

# Finchley Catholic High School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	101362
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323454
Inspection dates	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Samantha Morgan-Price (HMI)

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

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Type of School	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	1125
Sixth form	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Cunningham
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Hoare
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2005
School address	Woodside Lane Finchley London N12 8TA
Telephone number	020 8445 0105
Fax number	020 8446 0691

Age group	11-18
Inspection Date(s)	6 November 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- achievement and standards within the school in 2008, particularly for sixth form students
- management actions to raise the achievement of students in the few underperforming subjects
- the progress made by more able students, particularly at Key Stage 4, and the support available within the school to raise their achievement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with the headteacher, other teachers, the vice-chair of governors, one other governor and students at the school. The inspectors also examined documentation and parental surveys. Other aspects of the school's work were not examined in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included in this report.

## Description of the school

Finchley Catholic High School is a boys' school of average size. The school has a large sixth form, which now admits girls. Around half of students are from minority ethnic heritages, which is higher than that found nationally. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs are well below national averages. The school received specialist business and enterprise status in 2002.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Finchley Catholic High School is a good school. The school has a strong ethos based on Christian values. Its leaders and managers have worked hard to improve the standard of education and care the boys receive and this has resulted in high and improving standards in both Year 9 and GCSE national tests.

Students enter the school with standards that are above average. They make good progress to achieve exceptionally high results in national examinations in Year 9 and at GCSE. The school strives and is ambitious for pupils' success. Managers have recognised that some boys who achieved above level 4 in their national tests at Key Stage 2 do not do as well as they should and have put clear strategies in place to improve things. The results of this are not yet fully evident. The progress students make in science across all key stages is not as good as other subjects. Results in Year 9 and GCSE have continued to improve year by year after a dip in GCSE results in 2006. All students achieve well because of good teaching and an excellent curriculum.

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students are encouraged to think of others and make full use of opportunities to support their peers. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and their participation in sporting activities within the school is good. Students have a thorough understanding of how to remain safe and know where to report any concerns, which they say are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students enjoy school and the rate of attendance is high and improving. Students' behaviour within lessons and around the school is outstanding. They know what standard of behaviour is expected of them, and one pupil stated, 'I am proud to say I go here'. Students make an exceptional contribution to the community. Their work includes supporting primary school students and undertaking various charitable fundraising activities. Each year, a number of students are nominated by their peers to receive awards in recognition of their outstanding community work. Students' development of workplace skills is good, although they have insufficient opportunities to develop independence and work on their own initiative in lessons.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use information communication technology (ICT) in lessons well and they demonstrate good subject knowledge. In the better lessons, students engage purposefully in discussions and individuals contribute willingly. In these lessons, teachers set appropriate extension tasks to improve students' subject knowledge. In the less successful lessons, there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop independent learning and they are not challenged by the level of work, particularly the more able. In these lessons, teachers use limited question and answer techniques to assess students' understanding. In some subjects, the diagnostic marking and feedback is not precise enough to enable students to improve on their work.

The curriculum is outstanding and is tailored to meet the needs of many individual students. There is a wide range of options for those students identified as underachieving or disaffected. The new extended vocational curriculum complements the range of GCSEs on offer extremely well. There is a good range of work-related opportunities beginning in Year 7 which are linked to the school's specialist status. The specialist status has enabled students to access specialist subjects such as business studies and the take-up of such subjects at GCSE is high. The school offers a very broad extra-curricular programme of activities.

Care, guidance and support for students are good. There is an effective pastoral system in place which promotes students' personal development. For example, one student said the school was 'safe and caring'. Year 7 students settle quickly and happily into their new school because of the good induction programme provided. The school has forged good relationships with parents and outside agencies. Teachers have a good understanding of students' academic progress and any underachievement is identified quickly. The use of learning mentors to support students is effective. Students know their targets and receive good support from tutors.

Leadership and management are good. A tireless headteacher and a strong leadership team lead the school well. This team effectively communicate the key priorities of the school to staff. Community cohesion is good. The school works well with its local community. Most of the challenging targets managers have set to improve the school have been met, including specialist targets, although the improvement of students' achievement in science has been less rapid. There has been some improvement in the achievement of more able boys although more can be done to support them in

reaching their full potential. Governors know the school's priorities well and are becoming effective as critical friends by challenging aspects of the school's work. Investment in improving the school's buildings and resources has had a positive impact on the students' learning environment; for example, the investment in a new language laboratory is increasing students' participation in modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4. The school provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

**Grade: 2**

Students enter the sixth form from various schools within the borough with standards that are below the national average. They make outstanding progress to achieve good results in their AS and A level examinations, because of effective care, guidance and support, good teaching and a good curriculum. Students demonstrate outstanding personal development that includes them acting as business advisors to primary school children who run their own business enterprise, as well as extensive charity work.

The curriculum provides a good range of courses which enable students to study a variety of subjects at AS and A level. There are plans to extend pathways available to students and the school has recently introduced additional vocational courses. The school has developed good links with another local secondary school to extend the curriculum available. The management team within the sixth form has strengthened the monitoring and support given to students, which has resulted in improved attendance in both Years 12 and 13.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement for more able students at GCSE and in science across all three key stages.
- Improve the quality of assessment of learning, diagnostic marking and feedback to ensure students know how to improve.

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**Annex A**

# Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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## Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

## Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

## Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

## The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

<sup>2</sup> IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

## Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	



## Annex B



## Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

19 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Finchley Catholic High School, London, N12 8TA

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and for telling us what you thought about it. I know you enjoy school, especially the opportunities to take some of the specialist business and enterprise subjects.

We judged both the school and the sixth form to be good. You achieve very high standards in your national examinations in Year 9 and GCSEs. You make good progress, which in the main, is due to the good teaching, effective care, guidance and support the school provides and the outstanding curriculum on offer for Years 7 to 11. The inspection team did recognise that students that are more able are capable of achieving better results at GCSE and that your achievement in science has been less rapid than in other subjects. We judged that students in the sixth form make outstanding progress to achieve exceptionally well. The majority of you are leaving the sixth form with good standards in your A Levels.

You demonstrate outstanding personal development. Your attendance is outstanding and your behaviour is exemplary. You make an outstanding contribution to the community and I am aware that some of you are given awards by your peers for your contribution to the community. Many of you in the sixth form undertake exceptionally good work helping primary school children to develop enterprise skills.

We did identify that there were two points that the school needs to focus on. We have asked the leaders and managers at the school to:

- improve achievement of the more able students at GCSE and in science across all three key stages
- improve the quality of assessing how well you are doing in lessons, diagnostic marking and feedback, to ensure you know what to do to improve your work.

I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price  
Her Majesty's Inspector