

**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

Wimbledon College
Edge Hill
Wimbledon
SW19 4NS

Chair of Governors Mr Andrew Kennedy
Headteacher Fr A Porter, SJ
Inspectors Mr Peter Ward
Mr Chris Cahill

Inspection dates 19-20 June 2007

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**
St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington BR5 2SR
Tel 01689 829331 Fax 01689 829255
Director of Education: Dr Dilys Wadman

Introduction

Description of the school

Wimbledon College is a voluntary aided school under the Trusteeship of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in the Archdiocese of Southwark. It serves the parishes of the Merton Deanery and also draws from some one hundred parishes and primary schools further afield. All pupils in Years 7-11 are baptised Catholics apart from a small number of boys with Statements of Special Educational Needs.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 18 years of age (Years 7 to 13). The number currently on roll is 1335 including 320 in the Sixth Form which is run jointly with the Ursuline High School Wimbledon.

The attainment of pupils entering the school is broadly average for current Y10 and above and slightly above average for Y7-9. The proportion of Y7 pupils eligible for free school meals is 8.2%; 41% belong to ethnic minority groups; 14% do not have English as their first language and 25% have special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

Wimbledon College is a good Catholic school with an outstanding Catholic community life. The headteacher, supported by a committed governing body, shows first class leadership in addressing the challenges faced by the College. A regular systematic review of its Catholic life would help to ensure that it continues to develop. The existing development planning of the chaplaincy demonstrates that there is good capacity to achieve this goal. The need to improve achievement in religious education may be addressed in a number of ways. Leadership and management of religious education is such that there is good capacity to address these, particularly with the introduction of the improved school-wide data monitoring and tracking system.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

- 1 Develop the self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school and incorporate judgements
- 2 Amplify existing schemes of work and incorporate assessment for learning
- 3 Continue to raise academic standards through monitoring of teaching and learning

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the College are excellent. All members of the school community know and appreciate the distinctive Jesuit ethos articulated by St Ignatius Loyola in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus: "improvement in living and learning to the greater glory of God and the common good". This vision pervades all aspects of College life. It is shared among staff through, for example the staff retreat day and joint training day with Ursuline High School with whom the College shares a common sixth form. There is a strong commitment to promote theological as well as religious literacy through religious education. The religious and liturgical life are outstanding, with an extensive range of opportunities that seek to enable every pupil to grow in their life of faith. Students personal development is also outstanding, reflecting excellent school systems implemented by committed staff. Service to the school and wider community is promoted, with many pupils contributing to a very wide range of activities. Governors maintain a good knowledge of the College, not least through the annual day spent in College shadowing and meeting staff.

Grade 1

Quality of Catholic life of the school

Wimbledon College is a flourishing Catholic school in the Ignatian tradition. Staff reflect the institutional commitment of the College to the well-being of all pupils in line with the Jesuit maxim *cura personalis*, 'care of the individual person', resulting in a positive atmosphere within the College with relationships based clearly on Gospel values. A particular feature is the range and nature of opportunities provided for pupils to contribute to development and review of policies and practices. The headteacher and governors provide very good leadership to the Catholic life of the school and constantly seek to develop further its Jesuit character. Prayer and worship are central to its life, facilitated by an established lay chaplain who is a member of the leadership team and by a Jesuit chaplain. The chapel and chaplaincy rooms located at the heart of the College are the focus of an extensive range of activities. These extend to local and global initiatives including a long-standing one to support a Catholic school in southern India. The chaplaincy's challenging yet realistic development plan involves increasing pupil participation in an increasing range of liturgies and activities in addition to greater support for and engagement with local Catholic primary schools and parishes.

Grade 1

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

The quality of provision for prayer and collective worship is outstanding. Voluntary Mass is celebrated by the school chaplain before school each morning in the school chapel. Morning prayer is celebrated in tutor groups during morning registration, staff having a variety of resources from which to draw including the College intranet. The regular pattern of assemblies is led by the chaplain in the well-appointed assembly hall where pupils are very attentive. It is based upon the liturgical year which is also marked by a range of liturgical celebrations. During the inspection, the Year 9 assembly marked the feast of St John Fisher and St Thomas More with a reflection on the significance of their stand for today, illustrated effectively on the hall's screen. This was followed by a powerful audio-visual presentation by a tutor group exploring the plight and circumstances of refugees across the world today. Years 7 and 8 marked the feast with Mass in the local parish church celebrated by the headteacher and chaplain with scores of pupils making individual contributions to the liturgy. Pupils respond positively to these celebrations which contribute to their spiritual and moral development.

