

St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

Oxford Road, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF13 4LL

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership has been unsuccessful in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Consequently, the overall effectiveness of the school has declined. The capacity for improvement is not secure.
- Leaders have an overly positive view of the effectiveness of the school. Consequently, they have not taken swift action to tackle poor teaching and provide an effective education for pupils.
- Pupils' progress is weak across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, especially in Years 7, 8, and 9.
- Teachers' expectations are very variable, and too often low. Assessment is not used effectively to plan work that matches pupils' needs and abilities. As a result, outcomes for pupils are highly variable and poor overall.
- A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect for adults and each other. Pupils' presentation and pride in work is very variable and too many pupils have poor attitudes to learning. Staff do not manage behaviour consistently well.
- Leaders' use of additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is ineffective. There is consistently low attendance for disadvantaged pupils that has a negative effect on their progress.
- Over time, governance has not supported and challenged leaders well enough to overcome the school's inadequacies. Leaders and governors have not ensured that the curriculum leads to good outcomes for pupils.
- In the sixth form, students are not making consistently good progress. However, teaching and outcomes are better than in the rest of the school. Attendance in Year 12 is not good.

The school has the following strengths

- There are high-quality safeguarding procedures in place to protect pupils and students.
- Pupils at alternative provision are well cared for and follow relevant courses to meet their needs.
- The proportion of pupils and students continuing in education or employment with training is above average.
- Sixth-form students make good progress in mathematics and English GCSE resits.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, so that it is at least consistently good to enable all groups of pupils to achieve well, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9
 - accurately assess pupils' learning to overcome misconceptions and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - use assessment effectively to plan work that matches pupils' needs and abilities, including the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils, and leads to strong progress
 - question pupils skilfully to check their learning and deepen their understanding
 - manage pupils' behaviour effectively to eradicate low-level disruption so that lessons flow at a good pace.
- Urgently improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves rapidly so that it is at least average
 - the proportion of disadvantaged pupils persistently absent from school swiftly reduces so that learning is not missed and progress improves
 - good behaviour is secured quickly by making sure pupils treat each other and adults with respect at all times, both in class and around the school
 - school leaders and staff take action to eradicate persistent low-level disruption in class
 - pupils take pride in their work and develop good attitudes to learning
 - pupils use the advice and guidance given by teachers consistently well to improve their work and ensure that it is of a good standard.
- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth-form provision by ensuring that:
 - students make consistently good progress across a wide range of subjects
 - students in Year 12 attend their courses well, especially those on the level 2 programme.
- Swiftly improve the impact of leadership and governance by making sure that:
 - senior leaders and subject leaders are skilled and thorough in checking the quality of teaching and learning so that they have an accurate view of the performance of the school and subject areas

- senior leaders and subject leaders ensure that the quality of teaching improves quickly and is consistently good across the school
- leaders ensure that pupils quickly develop good attitudes to learning and good behaviour
- all staff manage behaviour well and resolve aspects of bullying effectively
- leaders' plans for improvement have crystal clear success criteria so that the effect of actions taken are clearly identified and recorded to support future development
- the impact of external support and professional development is clearly identified in terms of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress
- the funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to improve attendance and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- governance challenges and supports leaders more effectively to ensure that the overall effectiveness of the school improves
- senior leaders and the multi-academy trust take appropriate action to improve the effectiveness of the school and gain the full confidence of staff, parents and carers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders, governors and the multi-academy trust have not been successful in overcoming the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Consequently, the quality of teaching and outcomes, as well as pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, remain poor. The effectiveness of leadership has declined. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate and the capacity for improvement is insecure.
- Over time, leaders have been too generous in their evaluation of the school's performance. Subject leaders are overly positive about the work in their departments and are not checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress robustly. This is despite additional training, support from other schools and more thorough guidance from senior leaders.
- Ineffective support has been given to disadvantaged pupils to help them achieve well and attend school regularly. The additional government funding for these pupils has not been spent well and the effect of the spending has not been checked appropriately. A recent review of the pupil premium has taken place, but leaders have not addressed the recommendations effectively. There are some signs of improvement, but it is too early for the changes made to have a secure impact on improvement.
- Leaders are not effective in analysing the effect of the strategies they have put in place to improve attendance. Consequently, there are exceptionally high rates of absence for disadvantaged pupils and above average absence for other pupils. A significant proportion of pupils do not have positive attitudes to learning and leaders have not addressed this effectively.
- The curriculum is poorly taught, and pupils' outcomes are weak in key subjects such as science, English and mathematics. However, there is a wide range of courses, clubs and activities for pupils.
- There is a well-structured programme to develop pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural awareness and British values. The majority of pupils benefit appropriately but a significant minority do not, indicating that this work is not having the desired effect.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching have been established. Intervention work with older pupils is starting to show some signs of improvement but this is not swift enough to overcome their poor progress over time. Senior leaders have challenged and supported staff with the intention of improving teaching but the impact of this has not been swift and teaching remains ineffective.
- Leaders' plans for improvement, including the pupil premium plan, identify action to be taken. However, actions taken are not clearly linked to how much improvement is expected in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, leaders' understanding of how well the school is improving is insecure.
- Additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is spent effectively, as is the Year 7 catch-up funding. Leaders provide extra support for these groups of pupils to meet their needs and abilities.

