



# Sir James Smith's Community School

Inspection Report - Amended

**Unique Reference Number** 112039  
**Local Authority** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 289156  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Pauline Robins HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Dark Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Camelford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		PL32 9UJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01840 213274
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	604	<b>Fax number</b>	01840 212189
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	62		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Trevor Griffiths
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Perlmutter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–19	12–13 September 2006	289156

## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Sir James Smith's is a smaller than average secondary school and sixth form specialising in humanities. It is situated in a rural and relatively isolated community with approximately 70% of its pupils travelling daily by bus. The majority of students are of White British origin. There are very few students who speak English as an additional language or are looked after by the local authority. Although there are an average number of students with learning difficulties or disabilities, the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average. Students come from the full ability range but, taken overall, their attainment when they start at the school is barely average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Sir James Smith's is a school of two widely differing parts. On the one hand the main body of the school for pupils aged 11–16 is effective and provides a good standard of education. On the other, provision in the sixth form is inadequate. Although the latter has been acknowledged by the school the inadequacies have not been addressed. However, the inspection team recognises that there are some difficulties beyond the control of the school which relate to geographical isolation. As a result the school can only be judged to provide a satisfactory standard of education overall. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying the weakness in the sixth form. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

With the exception of the sixth form, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly with regard to the behaviour of the students. The good leadership and management of the main school together with a number of recent staffing changes demonstrate that there is capacity to improve throughout the school and tackle the shortcomings in the sixth form.

Students enter the school with standards that are barely average overall. As a result of the good teaching in the main school, they achieve very well in Years 7 to 9. They make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 and reach GCSE standards that are broadly in line with national averages. Aspects of care and personal support are good; this is a small school where staff know the students well and care about their well-being. However, academic guidance is inconsistent and does not give individuals enough information about how to improve their work and achieve higher standards. The students enjoy their education and demonstrate this through their positive attitudes to learning and their contribution to the school community. They told us that the introduction of a tutoring system, which brings together all year groups, develops confidence in the younger students and a sense of responsibility in those who are older. The curriculum offered to students in Years 10 and 11 is flexible and successfully caters for the needs and aspirations of learners. In Years 7 to 9 effective literacy provision has contributed significantly to the students' good achievement.

The school correctly judges that provision in the sixth form is inadequate. Regardless of this fact, sixth form students enjoy their education and have very positive attitudes to school. The nub of the weakness is inadequate achievement, particularly by girls. Sixth form teaching lacks the required rigour to address this issue. Academic guidance is very limited and generally unhelpful in tackling underachievement. The curriculum is limited in scope and unsuitable for a number of students. The standards reached by sixth form students are below average. Statistics provided by the school indicate that students' achievement over their two years in the sixth form is below what is expected and unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, students' personal development is limited because the school provides too few opportunities for them to take on greater responsibility.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 4**

The school has yet to address the two important issues of girls' underachievement and some very small group sizes. The learning of students in groups as small as one suffers because lessons continue as if there were a group. Teaching in some lessons is unchallenging and routine. The school recognises that the sixth form curriculum is too narrowly focused on A level studies and provides too few opportunities for students to pursue vocational courses. There are too few opportunities for students' enrichment through extra-curricular activities. Students say they feel that they are well cared for in a supportive environment and they get appropriate advice about university and other opportunities at age 18. However, the academic guidance they receive provides very little information for students on how they could improve their work. The leadership and management of the sixth form are inadequate. However, the school has now put in place an effective leadership team which frankly acknowledges the wrongs that have to be corrected and has started to put things right. Governors are very supportive of the sixth form and are keen for it to continue.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Carry out a swift and thorough review of the sixth form provision in order to raise achievement.
- Provide all students with sufficient information, which they can clearly understand, about how they can improve the quality of their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 4**

Overall, achievement is satisfactory. In 2005, results of national tests for 14-year-olds were broadly average in English and science and slightly below average in mathematics. Students improved their standards very well to reach these levels and made outstanding progress in science. Initiatives to improve boys' literacy have contributed significantly to the good performance of students by the end of Year 9. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress, as do those few who are looked after by the local authority or are from ethnic minority groups.

GCSE results have risen year-on-year up until 2005 and have been above the targets set in the last three years. A fall in results in 2006 was due to the relative weakness of that year group. Most students respond well to effective teaching and make good progress. However, a minority of boys in Years 10 and 11 barely achieve the grades of which they are capable. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to support these students, although they have not been established for sufficient time for their impact to be evident.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. From an early stage students develop increasingly good social skills which enable them to interact confidently. They reflect sensibly on moral and spiritual matters presented through assemblies. Successful visual and performing arts lessons provide good understanding of cultural elements and students respond well to opportunities for international understanding such as those provided through school links with Germany. Behaviour is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Students enjoy school and say that it is a friendly place to be. Attendance is satisfactory and students' attitudes are good. Students are attentive in lessons, courteous around the school and articulate in conversation with adults.

