

St Aloysius Catholic College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100459
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	376401
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2012
Lead inspector	Alison Thomson

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	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1023
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ashitey Ollennu
Headteacher	Tom Mannion
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 November 2006
School address	Hornsey Lane Highgate London N6 5LY
Telephone number	020 7263 1391
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Age group	11–19
Inspection date(s)	6–7 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alison Thomson

Additional Inspector

Roger Garrett

Additional Inspector

Joan Lindsay

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to use in the planning of the inspection. Inspectors observed 34 teachers teaching 36 lessons, of which 3 were joint observations with the senior leadership team. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school leaders and students. The inspectors observed the school's work, including analyses of the students' work, and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to development planning, safeguarding and child protection, the monitoring of the quality of teaching, external views of the school and minutes of the governing body meetings. They also analysed questionnaires from 63 parents and carers, 149 students and 18 staff.

Information about the school

This school is a larger than average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The proportion of students from ethnic minority groups, including those who do not have English as their first language, is also much higher than average. The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is average, although the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The school is a specialist mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) college. The school has met and exceeded government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has gained many awards, including the Leading Aspect award for its successful promotion of a positive learning environment. The sixth form opened in September 2010 and is part of a local consortium.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- St Aloysius is an outstanding school and one that keeps getting better. The effectiveness of the recently opened sixth form is good. The following comment illustrates the high esteem in which the school is held by parents and carers, staff and students alike, 'The ethos for learning here is fantastic.'
- Students' achievement is outstanding. Students enter in Year 7 with below average attainment and leave at the end of Year 11 with attainment that is well above average. Progress is outstanding. This includes pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and also those for whom English is not their first language. Equality of opportunity is excellent.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers are very enthusiastic and use skilful questioning to challenge students and make them think. They regularly assess students' work most effectively and make it clear to them how they can improve it. However, occasionally the enthusiasm of the students to be involved in their own learning and progress is not always maximised.
- Students behave extremely well and say that they feel very safe in school. They are very polite and welcoming and they look after each other well. They cooperate in a very mature way in lessons and this has a highly positive effect on their learning. The students rate behaviour highly and they are very proactive in the promotion of their own safety and that of others.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are highly successful. The school knows its strengths and the areas to develop further extremely well. Monitoring and evaluation of students' progress are carried out very rigorously and, along with the outstanding curriculum, ensure that the needs and interests of all students are met very effectively. The school provides many memorable experiences for its students, such as a visit to Beijing, successfully promoting their mature appreciation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maximise learning and progress in all lessons by:
 - always sharing clear criteria for success with the students
 - encouraging the students to reflect on how well they are learning

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students start in Year 7 with attainment that is generally below average. Excellent induction procedures, including mentoring by older boys, help them to settle quickly and get a very confident start. Progress throughout school is outstanding, particularly in Years 10 and 11. By the time the students leave at the end of Year 11 their attainment is well above average, especially so in mathematics, one of the school's specialist subjects. All groups of students make outstanding progress throughout the school. In previous years, attainment of the most-able students has not always been as high as that of other students. Strategies, such as teaching higher-level thinking skills in English, have impacted well on their performance and as a result have narrowed the gap between the progress those students make compared to that of their peers. The school's data of current progress and inspection evidence confirm this. Students rise particularly well to challenges, such as in a Year 11 history lesson, where they made outstanding progress, maturely discussing how the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan changed the Cold War.

Parents and carers strongly agree in the questionnaires that their children are achieving very well. The school's data show that progress has steadily improved over the past seven years. This is helped greatly by the school's rigorous monitoring of progress, timely interventions and extensive preparation for examinations. It is a testament both to the boys and to their parents and carers that attendance at Saturday school, sometimes used for revision, is so high. Students are very respectful of each other and encourage each other to learn well. This was exemplified well in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on probability. Here, they listened attentively to each other giving explanations on how to calculate probabilities by drawing tree diagrams. Great care is taken to introduce literacy, numeracy and ICT into as many lessons as possible, ensuring that the application of these skills is excellent. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do as well as their peers, because teachers make suitable adjustments to materials and activities so that they match students' needs. High levels of staffing enable students of varying abilities to make outstanding progress, as a result of highly effective levels of care and one-to-one support they receive from teaching assistants. Those students who are new to learning English make outstanding progress as a result of various strategies, such as staff providing practical activities using visual clues for word recognition.

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Quality of teaching

The questionnaires showed that parents and carers strongly agree that their children are well taught. Outstanding teaching was observed in many lessons during the inspection. Teachers are very enthusiastic and make learning enjoyable. They plan their lessons very effectively with work that is carefully matched to the abilities of all students. There is a very purposeful learning environment and expectations are high. For example, Year 10 students were often able to demonstrate a good understanding of the command word, evaluate, exemplified in a science lesson on the impact of quarrying on the environment. Work is scaffolded well to help students have secure knowledge and understanding of tricky skills, such as using a protractor correctly in Year 8 mathematics.

