

Bellerive FCJ Catholic College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	138183
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	404554
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	John Coleman HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Voluntary Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	894
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Thornton
Headteacher	Sr Brigid Halligan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector
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This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons taught by 32 different teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior staff, heads of department, external consultants and several groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including data showing students' attainment and progress, policies, the minutes of governing body meetings, reports from external consultants, safeguarding records and students' work. Inspectors took account of the questionnaires from a sample of 147 students, 16 staff and from 303 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Bellerive FCJ Catholic College is smaller than an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is about twice the national average. The majority of students are of White British heritage. A very small proportion of students speak English as an additional language. The percentage of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The percentage of students who are supported at school action plus or those with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school specialises in mathematics, sciences computing and applied learning. The school meets the current government floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. On 1 June 2012, the school was granted Academy status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Due to good leadership and management and good teaching, students' achievement is good overall. It is not yet outstanding because there are variations in students' achievements across key stages, subjects and some student groups.
- Overall, the progress made by students in most subjects is good, so that from average starting points, students leave Year 11 with attainment which is generally above average. The progress made by students in mathematics, by some of the highest attaining students and by students in the sixth form is less strong, and more is satisfactory than good.
- The quality of teaching while good overall is variable. For example, in mathematics, due in part to significant staffing instability, teaching is satisfactory, but is improving as a result of the effective measures taken by senior school leaders. The leadership of teaching is good.
- The quality of leadership and management in the school is good. Over time, leaders have ensured the maintenance of above average standards for students; they have identified underperforming areas through effective performance management, such as mathematics, and taken swift actions to remedy any shortfalls. Notably, leaders inspire staff to achieve very high rates of personal development for students and the quality of pastoral provision is first class. Taken together, these demonstrate good capacity to improve the school.
- The sixth form is satisfactory overall and improving. Students' achievement is satisfactory over time. Good and effective leadership is successfully improving the quality of the curriculum to widen choices for students, such as the introduction of further mathematics and geography at AS and A level.
- Students' behaviour and safety are outstanding. Students show exemplary levels of courtesy to visitors. They act as excellent ambassadors for their school. Behaviour in

classes and around the school building is first rate. Any minor and rare disruption is dealt with rapidly by staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion and consistency of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers make more effective use of the records of students' prior learning to fully inform their lesson plans
 - raising the level of challenge in lessons for the higher-attaining students to ensure their good, rather than satisfactory, progress
 - reducing the time taken in lessons to introduce and explain the initial activity
 - increasing the focus of leaders' monitoring on the progress of students in lessons
 - fully embedding the recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics
 - ensuring that improvements to teaching in the sixth form accelerate the rate of students' progress and achievement from satisfactory to good.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment which are broadly average. Due to mostly good teaching they make good progress in lessons. For example, in English, students make consistently good progress in acquiring skills in reading, writing and communication. External examination results in recent years show attainment in English to be above average. In English lessons seen by inspectors, the students concentrated very well and engaged freely in discussions about their work. This aids their understanding as they share their ideas. In every subject, the often impeccable behaviour of students makes an excellent contribution to their learning. This enables them to get the very best from every experience offered in lessons. In mathematics lessons, students were seen to make good or satisfactory progress and inspection evidence shows the rate of progress to be improving during the current academic year. Students' questionnaires show that the vast majority think they learn a lot in lessons, that teaching is good and enables them to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. The responses from parents and carers show a similar supportive view.

The distribution of students' prior attainment levels is similar to that found nationally. Students of below average or average prior attainment make consistently good progress throughout the school as shown by the percentage of students who achieve five A* to C grades in GCSE examinations which is consistently above average. Students of above average prior attainment make mostly satisfactory progress as shown by the average percentage of students gaining the highest A*/A grades in GCSE examinations. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is due to the effectiveness of additional support provided by the school. In the sixth form, students generally enter with levels of attainment which are below those found in most sixth forms nationally. Students make satisfactory progress over time, though this is improving due to increasingly good teaching. Students in Year 11 and Year 13, who leave the school, show very high rates of successful entry to further education, training or employment.

Quality of teaching

During the inspection, the vast majority of the teaching which was observed was good. Most other teaching was satisfactory, a small amount was outstanding and no inadequate teaching was seen. This profile supports the school's view which is informed by senior and middle leaders' monitoring and by external reviews. Students' questionnaires and the views offered by students in discussion with inspectors show very positive opinions about the quality of teaching which they receive. Parents and carers questionnaires were of like mind. A significant strength of the school is the inclusive way in which students are welcomed on admission from other schools. They are helped to quickly meet the very high expectations of the school regarding behaviour and attitudes to learning. This has an extremely good impact on the social and moral development of students. The quality of teaching, support and guidance for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good and leads to this group making good progress.

