

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**

SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
Of the Education Act 2005
URN 102681

Wimbledon College
Edge Hill
Wimbledon
SW19 2NS

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| Chair of Governors | Mr A Kennedy |
| Headteacher | Rev A Porter, SJ |
| Inspectors | Mr J Carvill Mrs M Todd |

Inspection dates 27 – 28 January 2010

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES
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Director of Education: Dr Dilys Wadman**

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided under the Trusteeship of the Society of Jesus, situated in the Merton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and maintained by Merton Local Authority. It takes its pupils from all the Merton parishes and from parishes and schools across much of London. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 99.8%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 4.5% in Key Stage 3, 10% in Key Stage 4 and just over 3% in the Sixth Form.

The school takes pupils ages 11 to 18. The number of pupils currently on roll is 1242, including 241 in the Sixth Form. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly around average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low, while the proportion with special educational needs is average. The number of pupils from an ethnic minority heritage is high with White Other, Black African and Caribbean being the largest groups. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

Wimbledon College, as a Catholic learning community, is a good school with many outstanding features. It is a Catholic school with a distinct Jesuit ethos. Leadership is excellent with a strongly motivated and motivating Head Master, who is supported by an able senior leadership team, hard working staff and committed governors. Pastoral care is a strength of the school where pupils feel valued, supported and safe. Chaplaincy is excellent and the pupils' spiritual and moral growth are enriched and enhanced as a result. The quality of the acts of worship is outstanding, as is the school's achievement in promoting community cohesion. Standards in religious education are good and improving. The quality of teaching and learning is, overall, good and sometimes outstanding. The quality of the religious education curriculum is varied. At Key Stage 3 the time allocated to the subject (4.5%) is significantly below that recommended by the Bishops' Conference (10%) and this impacts on the breadth and depth of study needed to meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory in full. At Key Stage 4 both the curriculum content and the time allocated to the subject are good while the general religious education in the Sixth Form is addressed through Focus Days throughout the year. The new Cambridge Pre-U course in Year 12 is very suitable and challenging. Leadership of religious education is very good.

The issues raised in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. An Apostolic Report is written annually in which the school's Catholic life is evaluated, the schemes of work in religious education have been improved, there is now in place a departmental programme of lesson observation and standards of attainment in religious education are improving. The inspectors believe the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

In order to improve further the governors and senior leaders of the school should:-

- Review the Key Stage 3 religious education curriculum to ensure it complies with the recommendations of the Bishops' Conference and covers fully the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.
- Review the provision for General religious education in the Sixth Form.
- Ensure that resources and materials in religious education lessons are appropriate for pupils of all abilities, especially those with particular learning or language needs.
- Continue and further develop sharing good practice in the teaching of religious education.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Wimbledon College are outstanding. The Head Master is a Jesuit, who has a strong positive presence in the school and is very well liked and respected by the pupils. The very strong Ignatian ethos is the basis for the very good quality of relationships within the school. There is a sense of purpose and belonging in the school in which all are made to feel part of the local and wider Jesuit community. The school's distinctive Catholic and Ignatian identity is promoted by the very many religious images and artefacts in and around the school, beginning with the statue of the Sacred Heart on the front piazza. Governors are very committed to the school and they give good support by often attending liturgies and services and spending one day a year in the school with staff and pupils. Pastoral care of the pupils is excellent. Pupils appreciate the support given by staff, while the younger boys value the mentoring by older boys, and pupils feel known, cared for and safe in the school. Chaplaincy is excellent. The school is very fortunate in having its own full-time priest chaplain, who is also a member of the Society of Jesus. There is an excellent and very extensive chaplaincy programme for all ages involving prayer groups, liturgical celebrations, retreats, human rights activities, and pilgrimages and, in the Jesuit spirit, opportunities for the boys to give service to others, for example those activities mentioned under 'community cohesion'. The chaplain's support for form tutors who lead prayers in tutor time and for assembly leaders is excellent. There are excellent opportunities to support staff's spiritual development through the annual staff retreat day and prayers before staff and departmental meetings. There is a well-developed staff induction programme. Links with the local parish are very good, where the school uses the church regularly and priests from other parishes help with Confessions during Lent and Advent. The opportunities for the spiritual and moral growth of the boys is very good and is provided through retreats, Focus Days, assemblies and the religious education curriculum. Behaviour of the pupils around the school is very good.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade1

The quality of provision for private and collective worship is outstanding. A voluntary Mass is celebrated daily in the school chapel, while there is a major programme of sacramental and non-sacramental liturgies which celebrate the liturgical year as well as significant milestones in the lives of the pupils. For example, the Welcome Mass for Year 7 and their families in September, the Academic Mass for the start of the school year, the Leavers' Mass in July and an Ash Wednesday service serve to celebrate these occasions. The Feast day Masses are celebrated in the Sacred Heart church where pupil participation in these is impressive. Boys take part as altar servers, readers, leading bidding prayers, bringing the gifts to the altar, in the choir, as musicians or as Eucharistic Ministers. The school chapel is well appointed and is used for Form and Year Masses. Hanging in the chapel are six

inspiring, specially-commissioned banners representing the school's four Houses, the Sacred Heart and St Ignatius. The chapel is also well used by pupils and staff for quiet individual reflection during the day. With the help of local priests, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated every Lent when very many of the pupils use the opportunity to go to confession. There is a regular programme of assemblies, which are led by senior leaders or heads of year. During the inspection, on Holocaust Day, two outstanding assemblies were seen on The Legend of Hope, about some survivors of the Holocaust. The message was very striking and the pupils were extremely attentive. Morning form period time provides excellent opportunities for worship. Form tutors have an extensive pool of resources, including PowerPoint clips on the school's intranet, to draw on. These high quality materials are provided by the school Chaplain and consist of a selection of readings, meditations and prayers.

