

# St Julie's Catholic High School

Speke Road, Woolton, Liverpool, Merseyside L25 7TN

## Inspection dates

18–19 April 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Social justice is the principle that has guided this school's rapid improvement over the past two years. Governors and the headteacher accepted that some aspects of education being provided for pupils were not good enough and set about to improve these quickly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of all the school's work. Now, pupils are being well educated and their personal development is of the highest quality.
- The headteacher and governors have very skilfully managed the school's improvement. They identified talented staff and promoted them to key positions in the school. Leaders and governors encouraged professional debate about how best to teach St Julie's pupils. They trusted their staff. Teachers and teaching assistants committed to improving teaching and quickly grasped new ways of working.
- Reflecting the school's ethos, pupils show great respect for each other and school staff. They are clearly happy, feel secure and enthusiastically grasp the extensive range of opportunities available to them. In most classes, pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Leaders and governors have maintained a very good and balanced curriculum, providing opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests while establishing a very sound foundation in a broad range of subjects.
- Students who continue their education in the sixth form are also well served by the school. Good achievement, excellent care, guidance and support, and excellent personal development help these students to gain access to high-quality courses and training on leaving the school.
- The school has very successfully and quickly addressed most areas identified as requiring improvement in recent inspections, including raising pupils' achievement. Leaders and governors recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that achievement in science is as good as it is in other subjects. Although improving quickly, the progress made by the most able pupils is not as strong as the progress made by other pupils.
- Despite the quality of teaching improving rapidly, some teachers are not doing enough to help pupils develop their basic skills in spelling and using grammar accurately.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve achievement:
  - by ensuring that all teachers systematically and consistently address key grammatical and spelling errors in pupils' work
  - by continuing to improve the quality of teaching in science so that pupils achieve as well in science as they do in other subjects
  - of the most able pupils, by encouraging them to excel and to think more deeply about their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Disappointment at the outcome of the last inspection and the examination results that followed served to bring teachers and leaders at all levels to the realisation that the education they were providing was not good enough. The pace of improvement is a credit to all school staff. However, it was the headteacher and governors that drove this rapid improvement in all aspects of the school. It is even more remarkable that they achieved this at a time when they were supervising the building of a new school and the subsequent move, only seven months ago.
- Leading and driving the improvement, the headteacher challenged every member of staff to reflect on how well they were performing. He asked teachers fundamental questions about the effectiveness of teaching. The headteacher and governors made a root-and-branch restructuring of leadership systems throughout the school and provided excellent training to ensure that all leaders knew what they needed to achieve and how they would achieve it.
- Those leaders with responsibilities for subjects have experienced some of the most significant change and improvement. They now have much more responsibility and relish it. These leaders fully accept that they are accountable for the progress pupils make in their departments. Highly effective and extensive programmes of professional development have focused mainly, but not exclusively, on improving teaching and learning. Teachers have established what successful teaching looks like in St Julie's. This has led to the adoption of policies and the setting of expectations, that when consistently applied, contribute significantly to improving teaching and learning across the school.
- When evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the school and of those individuals within it, the focus shifted from what adults were doing to how well pupils are learning. This has provided leaders with much more accurate information. Their intelligent and skilled analysis of this information helps leaders identify precisely areas of strength and aspects in need of further improvement. Systems to monitor the performance of staff are highly effective because they now focus on pupils' achievement and development. Similarly, strategic plans to inform improvements are clear and establish precisely what effect success will have on pupils.
- This improved clarity of how well staff are performing has enabled senior leaders to identify key staff as 'model leaders'. These members of staff promote the very best practice in the school and share their skills and expertise. Model leaders help everyone to reflect on their own practice and drive up standards.
- Tracking of how well pupils achieve provides leaders and teachers with accurate, timely and very useful information. Intelligent analysis of this information informs a wide variety of staff on how effectively the school, a subject or a pupil is performing. This in turn enables swift intervention and support to address any weaknesses that are identified. An aspect of particularly effective practice is the school's ability to evaluate how well pupils in key stage 3 are developing their basic skills. Detailed analysis of assessments enables teachers and leaders to identify when a pupil has gaps in their understanding. It also enables leaders to identify when groups of pupils have not

grasped aspects of learning. Recently, leaders have become aware, through this system of evaluation, that pupils' spelling and application of grammar were weak. They are beginning to address this.