- A significant number of parents and staff responding to Ofsted’s questionnaires are not confident that the school is well led and managed. However, a school survey of Year 7 parents indicated positive views about the school.
- The trust has brokered support to improve leadership and the quality of teaching. For example, external support has helped leaders to introduce new systems for tracking pupils’ progress and improving teachers’ assessment of pupils’ work. The local authority also provides support to the school. However, the effect of this support is not checked carefully, and it has not led to sustained improvements in teaching and leadership.
- As pupils’ behaviour has been judged inadequate, it is recommended that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust and trust intervention board (TIB) have not held leaders to account effectively for their work. While the TIB keeps a close eye on the work of the school, and this small group of specialists is realistic about how much improvement is needed, it has not challenged leaders sufficiently well to secure the necessary improvements.
- The TIB is clear about the additional spending for disadvantaged pupils and knows that the performance of these pupils, along with that of other pupils, is not where they would want it to be. They are well aware of the magnitude of the task to improve the school and the need to recruit more governors to increase capacity and meet the needs of the school. The trust commissioned a review of governance to support this aspect of leadership and management but have had insufficient time to address recommendations.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make sure that pupils, including those at off-site provision, are safe and protected from harm. There is a clear ethos across the school that sets the safeguarding of pupils as a priority. Child protection training for staff means that they are knowledgeable and up to date in terms of the most recent guidance and legislation.
- Staff are vigilant and know what to do should they have any concerns about pupils’ welfare. The school works appropriately with a wide range of external agencies. Pupils are clear about how to stay safe and leaders are tenacious in ensuring that safeguarding matters are followed up.
- The trust makes sure that all adults on the school site are checked to confirm they are fit to work with pupils. The school’s central register of these checks is well kept.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is highly variable across the school. Pupils are underachieving because of poor teaching over time and the weaknesses in teaching that persist.
- Teachers’ expectations are too low in a range of subjects, especially science, mathematics and English. The quality of work accepted by teachers is often of a low

standard, not improved by pupils when advice is given, and is presented poorly. Pupils' work in Years 7, 8, and 9 is especially poor. There is evidence of better work in Years 10 and 11 because of additional support and more effective teaching. However, teachers' expectations are inconsistent in Years 10 and 11, but not to the same degree as in Years 7, 8 and 9.

