it Forward' students provide very positive models for younger members of the college, as well as making a positive contribution to their local community through intergenerational work at local charity shops and nursing homes. Some students have attended residential courses to develop high quality presentational skills, which they have then used to coach younger students in a project on social responsibility. The teaching in the sixth form is good, with considerable emphasis on promoting students' independence and challenging them to refine their thinking and apply their skills. This was the case in an outstanding drama lesson where students demonstrated high levels of peer support in perfecting a routine that required them to demonstrate high quality dramatic interpretation. The quality of care, guidance and support provided to sixth formers is exceptional, including bespoke support to families of first-generation students making applications to university. The sixth form leader has a clear view of developmental priorities and is effectively supported by staff and students in raising achievement.

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who completed questionnaires was very much higher than average. The vast majority of those who responded say that they are happy with their children's experience at the college. They are pleased with the quality of teaching and care their children receive and feel that the college is well led. One commented, 'There is an excellent ethos and the staff at All Hallows really care about every child.' This view was endorsed by many others. There was particular praise for the efforts taken by the college to welcome and integrate students when they join its community. A very small minority feel that the college is over-zealous with regard to its dress code for students. Inspectors found that students had smart appearance and that the college's 'dress for success' policy was helping to maintain a business-like learning environment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at All Hallows 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 450 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,113 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	122	27	297	66	22	5	6	1
The school keeps my child safe	206	46	236	52	4	1	2	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	180	40	236	52	27	6	2	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	157	35	258	57	24	5	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	141	31	277	62	14	3	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	135	30	267	59	34	8	2	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	88	20	304	68	41	9	5	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	30	266	59	20	4	6	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	126	28	287	64	21	5	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	158	35	242	54	36	8	8	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	19	283	63	40	9	10	2
The school is led and managed effectively	162	36	256	57	18	4	5	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	178	40	249	55	13	3	4	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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 April 2011

Dear Students,

Inspection of All Hallows Catholic College, Macclesfield, SK11 8LB

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your college recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up your time to speak to us and those of you who completed the questionnaire. We were extremely impressed with your caring and sensible behaviour and the great pride you rightly take in your college. We agree with you that your leaders and teachers provide you with an exceptionally high standard of care, keep you very safe and prepare you well for life beyond college.

The inspection team consider All Hallows to be outstanding. It provides you with an outstanding quality of education and you achieve outstandingly well, both in your academic work and in the skills and attitudes you show. There have been significant major improvements to the college over recent years, many of which you told us about. The way in which its business and enterprise specialism has been developed is particularly impressive and it was interesting to see the range of opportunities you take up to behave as ethical entrepreneurs, making a difference to your college community while supporting international aid. We think that the leadership of the college by Mr Billings and his team is excellent and we have every confidence that, with your continued help, the college will continue to grow from strength to strength. We have identified a few points for improvement. First we have asked the college to increase further the amount of good and outstanding teaching. Your teachers already work extremely hard and you can help them by letting them know the sorts of activity that really help you think and learn best. Second, we have asked that the quality of marking becomes more consistent; you can play your part by answering the questions teachers pose in their feedback to you. Third, we hope to see the college's new specialism in modern foreign languages become as powerful as that in business and enterprise in enhancing achievement. It was good to see that attendance has improved since the previous inspection. A small minority of you still have low attendance and we hope that you can reduce your absence. Remember that every lesson counts!

Please continue to support your college as strongly as you do. On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,
Shirley Gornall
Her Majesty's Inspector

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