Students gain confidence because they are given many opportunities to voice their opinions, share ideas and help assess their own learning, all of which contribute effectively to their excellent spiritual, moral and social development. This was exemplified well in a Year 12 biology lesson, where students helped to assess each others' presentations. Teachers assess students' work thoroughly. Along with correcting mistakes and giving praise, they write well-chosen comments to help students know how they can improve their work. There are, however, a few lessons in which students are not given sufficiently clear ways of being able to tell how well they are learning or enough time for reflection time in order to do this. In those lessons, progress is not as good as it could be. Curriculum planning allows for many opportunities for students to practise their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Year 11 students were seen making outstanding progress designing very professional looking computer games for younger children.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is outstanding and there is much evidence that it has been so for some time, for example from talking to the older students. When asked what he liked best about school, one student said, 'It's the way the teachers work so hard for us to succeed.' Not only do the teachers work hard, but the students do too. They place a high importance on their own learning and show this, for example, by their commitment to revising for examinations. Incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare and any that occur are dealt with very well. Staff, students, parents and carers report that there is virtually no bullying of any type, including name calling or homophobic comments, within the school. This is reflected in a student's comment, 'Bullying just doesn't happen here at St Aloysius.' There have been few exclusions in the recent history of the school. Attendance is consistently above average and students are punctual despite the local traffic problems. Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed strongly that behaviour is good and all staff who returned the questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good. Similarly, the pupils' questionnaires showed the students agreed that behaviour is good in lessons most of the time. Students' behaviour impacts extremely well on their learning. This was seen many times throughout the inspection. For example, students rise well to the challenge of being fully involved in their own learning when they are given the

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opportunity to do so.

Throughout the inspection there were many examples of the students being very considerate towards others. The parents' and carers' questionnaire agreed that the school keeps their children safe. Similarly, most students agreed that they feel safe in school all or most of the time. Students told the inspectors that they feel particularly safe when going home from school as the school is vigilant in ensuring their safety, even to the extent of accompanying them part of the way. They have an extremely good understanding of how to take care of themselves and one another. Students take their roles such as mentors and prefects very seriously, saying these give them enormous pride. They talked about the importance of being Youth Ambassadors, going into nearby primary schools to promote keeping safe to the pupils there.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are exemplary and all staff are ambitious on behalf of their students. The needs and interests of the students are paramount and education is something that is done with the students rather than to the students. It is clear that all staff and students feel extremely valued. The headteacher, ably assisted by the senior leadership team, delegates well and middle leaders play a vital role in monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching in their areas. The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well. It monitors and evaluates the progress of the pupils rigorously and any underachievement is addressed quickly and effectively. Consequently, attainment and progress have improved strongly. Equality of opportunity is outstanding, with all groups of students making outstanding progress. Racism and poor behaviour are not tolerated and are very rare indeed. The school's national award for behaviour and cohesiveness is a testament to its harmonious multicultural community. Governance is outstanding. Members of the governing body have been very effective in helping to move the school forward and are fully involved, not only in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school but also their own performance.

The school has been successful in its promotion of the importance of learning and provides the students with a highly appropriate curriculum that impacts particularly well on their academic achievement as well as their personal development. The curriculum is enriched by inspiring assemblies, themed weeks, trips and residential visits which provide further opportunities for pupils to broaden their social skills. There is a vast array of after-school clubs as well as Saturday school, which is extremely popular and well attended. The school wins many trophies in a variety of sporting events, including the national basketball championships. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by high expectations of all staff who present very positive role models for the pupils. This enables students whose circumstances could make them vulnerable to overcome their difficulties and make significant changes in their attitudes and in their lives at home. The students appreciate the quiet private place for school gives them for daily prayer at lunchtimes. Safety is a very high priority and this approach results in students feeling

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extremely safe and secure. Safeguarding is robust with clear policies and very thorough risk assessments, often involving the students themselves. Parents and carers agree strongly that the school keeps them very well informed, acts promptly on any concerns and helps them to be fully involved in their children's learning. Since the previous inspection the school has raised levels of attainment, improved teaching, behaviour and attendance which demonstrate that its capacity to improve further is outstanding.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



8 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of St Aloysius RC College, London N6 5LY

The inspectors would all like to thank you most sincerely for engaging with us so well when we visited your school recently. You were very keen to talk to us and tell us about the many things that you like about your school. We were hugely impressed by your behaviour and your mature attitude to learning. Your teachers really encourage you to do well and we can see that, in turn, you thoroughly enjoy learning and play a major part in achieving as well as you do. Those of you in the sixth form told us that you enjoy being there hugely and are making good progress. We agree that the effectiveness of your sixth form is good.

Here are some of the responses you gave when asked to describe your school.

- 'It's one where the teachers work hard for us to succeed.'
- 'It's a great atmosphere - it's all about the students.'
- 'It's strict, but we do well and have lots of opportunities.'
- 'It's really social and closer.'
- 'It's a happy one and I am so glad that I picked this school.'

We agree with all your comments. We judge the overall effectiveness of your school to be outstanding, including your achievement in the main school, the teaching you receive, your curriculum and your behaviour and safety. Your school is particularly well led and managed and even though the school is outstanding, it is not complacent. Your headteacher says that this inspection doesn't end the journey of improvement, but starts it. You can help the school to improve even further by maximising your learning in every lesson. We would like you to be as reflective as possible about your learning and clarify with your teachers, if you are unsure, how you can tell how well you are learning.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time in school and we wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson
Lead inspector

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