Students tell us that they feel safe. They appreciate the school's firm responses to incidents of bullying or infringement of behaviour codes. They adopt healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe and fit. Older students contribute to the community life of the school; younger students say they would like more opportunity to do so, for example through involvement in the School Council. The development of skills needed for working life is good and lessons in citizenship and personal health and social education (PSHE) prepare students well for their future in society and at work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 4**

The school is accurate in its assessment that teaching and learning throughout the main school are good. Through their own enthusiasm teachers try to make learning interesting and engaging for the students. In recent years extensive training and support has been in place to create a climate of continuous improvement in teaching. This has mainly focused on Years 7-9 but is now being applied to Years 10 and 11. As a result there remains a legacy of slower progress in this upper age group which is now being addressed. The teachers make good use of assessment information to inform their lesson planning and therefore work is pitched at the appropriate level for the needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils and enhance the teaching. However, teachers do not consistently set short term targets that are clearly understood by the students to enable them to improve their work and progress to the next level.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 4**

The school provides a good curriculum for its students and it is clear that the specialism in humanities is having a positive impact. Extensive steps are taken to ensure that the GCSE and vocational courses offered match the interests and aspirations of learners. All students follow GCSE courses in citizenship and religious education; these are popular and successful. In collaboration with local schools and colleges, the school provides a flexible programme of work-related courses for students in Years 10 and 11. Although this means that a few of these students miss some statutory lessons, the advantages considerably outweigh the loss. Staff provide a good programme of after-school activities. The extra transport provided by the school helps to ensure that these are well attended.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 4**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school's successful emphasis on care, safety, security and enjoyment leads to students' good personal development. Child protection arrangements are robust and the vetting of adults who work with learners and records are up to date.

Good new arrangements to ensure that pupils receive proper advice and guidance about careers have been implemented to ensure consistency in this area, but are as yet too recent to have had effect. Individual academic guidance from teachers about how to achieve targets is inconsistent; as a result this is not helpful in supporting the students to make the progress of which they are capable.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 4**

The headteacher provides good leadership and management in the main body of the school and is ably supported by a capable and highly professional senior management team. They know their school well, including the shortcomings of the sixth form. Systems and processes for self-evaluation are robust and provide an accurate description of the school. In some instances judgements are overly optimistic as the leadership team has failed to view the school in its totality and take sufficient account of the inadequacies in the sixth form. However, the newly appointed head of sixth form recognises the challenges that face the school and has already started to address the issues. As a result leadership and management can only be judged as satisfactory overall.

There is a breadth of experience on the governing body. They know the questions that need to be asked in order to hold the school to account and have carried out a thorough evaluation of their own effectiveness. However, they too have failed to acknowledge the issues of inadequacy in the sixth form.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	4
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	4

<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.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
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	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know I recently visited your school with a team of three other inspectors and this letter is to tell you what we found. Firstly, can I thank you all for the friendly, helpful and honest way in which you answered our questions and allowed us to look at your work and planners; particularly so early in the term when some of you are new to the school.

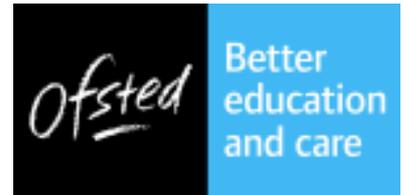
Students from all year groups said that they like coming to school, especially the new Year 7, and you feel that the school is improving all the time. The staff know you well and care about you. Despite this we found that there are real differences between the sixth form and the rest of the school. In the main school, most of you are achieving well and students told us that this is because your teachers are enthusiastic and make lessons interesting. The curriculum is varied and you are given a choice of courses in Years 10 and 11 which are appropriate for all ranges of ability and interest. However, this is not the case in the sixth form which is providing too many A level subjects where the classes are too small, and not enough vocational courses. As a result students, particularly sixth form girls, are not reaching their full potential.

There are two areas in which the school needs to make further improvements:

- The school already knows that a thorough review of the sixth form needs to be carried out as a matter of urgency. The appointment of a new leading learner for the sixth form has enabled this process to begin but she will need your support.
- Nearly all of you were able to tell us what your target grades are for the year. Very few of you could say what specific things you need to do in each subject to improve. Teachers will be working on this but they need your help. Talk to them about your work and ask about the ways it can be improved.

Lastly I hope that some of you will take the time to read the full report.

With best wishes for the future success of the school.



14 September 2006

Sir James Smith's Community School  
Dark Lane  
Camelford  
Cornwall PL32 9UJ

Dear Students

As you know I recently visited your school with a team of three other inspectors and this letter is to tell you what we found. Firstly, can I thank you all for the friendly, helpful and honest way in which you answered our questions and allowed us to look at your work and planners; particularly so early in the term when some of you are new to the school.

Students from all year groups said that they like coming to school, especially the new Year 7, and you feel that the school is improving all the time. The staff know you well and care about you. Despite this we found that there are real differences between the sixth form and the rest of the school. In the main school, most of you are achieving well and students told us that this is because your teachers are enthusiastic and make lessons interesting. The curriculum is varied and you are given a choice of courses in Years 10 and 11 which are appropriate for all ranges of ability and interest. However, this is not the case in the sixth form which is providing too many A level subjects where the classes are too small, and not enough vocational courses. As a result students, particularly sixth form girls, are not reaching their full potential.

There are two areas in which the school needs to make further improvements:

- The school already knows that a thorough review of the sixth form needs to be carried out as a matter of urgency. The appointment of a new leading learner for the sixth form has enabled this process to begin but she will need your support.
- Nearly all of you were able to tell us what your target grades are for the year. Very few of you could say what specific things you need to do in each subject to improve. Teachers will be working on this but they need your help. Talk to them about your work and ask about the ways it can be improved.

Lastly I hope that some of you will take the time to read the full report.

With best wishes for the future success of the school.

Pauline Robins HMI