

St Francis Xavier's College

High Lee, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 6EG

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The current Year 11 is well placed to make good progress overall given their starting points in English and mathematics since the beginning of September 2012. So too is the current Year 10 according to the wide-ranging and accurate school tracking data.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and a small proportion is outstanding. The strong teaching quality supports the good achievement secured by students.
- Students' behaviour around school and attitudes to learning in lessons are good overall. They say they feel very safe and are well cared for. They possess a well balanced view of their responsibilities to others and themselves.
- Senior leaders and the governing body know the school well and are committed to improving it even further. They set a clear direction of improvement for the school and monitor its performance regularly.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Students have a comprehensive awareness and experience through the well-designed curriculum. They understand right from wrong and possess a well-developed understanding of current affairs and issues based on the school's strong moral code and Christian character.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. There is effective monitoring of students' progress throughout and leaders and managers act quickly to support students in danger of underachieving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement. Because of this, the learning that some students make, when considering their starting points, is not as rapid as it could be.
- Some subject leaders do not yet hold their teachers closely enough to account for the performance of the students in their classes. Furthermore, they are not rigorous enough in evaluating their colleagues' teaching quality to support improvements in this area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 43 part lessons across each key stage. Joint observations were undertaken in eight lessons with senior leaders. During the two days of inspection the majority of students in Year 11, 12 and 13 were undertaking examinations.
- Meetings were held with students from each year group, teaching staff, middle and senior leaders, a group of teaching assistants, representatives from the governing body and the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including students' work, data relating to the progress of current year groups since September 2012 and individual students, records of the monitoring of teaching, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, the school's checks on how well it is doing and the school development plan. A wide range of policies were scrutinised also.
- Inspectors took account of the school's own analysis of recent student and parental responses. Staff responses were considered from those who returned the Ofsted questionnaires. The 45 responses to Parent View on the Ofsted website were also considered.

Inspection team

Peter Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Derek Davies	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized, all boys secondary school with a mixed sixth form.
- There is a below average proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after).
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. Hardly any students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of those students supported through school action is much less than that seen nationally. However, the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is twice the national average.
- A few students in Key Stage 4 attend part-time courses at The Young Persons Opportunities Project
- St Francis Xavier's College converted to become an academy on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and eradicate that which requires improvement so that even more students make outstanding progress by:
 - a sharper use of data by teachers to inform more accurate planning of learning activities that match the range of students' ability
 - promoting high standards of presentation in students' work
 - ensuring the high quality feedback to students seen in some subject areas is used more widely across the school.
- Strengthen further the effectiveness of subject leaders so that they hold their teachers and their assistants more closely to account for the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students currently in Year 11 started at the school with attainment that was in line with the national average. The accurate and comprehensive tracking data for this group of students is indicating that by the summer the boys will have performed above the national average when considering five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics.
- When taking account of their starting points the boys have made good rates of progress in their learning. Overall the proportions making the expected three levels of progress and those securing four levels of progress, according to the school's data, compare well with the national picture. However, leaders acknowledge the variance in some classes' performance and have put in place strategies to ensure that students of all abilities progress as well as they should in both English and mathematics.
- Achievement is not outstanding because the proportion of students making rapid gains in their learning and achieving high levels of progress is not large enough.
- Data on the progress of the current Year 10 students indicates that by the time they reach the end of Year 11 they will have out-performed this year's cohort because of the comparatively strong progress they have already made.
- Students who are disabled and those with special educational needs make equally good progress because their needs are accurately identified and the support received from staff is effective. Those who study part-time courses away from the school make good progress too, as was seen by the provider's reports on students' achievement.
- The funding used to help poor readers in Year 7 catch up with their peers is being used effectively and early indications are that gains in reading ages are being secured.
- The school has an appropriate policy for entering students early for some GCSE examinations. This does not stifle their potential because if they do not achieve their aspirational grade they are able to re-take the examination at a later time.
- Pupil premium funding is well targeted according to the school's data, the attainment gap in both English and mathematics between those students known to be eligible for free school meals and their peers is closing rapidly. The school promotes equality of opportunity well.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and improving. Curriculum changes for next year and better advice and guidance offered to the current Year 11 are in place to ensure good rates of progression through to Year 13.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching quality is good overall and a small proportion of teaching seen during the inspection was outstanding, confirming the better rates of progress made by some students since September. The good teaching of English and mathematics helps provide students with a secure understanding of, and skills in, numeracy and literacy. These skills are helping them prepare well for their next stage in education, employment or training. In mathematics, students are encouraged to understand key concepts and so gain a secure understanding of mathematics in a wider sense.
- Students spoken to talked of enjoying learning because most of their lessons are lively and pacy. This was seen in a Year 8 history lesson where students had to stay very alert in order to answer the quick-fire questioning of the teacher, who challenged their learning of Charles I. Resources and practical activities in this lesson progressed learning extremely well.
- Literacy is promoted well across the curriculum. Students' communication skills and particularly oracy are of a good standard although presentation of their work in exercise books and folders is often unkempt.
- Marking of students' work and feedback from teachers exists but the quality varies across the