Teachers plan lessons carefully and many lessons make effective use of curriculum resources to enable students to make links to everyday life. For example, in an English lesson students studied poems from different cultures and this developed their knowledge of and empathy with people and societies of contrasting features to Britain. The setting arrangements in some subjects help teachers to effectively match the level of challenge to the different prior attainment levels of students. Teachers establish excellent relationships with students which result in very good one-to-one or small group support in the midst of lessons, as teachers circulate among the class. However, the highest attaining students are not always stretched to reach their full potential because they are sometimes expected to complete the same work as all other students. In these cases the pace of their learning slows. Good and outstanding lessons are characterised by activities which quickly capture the interest and attention of students. In these lessons, learning proceeds at a fast pace in small chunks of time, at the end of which the teacher skilfully questions students, to ensure their full understanding before rapidly moving on to a more challenging task. For example, in a lesson seen by inspectors, students discussed what is meant by the 'literary canon.' Students showed very high levels of interest as they engaged in lively debate. The pace of learning was excellent because the teacher guided students within a set timeframe. They showed outstanding understanding of a range of complex values and judgements.

Lessons seen which were satisfactory, were not good because insufficient use was made of information on students' prior learning in determining the starting points for different groups of pupils. In such lessons, teachers often use over lengthy explanations. Too much time is taken at the start of lessons before getting to the main focus of learning and the expectations for the higher-attaining students are too low.

Variations in the quality of teaching explain why it is not judged as outstanding. Some inconsistencies such as in the expectations of the higher-attaining pupils are present in several subjects, others are as a result of weaknesses within departments. For example, when mathematics teaching was less than good senior leaders took decisive actions to remedy this shortcoming. During the inspection there was clear evidence of strong improvement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in lessons is at least good and is often outstanding. The relationships between staff and students, and between students, are first class. They are warm, friendly and respectful and enable learning to proceed smoothly. Students say that bullying of all types is rare and they are confident in reporting any concerns to staff. The staff are extremely consistent in the way they place very high expectations on students' behaviour. Behaviour records over time show very few incidents. Students say they feel safe and that the key feature of their school is the firm but friendly way staff treat students and the high level of cooperation between students. Inspectors concur with students' opinions. The impact of the school's actions to improve students' attendance is shown in the significant improvement this year. Attendance rates are now above average. This is due to very effective communication with students and families through telephone calls, text messaging and visits by staff to students' homes. A small minority of questionnaire returns from parents and carers, and from some students, raised concerns over behaviour. The vast majority of parents and carers', and students' questionnaires agreed that there is a good standard of behaviour. Inspectors judge that while there are individual occasions when minor incidents occur, these are infrequent, dealt with well by staff, and, overall, behaviour is outstanding.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior staff form an effective team which successfully monitors the school's performance. Through this they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to improve. Historically, a characteristic of senior leaders' monitoring has been a relatively informal structure which has succeeded due to excellent dialogue and relationships between the senior team. Recently, more formal structures have been introduced, especially to the tracking systems for measuring students' progress and to the developing roles of middle leaders. This is significantly improving the consistency of leaders' practice across departments and key stages. For example, the use of data showing students' attainment is beginning to be used more effectively to monitor staff performance, and to ensure that teachers plan their lessons to match all students' needs. Leaders have rightfully targeted improvements for the higher-attaining students in this way. The monitoring of teaching is undertaken by senior and middle leaders effectively but the emphasis upon students' progress in lessons is not always sharp enough.

Effective use is made by leaders of external expertise, to complement internal staff skills. For example, senior leaders identified previous underperformance in mathematics. They invited a local authority review. As a result, targeted staff training was implemented and provided by external consultants. Recent monitoring and inspection evidence shows good improvement to the quality of teaching and to the rate of students' progress. This clearly demonstrates leaders' good capacity to improve. The governing body demonstrates effective levels of challenge and support to senior leaders as shown by the minutes of meetings.

Students' behaviour and safety are an outstanding feature of the school due to the excellent role models provided by staff and their consistent application of policies and procedures. Safeguarding arrangements and all statutory requirements are met. The good curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and is extended and enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities. The school is improving its curriculum by offering a widening range of subjects and pathways, especially in the sixth form. Curriculum choices and pathways are well-matched to students' future employment or training needs. The school's science and mathematics specialisms make a varied but strongly improving contribution to students'

learning and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Achievement is good and improving, and any gaps between the progress of different groups of students are closing, thus ensuring an equality of opportunity for all.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



15 June 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Bellerive FCJ Catholic College, Liverpool, L8 3SB

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school when we visited you recently. We would like to share with you what we found out about your school. We judged that the overall effectiveness of Bellerive FCJ Catholic College is good. These are the main reasons why we judged the school to be good.

- Students' behaviour and safety are outstanding. You feel safe and say that your school is firm, fair and friendly. Staff and students get on well together and staff provide excellent support for students' personal development.
- Teaching is good and improving. Overall, it leads to students making good progress, though this varies. In mathematics, the sixth form and for the highest attaining students, progress is satisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good. School leaders are improving the quality of teaching, widening curriculum choices and ensure outstanding provision for your well-being.
- Students' achievement is good. You gain the skills, knowledge and understanding you will need as you move on to further education, employment or training.

All schools need to develop and improve. We have asked that the headteacher and staff improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is good and outstanding. This is to ensure that you make better progress in mathematics, in the sixth form and that more of you gain the highest grades in external examinations such as GCSE.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector

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