- Leaders have been quick to address areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. A monitoring visit made by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) a year ago acknowledged improvements being made across the school. He also identified some aspects that were not improving as quickly as others, including science. The achievement of pupils in science has been a stubborn weakness to resolve. However, there are very secure signs that some aspects of science are now improving. Governors have, very recently, appointed a new subject leader of science. However, this department has some way to go until it sees the improvements that other departments are demonstrating.
- During the monitoring visit, HMI also noted that pupils' skills in expressing themselves, orally were not as strong as one would expect of their age group. Leaders quickly addressed this, initially by using national research to understand fully how pupils learn and subsequently by adapting teaching. Teachers are much more systematic in helping pupils to express their ideas and opinions. This improvement typifies the high quality and success of leadership.
- The school spends any additional funding it receives to help groups of pupils very well. A year ago, the progress that disadvantaged pupils made in the school was poor. Consistent with other rapid and significant improvements, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved considerably. Although progress for disadvantaged pupils is now not quite as good as that of other pupils in the school, it is very much closer than it was. The school also receives funding to help pupils who did not achieve well in primary school to catch up in Year 7. Again, this funding is used very well and these pupils are making rapid progress in their basic skills. These successes have been the result of the general improvements in the school and some very focused support to help individual pupils overcome their personal barriers to learning.
- Under the leadership of a recently appointed coordinator, the achievement of the large number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is also improving quickly. There is a large body of knowledge held within the school that promotes understanding and ensures that the needs of these pupils are quickly and accurately identified. This is supported by the use of special needs 'champions', teaching assistants who have become experts in a single type of need or disability. They advise other teaching assistants and teachers on how best to promote the learning and care of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Through a range of quality assurance checks, leaders ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are provided with the care and support they need.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively across the school and have a wide range of responsibilities and skills. Some support the individual needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Others work within departments supporting the learning of all pupils. Teaching assistants are as ambitious as any group of staff in the school to provide high-quality education. They are very well managed and highly effective.
- Leaders took great care to plan for the recent changes in the curriculum and assessment. They were determined to provide a curriculum that leads to successful learning and matches the interests of all their pupils. So, for example, performing arts

is highly successful and loved by many pupils. From Year 7 to the conclusion of Year 11 and across subjects, no time is lost.

- Pupils' personal development is promoted through a diverse range of opportunities and responsibilities. For example, pupils work hard to support local, national and international charities. In the most recent example of this, pupils collected 400 Easter eggs for a local food bank. Pupils make cultural visits locally and have opportunities to travel abroad.
- Parents and carers have a very positive view of the school and its leadership. However, they have different views on the quality of communication they have with the school, with as many complimenting this as criticising it. Parents comment very positively on the care and teaching their children receive and on the leadership of the school. The quality of reporting to parents on their child's achievement, personal development and behaviour has been improved significantly and is an excellent example of practice.

### **Governance of the school**

- The school's ethos and governors' moral purpose have been the lights that have helped guide the school's improvement. Governors are not content that the school has improved; they are striving to provide an education that promotes outstanding personal development and learning for every pupil. Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent.
- Governors have shown determined leadership in supporting the headteacher to improve all aspects of the school while retaining its qualities. Their considerable and broad expertise enables them to challenge the headteacher to strive for higher standards. They also offer excellent support in a diverse range of aspects of school leadership.
- Governors describe the improvements the school has made and fully understand what has driven these. They also know other aspects of the school that have not improved as quickly as the rest. Governors ensure that systems to manage the school's finances are robust.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- In everyday life, pupils model a caring disposition for their peers and indeed for everyone they meet. They do this because they believe it is the right way to live their lives. St Julie's pupils are also prepared to speak up when they see injustice or think something is wrong. Leaders have created a culture where pupils are at the forefront of ensuring that the school provides a safe environment in which to learn. This culture is backed up with considerable staff expertise and highly effective procedures.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote safety through teaching pupils how to identify and deal with potential dangers. This includes the use of social media, when out and about in their communities and when at home.
- The school reviews the effectiveness of safeguarding frequently. It uses this information to improve already robust systems.