- Not all teachers are assessing pupils' learning accurately. Too frequently, assessment is not effectively used, and teachers' planning is poor. Learning is not structured appropriately for pupils to make effective progress. Pupils' starting points are not assessed well enough to make sure the pitch of work is challenging and matches pupils' needs and abilities, especially for the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- An analysis of pupils' work showed significant variations in the quality of teaching and too much that is weak. Incomplete work is often evident in books and progress is highly variable across subjects and within subjects. This results in many pupils making poor progress over time.
- Teachers' questioning skills vary considerably. Leaders and managers have recognised this and have provided professional development to improve the quality of questioning. Some skilful questioning that assessed pupils' understanding and deepened their learning was seen by inspectors. However, too often, questioning does not engage pupils well in their learning and does not clear up misconceptions and misunderstandings. This leaves gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding which slows pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour consistently well. Poor teaching leads to a lack of pupil engagement and disruption to lessons. Pupils spoken to by inspectors mentioned that their learning was interrupted too often by a significant minority and behaviour was not managed well over time.
- There are examples of teachers assessing pupils' learning well, having high expectations and setting challenging work that captures pupils' interests. When this occurs, pupils learn well and cooperate well with staff.
- Some parents expressed reservations about the quality of teaching their children receive and pupils who spoke with inspectors were clear about the very variable quality of the teaching they receive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- A significant minority of pupils do not show respect for each other and adults in lessons and around the school. These pupils have negative attitudes towards the school and its community.
- Pupils' pride in their work is very variable and hinders their learning. Incomplete and untidy work shows a lack of application and desire to present work to the best of their abilities. Although some pupils respond well to improve their work, this is highly variable. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very inconsistent.
- Pupils say that bullying occurs in school and they know it should be reported. Some

pupils say that they are not confident that all staff resolve incidents of bullying effectively.

- Pupils, and most parents, are positive about how well pupils are cared for by the school. Pupils appreciate the guidance given to them to be able to stay safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of radicalisation, extremism, democracy, tolerance and respect through personal, social and health education and other subjects. However, a sizeable minority do not demonstrate respect and tolerance effectively.
- There are good links with alternative providers to make sure that pupils are safe and benefiting well from the provision.
- The school has a well-organised programme of careers advice and guidance for all pupils. Pupils value the advice and guidance given to them, including the independent advice and guidance. Pupils at risk of not continuing in education or employment with training are identified early and a range of additional support and guidance is given to them along with parental engagement. Consequently, the proportion of pupils continuing in education or employment with training has increased to above average.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is low and has been for some considerable time. Far too many of these pupils are often absent from school. This poor attendance is an indication of poor attitudes to school.
- Overall absence and persistent absenteeism are above average and increasing. The school's pastoral team check pupils' whereabouts to make sure that they are safe.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly variable. Misbehaviour and interruptions to lessons are frequent, especially when teaching is not good and the school's behaviour policy is not followed consistently. There are well-behaved pupils who are concerned that their learning is interrupted.
- Around school and in class there is a significant proportion of pupils who do not self-regulate their behaviour. This leads to many pupils being sent to the school's inclusion unit to moderate their behaviour. Some parents responding to the Ofsted questionnaire expressed their concerns about unruly pupils having a negative impact on behaviour and learning. Pupils told inspectors that they were concerned about the deliberate misbehaviour of some pupils.
- The majority of pupils are well behaved and make a positive contribution to their learning. They enjoy learning when they receive good teaching. Positive relationships exist between these pupils and their teachers.
- A significant proportion of pupils, parents and staff responding to Ofsted's questionnaires indicated that behaviour was not good, with some expressing concern.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Weak teaching and poor attitudes to learning have contributed to pupils' progress being significantly below average for some considerable time.
- Published information shows pupils making significantly below average progress over time, with the progress of disadvantaged pupils being especially weak and not improving. In 2018, progress was below average in English, mathematics, science, humanities and a range of other subjects for pupils leaving Year 11. Although progress for the least able pupils was broadly average, for others it was significantly below average. Too few pupils attained grade 5 or above in English and mathematics given their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement has been significantly behind that of other pupils nationally and differences in attainment between this group and other pupils nationally are not diminishing sufficiently.
- School leaders believe that current information, particularly for Years 10 and 11, shows progress improving and attainment getting better. However, the information indicates weak progress in science and English in Year 10 and the progress of boys in both years.
- An analysis of current pupils' work by inspectors, including the work of disadvantaged pupils, showed significant variability in progress in Years 10 and 11, although there was some evidence of improvements for some pupils in English, mathematics and history. However, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not catching up quickly enough to overcome a legacy of poor teaching, in part because the quality of teaching remains very variable.
- Inspectors' work analysis for current pupils in Years 7 to 9 showed pupils making very weak progress across subjects including English, mathematics, science, history and geography.
- Inspectors noted better progress being made in physical education and in languages, although some variability in progress across groups is evident.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is being used effectively to help pupils develop their literacy and mathematical skills. An inspector listened to a small group of these pupils reading. Pupils were fluent readers and said that they enjoyed reading.
- Pupils with SEND are make stronger progress. The special educational needs coordinator provides teachers with advice about the needs and abilities of these pupils and support is deployed effectively.
- The few pupils attending alternative provision are following bespoke programmes of study and this is effectively supporting their progress. Courses prepare these pupils well to continue in education or enter employment with training at the end of Year 11.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Students' progress is not consistently good across academic courses and applied courses. Students with differing starting points do not achieve consistently well. Students recognise their variation in progress across courses.
- Disadvantaged students have achieved well because of the additional support and guidance given to them. Their needs are identified clearly by leaders and teachers, which supports good learning.