Community Cohesion

Grade 1

Wimbledon College is outstanding at promoting and achieving community cohesion. The liturgies are all-inclusive with every pupil having an opportunity to participate. In September, during Languages Week, daily Mass is celebrated in French and Spanish, as well as Latin and Greek. The religious education curriculum, to which every pupil has access, successfully promotes tolerance towards and understanding of other faiths and beliefs. Relationships in the school are extremely good, with the boys showing courtesy and respect for others in lessons and around the school. The school's international, national and local outreach projects are very impressive. These include Project Manvi - building a primary and secondary school for Dalit children in Southern India - support for The Passage in London and Sixth Formers' activities with local senior citizens. In addition and in the spirit of the Order's Founder, St Ignatius, to engage with other religions, the school has introduced an ecumenical Matriculation Service for new Sixth Formers with the Ursuline High School in Canterbury Cathedral and also invited a local Imam to take part in one of the workshops during the staff retreat day last year. This year the school plans to develop specific links with other Jesuit schools in Europe.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 2

Achievement and standards in religious education are, overall, good and improving. At Key Stage 3 in 2009, 79% of pupils reached level 5 or above. The results at GCSE have improved year-on-year over the last four years. Last year 72% of the year group gained A*-C grades with 22% being awarded A/A*. The A level results were satisfactory with all 26 students passing and 7 (27%) gaining grades A-B, while at AS level the results exceeded expectations with 60% being awarded the top grades. The quality of pupils' written work is generally high, especially that of the more able boys. For example, some excellent work was seen in Year 9 exercise books on the

Great Schism of 1054 and also on the Ecumenical Movement. Achievement is good, particularly at Key Stage 4 and, overall, pupils are making good progress. Pupils expressed the view that they enjoy the subject and their behaviour in lessons is, generally, very good.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 2

The quality of teaching and learning is, overall, good and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are well planned and structured with lesson objectives and intended outcomes shared with pupils. Where lessons are good or better there is good pace and pupils are challenged, through good questioning techniques by the teacher, to extend their thinking beyond the initial response. Very good use is made of the white board to record pupils' responses, thus re-enforcing their learning. A range of activities to engage the pupils as active learners is used effectively. For example, in a Sixth Form lesson on environmental ethics some students made excellent presentations to the group, demonstrating very good knowledge and understanding of the issues in this moral maze. Homework is set regularly and there is regular assessment. Written work is marked with, usually, diagnostic comments made by the teacher. Peer assessment is also used, as was seen in a Year 11 lesson on the Sacraments, as well as in the Sixth Form lesson mentioned above. Pupils are aware of their levels or predicted grades. Results of assessments are meticulously recorded in their planners. In lessons that are less than good there is often a lack of pace and opportunities are missed to explore important concepts beyond a superficial level. Good use is made of ICT as a teaching aid and sometimes also by the pupils as a tool for learning. Relationships are generally very good in lessons, although some low-level disruption when pupils are off task can be linked to lessons that lack sufficient pace. Differentiation is usually by outcome or support given by the teacher, which is usually good. However the department ought to take steps to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum by ensuring the materials are more suited to pupils whose first language is not English.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 2

The quality of the content of the religious education curriculum is overall, good. However the inspectors have concerns about the time available for the subject at Key Stage 3. At this key stage, religious education is taught in rotation with Geography, History and ICT. In this arrangement pupils have a daily lesson of religious education for a quarter of the year. This amounts to less than 5% of curriculum time and is therefore significantly short of the requirements of the Bishops' Conference (10%), which makes it very difficult to meet in full the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum time is 10% and the content of the Edexcel course studied – 'Roman Catholic Christianity and the Catholic perspective on Religion and Life' – is very suitable for the pupils and meets their needs. In addition to the A level course in Philosophy and Ethics, the school has this year introduced the new Cambridge Pre-U course in Philosophy and Theology to replace the AS

and A2 level. This course is very suitable and is popular, with 31 students choosing it in Year 12. General religious education in the Sixth Form is, to some extent, offered through six half-day Focus Days throughout the year. A mixture of speakers, workshops and activities cover a range of issues including relationships, justice, leadership, and social services. These issues, depending on their content and delivery, could lend themselves to encouraging the religious, spiritual and moral development, but the inspectors recommend that the school leaders review the present provision to ensure the focus of these days have more explicit links.

Leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership and management of religious education is very good. The head of department is committed to raising standards and in this he has been very successful. He has worked hard on the schemes of work as recommended in the last inspection. The department development plan is clear and in line with the priorities of the school but these would need to be adapted to fulfil the expectations of the Bishops' Conference. The department is developing a culture of lesson observation and the sharing of good practice and this should continue. The subject leader has high expectations of and gives good support to teachers of religious education. Pupils' progress is well monitored, examination results well analysed and target setting is based on up-to-date and accurate data. The school has recently invested significant funding in providing good quality resources, eg ICT, textbooks and furniture. The religious education classrooms, while not very spacious, are generally adequate but some, because of their size, limit the learning activities in which pupils can engage. There is some pupils' work on display but, overall, the rooms could be more stimulating and vibrant as learning environments.