Grade 1

Religious education

In Years 7-9, the College's religious education programme is taught as part of the humanities carousel with pupils receiving a daily lesson for one quarter of the school year. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow a GCSE course containing scripture and Catholic Christianity modules for three periods per week. Sixth form provision is currently being restructured, with the overwhelming majority of students following an AS course for four terms – some continuing to sit a GCE Advance Level examination – while the remainder follow a general religious education course in Year 12. There are also other timetabled events for all years that contribute to religious education.

Achievement and standards

Achievement at GCSE has been improving in recent years but the proportion gaining at least GCSE grade C is below that of those achieving a minimum of GCSE grade C in at least five subjects for the College as a whole. The proportion achieving grades A/A* is inconsistent, year on year. Achievement at AS is significantly above the national average but few students sit GCE Advanced Level Religious Studies, negating the validity of statistical comparisons. The College is still developing its assessment of religious education in Years 7-9 using Levels of Attainment so data is unreliable for comparative purposes. Throughout the College, religious education contributes positively to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils who make a positive contribution to the college community. Pupils recounted how their enjoyment of religious education grew as they progress through the school.

Grade 3

Quality of provision for religious education

Pupils generally make good progress and show positive attitudes to work. Teachers are committed to teaching Catholic belief and religious literacy, with more able pupils being challenged effectively to develop their theological literacy, in line with the College's Jesuit mission. Good lessons involve a variety of activities designed to engage pupils with different learning styles taught at a good pace, good developmental questioning by the teacher and a range of opportunities to record learning. Pupils demonstrate a high level of understanding and response with one during the inspection explaining that their artwork showed "goodness containing the evil". Less successful teaching lacked focus and pace, with pupils having fewer opportunities to consolidate their learning and failing to make the progress of which they were capable. ICT is used in some lessons, its development being one of the areas for development of the department. These weaknesses have been identified through lesson observation and pupil surveys and a process for improvement is in place. Pupils, particularly in the upper school, are very positive about their religious education teaching and acknowledge that they have been challenged to think spiritually, ethically and theologically.

Grade 2

The religious education curriculum

Throughout the College the religious education curriculum makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and is generally appropriate for most pupils. In key stage 3, religious education is taught in an innovative carousel arrangement which provides daily lessons for each of the four subjects in the carousel for a quarter of the year. This ensures that religious education has a high profile with pupils while they are being taught the subject but overall the time devoted to it falls short of 10% of the length of the taught week as called for in the May 2000 statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Notwithstanding the contribution of focus days and events such as the Year 8 experience "in the steps of the martyrs", the restricted curriculum time is insufficient to cover the requirements of the Curriculum Directory in full so the religious education curriculum in key stage 3 is satisfactory. At key stage 4 the expectations of the May 2000 statement are met and the GCSE religious studies option papers studied are appropriate. Provision for general religious education and GCE religious education are in transition. The overwhelming majority of students follow an AS religious studies course which is broadly focused so as to address many contemporary issues. The remaining students follow a general religious education course in Year 12 in line with the time stated in the 14-19 Curriculum Guidance document. Focus days also contribute to the religious education curriculum for 14-19 year old students which is good but the College needs to ensure that provision for Year 13 students remains consistent with the 14-19 Curriculum Guidance document.

Grade ks3 **3** 14-19 **2**

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of religious education is good. The head of department provides clear leadership in line with the Jesuit vision of Catholic education. Religious education is a department within the humanities faculty but the head of religious education is a member of the senior leadership team. Governors oversight includes visiting the department on Governors' Open Day. Together this ensures that leadership of religious education lies at the heart of the College.

There is an adequate number of qualified teachers and regular lesson observation informs provision for their professional development and department planning. The departmental development plan, based on an appreciation of the needs of the department, would be enhanced by more structured self-evaluation. The department handbook contains relevant policies and practices. The current schemes of work would benefit from clearer identification of a wider range of assessment for learning opportunities and strategies. Academic monitoring and target setting is developing significantly in line with advances throughout the College. There are adequate dedicated classrooms with displays which include pupils' work. The budget is well managed to ensure appropriate textbooks and related resources. There is scope to develop further the provision and use of ICT in support of religious education.

Grade 2