- Leaders recognise the differences in progress in both academic and vocational courses. They have introduced thorough systems for checking students' progress, the quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessments. This is starting to have a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and this is more effective than in the main school. Consequently, students are currently making stronger progress than in the past, but it is still not good.
- Students who enter the sixth form without a good GCSE in English and/or mathematics are given good support to improve their grades. As a result, students achieve well when they resit GCSE English and/or mathematics.
- Leaders have been successful in improving the attendance of students in Year 13 and most students attend well. However, students' attendance in Year 12 lags behind that of those in Year 13. Too many students studying level 2 qualifications, and non-academic or applied courses, are absent from school too often.
- Historically, too many students selected inappropriate courses, which resulted in them leaving the sixth form at the end of Year 12. Improved careers advice and guidance have reduced the number of students leaving courses at the end of Year 12. Leaders recognise that work is still needed to increase course completion rates even further.
- Work experience contributes to students' preparation for life beyond the sixth form. University visits and visiting speakers from local employers are an integral part of preparing students for their next steps.
- Students make a positive contribution to the life of the school. There is an expectation for all students to take part in the school's community service programme and students are very keen to engage in this. For example, they provide academic mentoring for younger pupils, volunteer at local churches and get involved in sports coaching with local sports clubs.
- Careers guidance has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Increasing numbers of students are entering university and almost all students continue in education or employment with training. An above average proportion of students go on to attend university or other higher education institutions, while others move on to employment with training.

School details

Unique reference number	141470
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10087581

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	1,162
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Edwin Kirkwood
Headteacher	Jim Taylor
Telephone number	01924 527000
Website	http://johnfisher.realsmartcloud.com/
Email address	reception@stjohnfisher.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly average. One in four pupils are disadvantaged.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.

- The headteacher's appointment was made permanent on 1 January 2018 after three months as acting headteacher.
- The school uses four alternative providers, Brian Jackson College, Ethos, Pivot and Nexus, for a small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The school is a member of the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust. The trust is governed by a board of trustees known as a trust board. Currently, there are two primary schools and St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary School, with each school having its own academy council.
- After the previous inspection, the trust decided to remove all delegated powers from the academy council of St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy and establish a trust intervention board (TIB) with a new chair of governors. The TIB holds the headteacher to account for his responsibilities and reports back to the trust board. The trust board has designated responsibility for the effectiveness of the school.
- The school uses the Yorkshire Teaching School Alliance and a national leader of education to provide some aspects of professional development and support for staff and leaders.
- External reviews of the pupil premium and governance have recently taken place.
- The school's religious character is Roman Catholic and is part of the Diocese of Leeds. The last section 48 inspection took place in May 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- During the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils and students, both individually and in groups, about learning and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' and students' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books and students' files. They listened to some pupils reading.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a member of the TIB and the diocesan director of education.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and middle leaders. An inspector visited one of the alternative providers.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of school policies and the minutes of meetings of the trust intervention board and information from the multi-academy trust board. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed the 130 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils and the 79 responses to the parent questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the 58 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Cleary	Ofsted Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Greatrex	Ofsted 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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