

St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

Oxford Road, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF13 4LL

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate. Pupils enter the school with starting points that are generally in line with national averages and leave Year 11 having achieved significantly less well than other pupils nationally.
- Despite recent improvements, there is still too much weak teaching with low expectations. This results in pupils making poor rates of progress.
- Some pupils' behaviour is poor. A significant minority of pupils are too regularly rude and disrespectful of each other and adults.
- Attendance is unacceptably low and has been since the school opened. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is particularly low and many of them miss school regularly.
- Leaders have not spent pupil premium funding effectively to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- Previously, assessment information has been inaccurate and too optimistic. Leaders have now implemented new and more appropriate systems but it is too early to evaluate their effect.
- Until recently, leaders did not hold teachers stringently to account for the quality of their work. Leaders have now introduced a more effective system to check on the quality of teaching and learning. This is leading to better progress for pupils in some subjects.
- Some teachers do not challenge their pupils to think deeply about their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has quickly and accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses. He is holding staff more stringently to account.
- The sixth-form leader effectively monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of teaching and learning and this is resulting in rising standards, particularly in vocational subjects.
- Leaders have taken swift action to improve the curriculum so that it is now broad and balanced. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities also have better access to the curriculum.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure rapid improvements in the progress and attainment of all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, so that they achieve in line with, or above, national expectations by:
 - ensuring that teachers accurately assess the progress of their pupils and set challenging and appropriate targets for them
 - ensuring that teachers have the highest expectations of all pupils to behave well and work hard
 - making sure teachers plan learning that enthuse and inspire pupils to want to learn
 - sharing the best practice in teaching and learning from within and from other schools to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to provide more effectively for the needs of their pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - using a wide range of evidence to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the school
 - thoroughly evaluating the impact of the spending of the pupil premium and ensuring that spending results in improvements for disadvantaged pupils
 - working with families and external partners to ensure higher rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils
 - revising the existing improvement plan so that it includes clear priorities, objectives, targets and milestones linked to equally clear success criteria
 - continuing to hold middle leaders more effectively and regularly to account, in particular those leaders of persistently underperforming subjects, such as English.
- Improve the personal development, welfare and behaviour of pupils by:
 - improving the effectiveness of the management of attendance, particularly for those pupils who repeatedly and persistently do not attend and those pupils who attend other providers for a proportion of their education
 - improving the quality of information, advice and guidance in the sixth form.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Ineffective leadership since the school converted to become an academy in 2014 resulted in a decline in standards and persistently low performance over time. Until recently, leaders had an overoptimistic view of the quality of teaching and learning in the school despite the decline in pupils' outcomes.
- The school's development plan is too complicated. Actions do not properly reflect the school's priorities. The new acting headteacher and other senior leaders understand the school's weaknesses and are currently writing a new school development plan.
- Since becoming an academy, senior leaders have not held middle leaders adequately to account. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the performance of different departments were infrequent, which resulted in persistent underperformance in a number of subjects, most notably English. However, new senior leaders have introduced more effective systems to challenge middle leaders about the progress pupils make.
- The academy trust commissioned the local authority to monitor, evaluate and support the school when it became an academy. Over time, this reinforced a culture of complacency and a lack of urgency. The local authority was slow to meet with the headteacher to review the performance of the school in 2016, and a recent review in June 2017 was too generous and therefore unhelpful.
- Recently appointed middle leaders are having a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Middle leaders report feeling trusted. In subjects such as mathematics, design and technology and history, pupils have begun to make better progress.
- The acting headteacher is now holding leaders to account more effectively and has demonstrated this through his recommendations to governors during the recent performance reviews. This is resulting in more challenging targets for middle leaders, and more regular monitoring by senior leaders.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum and made changes to give pupils a broader curriculum which now matches their needs and ambitions more closely. Although it is too early to see the impact on pupils' examination results, there are early signs of increased challenge to pupils in some lessons.
- The curriculum largely promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils, parents and carers value this highly. However, some pupils' behaviour and relationships with adults too often do not reflect this teaching.
- The pupils spoken with show that, on the whole, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain, although there is less emphasis on promoting equality between all groups in society.
- Leaders failed to act effectively upon the recommendations of an external review of the use of the pupil premium. Disadvantaged pupils continue to achieve below their peers and their results declined in 2017. More recently, leaders have set clear targets for the achievement and progress of this group of pupils and set up a system through which to measure their success.