- Procedures to recruit only suitable persons to new posts and train them are robust and of high quality. All staff are well trained to respond to concerns they may have about a pupil and know how to respond to a pupil disclosing information to them.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders have strategically and systematically improved the quality of teaching throughout the school. This had initially been based on research and the combined professional development of the teaching staff. Early work led to a collective understanding of what each teacher would have to do to ensure that pupils learn well in their classes. Expectations of lesson planning, homework and assessment were established. Departments discussed and agreed on the curriculum they would teach and how they would teach it. This built strong teams, enthusiastic about improving teaching. A major shift was made when teachers started to evaluate how well their pupils were learning.
- Where pupils are currently learning well, teachers provide carefully considered learning activities that engage pupils and challenge them to think deeply. Teachers, who have excellent subject knowledge, and in most subjects, use key vocabulary to help pupils develop their linguistic skills and broader subject understanding. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, yet are careful to build pupils' confidence in their abilities. All of this requires well-considered lesson planning, which has become routine.
- Occasionally, effective practice is not so evident and teachers lack an informed picture of their pupils' needs. This leads to their planning lacking precision and tasks lacking challenge, which caps the standards pupils achieve, particularly those of the most able pupils.
- Teachers set homework according to the school's homework timetable. Pupils say that these activities are very helpful in both consolidating their learning and in preparing them for their next topics.
- Although pupils' numeracy skills are developed well across subjects, aspects of literacy are not because some teachers do not help pupils to spell correctly or use grammar correctly.
- The process to improve the quality of teaching across the school has been particularly effective in mathematics. Two years ago, achievement in mathematics was not good. Currently, pupils in mathematics are learning very well. The team of mathematicians consulted widely and accepted guidance and advice from a wide range of sources. Through professional discussion and honest evaluations, teachers of mathematics began to refine their understanding of how to teach mathematics effectively at St Julie's. They now have a common and consistent understanding of how mathematical skills will be built from the start of Year 7. They know too what would have been taught in other years and other classes. They have established a consistent approach to pupils performing calculations and this includes ensuring that the pupils understand that different strategies can be just as effective as each other. This, together with providing pupils with many opportunities to solve mathematical problems and to use mathematics creatively, help develop secure mathematical understanding, reasoning

and confidence.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- A culture of social justice and equality of opportunity pervades the whole school. This is manifest in the school's approach to supporting pupils to flourish. Staff take great care to get to know their pupils' needs and strengths. The efforts of staff to break down barriers to pupils' learning and provide high-quality support are exemplary. This includes the extent to which staff go to support pupils who have mental health needs or have to support someone in their family who needs additional care.
- In this girls' school, pupils are encouraged to aspire to be successful in whichever fields of endeavour interest them. Pupils do not perceive that there are caps on ambition based on their gender. Similarly, pupils fully understand the barriers that can exist based on race and sexuality. A high moral code, respect for others and high aspirations are three of the most striking features of the pupils' excellent personal development.
- Diversity in this Catholic school is welcomed. Pupils with an Islamic faith say they experience no discrimination and they are encouraged to participate fully in their culture and religion while in school. In this regard, they mention the multi-faith prayer room as an important sign that their beliefs are embraced.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The aspect of behaviour that relates to pupils' relationships and attitudes to others is very strong. However, a small proportion of pupils do not yet display all the qualities of excellent behaviour with regard to their attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel entirely safe within the community of the school. When spoken to, pupils say there is no, or very little, bullying. In their inspection survey, however, a slightly larger proportion raised concerns about this. Pupils move around their school and socialise extremely well; there a sense of harmony and order. This is particularly impressive as building work has not yet been completed and current areas in which pupils can socialise are cramped.
- Attendance was broadly average and appears to be improving despite losing two weeks of learning to moving school sites, industrial action by transport workers and some extreme weather conditions that are not usually seen in Liverpool. Typically, the school takes care of individuals while being mindful of the bigger picture. The school has provided varied support to some pupils who had specific reasons for not attending well. Records for these pupils demonstrate that the actions have been highly effective.
- A small number of pupils are not punctual to school or moving between lessons. This can interrupt the start of classes.
- On the whole, pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils participate

enthusiastically in discussions and offer well-considered points of view. Most demonstrate pride in their work through careful and accurate presentation. A small number do not.

- The school uses alternative providers to support a few pupils who have health needs or are struggling to behave in the school environment. These placements are used sparingly and appropriately by the school. In all cases, pupils' personal development, behaviour and learning improve. The school quality assures the work of these providers and this includes ensuring that pupils are safe and well looked after.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- From the results seen in 2016, there has been a sustained improvement. Pupils currently in the school make strong progress across most subjects and year groups.
- The previously good curriculum has been further improved by ensuring that the courses pupils follow in key stage 4 are appropriate for their abilities and aspirations. For example, while once all pupils took a GCSE in a modern foreign language, now about two thirds do. This matches what is seen nationally. Those pupils currently studying a modern foreign language are making encouraging progress.
- Pupils have made consistently good progress in English, and they continue to do so. Through better teaching in mathematics, the progress of current pupils shows a significant improvement over recent years. Progress being made by pupils in the humanities subjects is also improving.
- Achievement in science has been slower to improve. However, the teaching of the individual sciences is now improving and this is reflected in improving standards attained by these pupils. Other science courses have yet to show such improvement.
- The school makes a detailed analysis of the progress made by pupils in all years. By comparing this information with the standards currently seen in pupils' work across years, groups and subjects, it can be established that the school's evaluations are accurate.
- Currently, those pupils with low and middle starting points are improving their progress very quickly. Most-able pupils are also showing improvement; however, this is not as rapid as for other groups. Achievement for the most able is, nevertheless, good.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged are also improving their rates of progress rapidly. Currently, there is little difference in their achievement and the achievement of others in the school or nationally. From their very different starting points, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make very strong progress.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make equally strong progress as those in the school setting. This is because the school ensures that the leaders in these alternative settings provide good-quality education and support.
- Pupils learn well and their personal development is excellent. They have good attitudes to learning. Pupils benefit from a well-planned and impartial programme of careers guidance. They are articulate and have high aspirations. St Julie's pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education or training.