school and within subject areas. Students do not always respond to teachers' marking or comments in constructive ways. The better practice seen is not routinely shared across subjects.

- Learning activities prepared by teachers do not always challenge well enough the full range of student ability in the classroom. Teaching assistants offer helpful support and encouragement to individuals but they do not routinely impact on the learning objectives in lessons and none were seen to be teaching smaller groups of students.
- Students speak highly of the 'Night owl' sessions, these are regular after-school lessons put on by many teachers to help further students' knowledge and understanding of subjects.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and supports well the good achievement seen during the inspection and the school's data.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning. They arrive at school and to their lessons during the day, on time and attend regularly, including those in the sixth form. In the majority of lessons where teaching is good students are engaged in learning and concentrate well. Behaviour around the school is good.
- Students are polite and courteous. They feel safe, as do those who attend the part-time courses at different locations. They are sensible and mature and know how to protect themselves from harm, including when using computer technology. Students say there is little bullying and the school's data confirm this. They understand the many forms bullying can take and know what to do should it occur.
- Parents who responded to the school's questionnaire and those on Parent View were positive about students' behaviour. The proportion that considers the school to manage behaviour well is high. Pastoral care and personal development of students is a strength of the school.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because it is not exemplary. There are some lessons when there is some off-task chatter and minor disruptions to learning when the teacher has to correct some behaviours of the minority.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and the governing body promote high expectations of all. There exists a clear focus on improving achievement in all areas of the school through high quality teaching and learning. Senior leaders set appropriate targets for the school when considering improvements. They know the school inside out and checks on how well it is doing are very accurate. The school is strongly placed to improve further.
- Arrangements for the review of the performance of teachers against agreed targets are robust. There is a positive correlation between students' achievement and teachers' pay progression.
- The management of the quality of teaching is good. Procedures are in place for senior leaders to monitor teaching and an accurate view of its quality is known. An increasing proportion of classroom teachers and some middle leaders observe each other teach in order to strengthen their own practice. There does not currently exist a formalised system of heads of subject taking responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in their area. Whole-staff training is undertaken when areas of weakness are identified.
- The curriculum is good. It is designed to meet the interests and aptitudes of the students and together with a rich programme of additional activities contributes to students' overall good achievement, both in the main school and the sixth form.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the students is a strength of the school. Students are encouraged to celebrate diversity, recognising differences and respecting them. Staff and students do not tolerate discrimination on students' ability, ethnicity or religion. As an example of this in a Year 9 registration period, a recent attack on a serving soldier in London was discussed. The teacher sensitively and skilfully made the point that it would be wrong to

conclude that this attack was motivated by religious beliefs, because of initial preconceptions of the attackers, without further information.

- The local authority provides good support to the school through a range of training and consultation programmes designed to improve the school's effectiveness.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. They have an accurate understanding of students' achievement and the priorities for improvement. They have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching because the headteacher and others keep them fully informed of the strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they are able to ensure that salary progression of all staff, including the headteacher, is inextricably linked to students' achievement. Pupil premium funding is monitored closely by the governors who consider it to be distributed to best effect and offering good value for money. The governing body keeps abreast of educational developments through appropriate training. Policies are effective and appropriately reviewed and updated when necessary.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138463
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	412824

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,247
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Keeley
Principal	Les Rippon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0151 288 1000
Fax number	0151 288 1001
Email address	admin@sfx.liverpool.sch.uk

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