- The acting special educational needs coordinator is making appropriate changes to the curriculum to support pupils' needs and is liaising with other schools to identify best practice. Consequently, funding is being used more effectively to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making better progress.

Governance of the school

- Over time, the academy council and The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Multi-Academy Trust have not held the school's leaders adequately to account because they have not effectively challenged them, or the information which they supplied.
- Governors make no excuses and accept standards are not where they should be. Although governors have met with middle leaders to check their work, governors have not been sufficiently trained to question how and why the school has underperformed for so long.
- The governor responsible for safeguarding is the head of the sixth form in the school. This limits the ability of the governing body to hold the school to account objectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are safe and those spoken with said they feel safe. There is a secure culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff are vigilant and make referrals to appropriate leaders, who diligently follow up any concerns and work effectively with professionals outside the school. This is done in a timely and effective manner.
- Staff and governors receive all the required safeguarding training. They fully understand the requirement that they act if they have any concern about the safety or well-being of any child at the school.
- The school makes all necessary checks on adults and visitors who work in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Over time, teaching in a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics, has not been effective in ensuring strong enough learning and progress. Teachers are not equipping pupils with skills in reading and writing as well as they should.
- Too many pupils, from all groups, are making inadequate progress because teaching does not develop their knowledge, skills and understanding sufficiently. Teachers' checks on the progress pupils are making are inaccurate and the targets they set for pupils are not sufficiently challenging.
- Teaching of English is weak. Too many lessons are characterised by pupils' poor attitudes to learning. During the inspection, some pupils were not clear about what was expected of them and how they could improve.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils' misconceptions and this limits their understanding and slows their progress. Work in pupils' books shows some improvement in pupils' progress in a few subjects, such as history.

- Too much work provided for pupils is characterised by a lack of challenge and low teacher expectations. It does not take into account pupils' different starting points. Some teachers do not plan learning activities that enthuse and inspire their pupils to want to learn. While this is beginning to change, as the effect of the revised curriculum brings in a better level of challenge, it is far from consistent.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is improving, with teachers monitoring pupils' progress more effectively. Pupils are now making better progress in mathematics. The quality of teaching and learning in science is also improving.
- In humanities, the new department leader is currently reviewing teachers' approach to planning, and some improvements are evident in the teaching of history; however, the quality of teaching and learning in geography remains poor.
- External reviews by advisers from the local authority, and other partners, have not helped leaders to understand how and why pupils have performed so poorly over time.
- Leaders provide training that staff value. This is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Seven teachers have been trained as specialist leaders of education in order to support teachers in different departments to plan learning and challenging activities to allow pupils of all abilities to achieve more highly. It is too early to evaluate their impact.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The attitudes to learning of a significant minority of pupils are poor and this limits their progress. Too many pupils do not engage fully in their learning or work hard enough in the classroom.
- The personal, social and health education programme is comprehensive and well planned and includes inputs from external partners which enrich this area of the curriculum. This is valued highly by pupils and parents.
- Pupils have the knowledge and ability to stay safe, including from all forms of bullying. They know how to stay safe online.
- Leaders have planned the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum well to promote an understanding of people from different faiths, and the teaching of religious education further develops this. More work is needed to help pupils better understand other aspects of diversity.
- A small number of pupils currently attend other providers for part of their education. There is regular contact between the school and these providers. Feedback regarding their progress and personal development is included in the regular reports that go home to parents. Some inconsistent practice regarding the recording of attendance has now been addressed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils when moving between lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes shows a lack of respect towards each other and adults, including inspectors during the inspection. This behaviour includes the use of unacceptable language.
- Some pupils told inspectors that behaviour around the school is poor.
- The acting headteacher has introduced a zero tolerance approach to pupils' defiance of staff. This has contributed to the rising exclusion figures but has not had a positive effect on improving pupils' behaviour. A disproportionate number of those excluded are disadvantaged pupils.
- The number of referrals of pupils to the behaviour support unit, as a result of their poor behaviour, has recently risen.
- Over time, pupils' attendance has been below the national average. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the school is in the lowest 10% of all schools nationally in terms of how well pupils attend. Pupils' persistent absence over time has increased, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and is well above the national average.
- In too many lessons, pupils' behaviour disrupts their learning and progress, as well as that of others, through their lack of attention or talking to other pupils. In one lesson observed, an inspector had to call for a senior leader as disruption had become so bad.
- Many pupils feel that teachers do not all apply the behaviour policy in the same way, which leads to differing levels of what is acceptable in different lessons. Leaders are now beginning to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the behaviour management policy and to review its effectiveness.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes at the end of key stage 4 have declined since the school opened. Pupils join the school having achieved in line with national averages, but leave achieving significantly below the national average.
- In 2016, the progress made by pupils across a broad range of subjects, including English, was significantly below the national average and in the lowest 10% nationally for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 11 in 2017 were also significantly below the national averages in a wide range of subjects. This includes outcomes for disadvantaged pupils who constitute approximately a quarter of pupils in the school.
- The school's own assessments and predictions have been inaccurate over time and leaders have not put systems in place to address this. As a result, pupils do not have challenging enough targets and do not always understand them.
- The school's current assessment information and pupils' work across all year groups indicate that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are not making enough progress in a range of subjects. This includes the important subject of English. However,

