

Inspection of Saint Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School

Cumber Lane, Whiston, Liverpool, Merseyside L35 2XG

Inspection dates:

17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not fare well at this school. They are ill-prepared for the next stage of their life. A poorly designed curriculum and weaknesses in how it is delivered hampers pupils' chances of attaining well in GCSE examinations. Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve academically are not high enough. Leaders' actions to improve pupils' achievement have been unsuccessful.

Pupils are confident that behaviour is getting better, although a minority of pupils still choose not to behave as they should in class. Corridors around the school are generally calm. Even so, some younger pupils do not like it when older pupils push in front of them in the lunch queue.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They are confident that staff will look after them. Pupils told us that if they report bullying, staff will deal with it. They say that bullying is rare, and they appreciate the work of their peers as 'bully busters'. That said, a small number of pupils are hesitant to report bullying to a member of staff.

Some pupils are involved in extra-curricular activities. A small number of pupils take part in sporting activities, music lessons and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils are keen to support good causes, such as the local food bank.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Up until very recently pupils have experienced a muddled curriculum. This has stopped pupils achieving well. Over time, leaders have failed to make it clear to teachers what pupils need to know and be able to do. Many pupils have not covered the subject content that they should have. This has got in the way of their learning in several subjects. This means pupils have struggled to succeed in external examinations. In turn, this has stopped them from making the best possible start on their future careers.

Although recent actions have been implemented too late for many pupils, some action is now being taken to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Subject leaders have created new curriculum plans which show what pupils should learn and when this should happen. Even so, this change for the better is only just starting. The current offer does not meet the needs of those pupils who have large gaps in their knowledge. It does not take enough account of the school's context, nor does it help teachers to support those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers do not make clear to pupils what they must remember. There are now some opportunities for pupils to go back to earlier learning. That said, teachers do not use this time well to check on pupils' knowledge and rectify their mistakes. For example, pupils' errors in their basic number calculations hamper their learning of

algebra in mathematics.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is mainly respectful, but some pupils do not follow the rules well enough. That said, behaviour has improved. Fewer pupils are excluded from the school than used to be the case. Leaders also ensure that more pupils attend school regularly. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should.

Leaders have introduced more opportunities to build pupils' confidence and prepare them for adulthood. For example, a small number of pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the Police Cadet scheme. There are also some initiatives which allow pupils to volunteer in the community. For instance, some pupils have recently created hampers for a local food bank. Other pupils are active members of the student council. This helps them to develop their understanding of democracy. Even so, the quality of the school's work to provide for all pupils' personal development is not good enough. This is due to weak planning of the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests at school are also limited.

In the past, leaders have removed a small number of Year 11 pupils from the school register. These pupils attended alternative provision. This was not done with the pupils' best interests in mind. Leaders ensure that this does not happen anymore.

The new headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has prioritised her actions appropriately. For example, she has repaired many of the broken relationships between leaders and staff. Staff say that leaders consider their well-being and their workload. They also feel that leaders support them well to manage pupils' behaviour. Staff are confident that pupils' behaviour affects teaching much less than it has done previously.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They understand what they must do if they have concerns about a pupil. Pupils say that there are adults in school who they can turn to if they have any worries.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. This includes learning how to stay safe online. Leaders ensure that pupils and staff are kept informed about safeguarding risks in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While positive steps have been taken to renew the curriculum offer, it is still early days. Leaders must ensure that the new subject curriculums are implemented effectively so that pupils' new knowledge and skills build on what has been

taught before, towards clearly defined end points. Leaders must also make sure that pupils' experience of the curriculum is what they intend it to be.

- Poor curriculum design in the past had led to large gaps in pupils' knowledge. In turn, this has stopped them from succeeding in external examinations. Leaders need to ensure that the new curriculum reflects the school's context and enables pupils to make up for the essential building blocks that they have missed over time.
- The current curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders must adapt the curriculum so that these pupils have an equal chance to succeed.
- Teachers do not use time to best effect to revisit learning or to tackle pupils' misconceptions. Teachers must ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure before they move on to new ideas. Teachers must use these opportunities well to check on pupils' understanding so that they can identify and address pupils' misconceptions.
- Too many pupils continue to miss school. Leaders must continue to improve pupils' attendance, particularly the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND.
- Although provision for pupils' personal development has improved, it is not good enough due to weaknesses in the taught curriculum. Leaders must ensure that pupils' opportunities for personal development are of a consistently high quality and pupils have more chances to develop their talents and interests.
- The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135481
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10056300
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary-aided school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	799
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Tomlinson
Headteacher	Helen Pinnington
Website	www.seaonline.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 May 2017

Information about this school

- There have been several changes in the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The governing body was reconstituted in November 2017. A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2018.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place on 10 March 2016.
- The school currently uses alternative provision at Harmonize Academy, New Horizons and Everton Free School to contribute to the education of a small number of key stage 4 pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils, about their learning and their school. We had meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other members of school staff. As the lead inspector, I spoke with a school improvement partner, a representative from the Archdiocese of Liverpool and a representative from the local authority.
- We reviewed school documentation. This included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. We also reviewed minutes of governing body meetings and considered information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- We checked on safeguarding documentation, including the school's appointment checks on staff. We also spoke to representatives of the alternative providers used by the school.
- We considered the views expressed by parents in the 21 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received via the free-text facility. We considered the 165 responses to a questionnaire for pupils and the 40 responses to a questionnaire for staff.
- The inspection focused deeply on science, mathematics, geography and art. We visited lessons, met with subject leaders and pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Emma Gregory, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Denah Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Farrent	Ofsted Inspector
Erica Sharman	Her Majesty's Inspector

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