## 16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The whole thrust of school improvement is having an effect on the quality of teaching in the sixth form, which is also improving. Teachers are concentrating more of their time with students on teaching them how to learn effectively while retaining very good coverage of subject knowledge.
- Achievement in the sixth form has been consistently good for a number of years. This includes the outcomes from both the academic and applied courses. The achievement of students currently in the sixth form continues to be good. As with GCSEs, the most able pupils are not achieving quite as well as other ability groups. Students have achieved consistently good standards in English for a number of years.
- Students who re-take their English GCSE in order to improve their grade do so very successfully. In the past, a much smaller proportion of students have successfully passed their re-sit in GCSE mathematics. However, this proportion was broadly similar to the proportion nationally. Improved teaching of mathematics across the school is having a positive impact on the learning of students currently re-sitting their mathematics GCSE.
- In preparation for moving onto post-16 provision, pupils throughout Years 8 to 11 are given high-quality and impartial advice and guidance. This is helping pupils select the right provider with which to continue their studies. Those who choose to stay at St Julie's for their sixth-form studies can select from a broad range of high-quality courses. Appropriate courses and good teaching are helping sixth-form students to do well.
- Students also gain a great deal from other aspects of their education in St Julie's sixth form. The quality of advice and guidance students received in the main school continues into the sixth form. They are made aware of the diverse range of courses available to them, including degrees and apprenticeships. Students are well supported to make strong and convincing applications. During their time in the sixth form, students take part in good-quality and meaningful work experience. They continue their personal and leadership development by undertaking lead roles in the school and by being excellent role models for younger pupils. Their attendance is good and other aspects of their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary.
- Disadvantaged students are successful in the sixth form, attaining as well as others. In 2017, all disadvantaged students leaving at the end of Year 13 went on to a high-quality university course.
- Leadership in the sixth form is very effective. Leaders strive to personalise the experience for every student through the curriculum, wider opportunities and guidance. As with the main school, leaders of the sixth form have quickly developed skills that help them to very accurately evaluate all aspects of their work. This enables them to celebrate success and work to improve any aspects that are not as good as others.

## School details

Unique reference number	104712
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10045839

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of students in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,015
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sister Margaret Walsh
Headteacher	Tim Alderman
Telephone number	0151 428 6421
Website	<a href="http://www.stjulies.org.uk">www.stjulies.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:reception@stjulies.org.uk">reception@stjulies.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2016

## Information about this school

- St Julie’s Catholic High School is an average-sized secondary school for girls. It includes a sixth form. St Julie’s is a foundation school in the trusteeship of the Sisters of Notre Dame.
- The school moved into newly built premises in September 2017.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a restructuring at senior leadership level. In addition, there has been a temporary appointment of a deputy headteacher to replace the substantive deputy headteacher who is currently seconded to Savio Salesian College in Bootle, Liverpool.

- The school uses three providers of alternative education for a very small number of pupils. They are Everton Free School, Alder Centre for Education and Childwall Study Support Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4. The school is not considered as coasting by the DfE's definition.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders and managers. The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, one of whom is also the chair.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and spoke with a representative of the archdiocese.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to pupils during their social times.
- Inspectors met with groups of teachers and also spoke to individual teachers.
- School documents were scrutinised including: safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors visited classrooms, sometimes with leaders, to speak with pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders were party to many of the inspection activities.
- Inspectors took account of 122 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They considered the views of 81 parents who texted their comments. Inspectors also took account of the views of 111 pupils and 49 staff who completed an inspection survey. The lead inspector received one email from a parent.

## Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Clive Hurren	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Lomas	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Arrowsmith	Ofsted Inspector

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