within this, there is some room for optimism as pupils are starting to make better progress in subjects such as mathematics and history.

- Expectations for the most able are not high enough. However, there is evidence of improved progress in mathematics, technology and history because of subject leaders' higher expectations.
- A new system is now in place to inform how pupils are organised for learning, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of this in improving pupils' outcomes.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Clear and effective leadership of the sixth form has resulted in an improving picture of students' achievement since the school opened, particularly in vocational courses. Overall, students' outcomes have improved from an initially low starting point, bringing them in line with national averages.
- Those students retaking their English and mathematics GCSE examinations achieve in line with the national averages.
- The most able students achieve well in mathematics and science because teachers plan work that appropriately challenges them and give the right support for them to achieve their targets.
- Teachers use assessment information to set appropriate targets and regularly support their students in improving their skills, knowledge and understanding. Effective teaching in A level English and chemistry and level 3 health and social care ensures that students are appropriately challenged.
- Students value the programme for personal, social and health education, which the sixth-form leader has developed to include awareness of mental health and safeguarding, partly in response to student voice. This has improved students' awareness of the needs of others and contributed to the positive behaviour and learning in the sixth form.
- Not all students choose to access the advice and guidance provided to help them make choices about their future. As a result, not all students are well informed about the options available or how different pathways match their needs and aspirations. This hinders students' ability to make fully informed choices about their future.

School details

Unique reference number	141470
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10037699

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,169
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	173
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Joe Cortis
Headteacher	Jim Taylor
Telephone number	01924 527000
Website	johnfisher.realsmartcloud.com/
Email address	head.stjohnfisher@edukirklees.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about: the school's most recent key stage 4 results; the school's most recent key stage 5 results, including how many students stayed on to complete the second year of their studies and where they went on to study, work or receive extra training; an evaluation of how effectively pupil premium funding was used to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils; an evaluation of how effectively extra funding was used to ensure that pupils achieving below national expectations in numeracy and literacy when they entered the school have caught up with the level that their peers achieved nationally; special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the impact on pupils' educational attainment arising from the expenditure of the pupil premium in the previous academic financial year.
- Saint John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy opened on 1 October 2014, as one of three schools to form The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Overall, the trust is governed by a board of trustees, with each school having its own academy council. The chair of the board of trustees is also the chair of the academy council for this school.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average.
- The majority of pupils in the school are White British.
- A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is slightly above the national average.
- The school uses three alternative providers of education: Nexus, Brian Jackson College and Pivot. Ten pupils currently attend one of these providers for part of their education.
- Based on the latest validated assessment information, the school met the current government floor standards in 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 50 parts of lessons, a number of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors discussed with pupils from all year groups what it is like to be a young person at the school.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, the chair of the academy council and trust, a foundation governor, and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and around the site at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took into account the 59 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including 35 free-text responses, the 50 responses to the staff survey and the 139 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors examined documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, the minutes of meetings of the governing body, and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to the behaviour and attendance of pupils were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Mike Tull, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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