

Inspection of St Francis Xavier's College

Woolton Hill Road, Woolton, Liverpool, Merseyside L25 6EG

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils respect each other and their teachers. Consequently, pupils learn without interruption in most lessons. However, a small minority of pupils disrupt learning. Most pupils behave in a calm and orderly way around the school. However, some pupils behave in a boisterous way in some buildings during breaktimes. Students in the sixth form are mature and behave extremely well.

All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe. They told inspectors that there is always someone who will listen to them and take them seriously if they have any concerns or worries. Most pupils are confident that staff would deal with bullying quickly if it should happen.

Pupils appreciate the extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs on offer, such as chess, music technology and badminton. They spoke positively about the 'Humanutopia' programme which promotes their mental health and well-being.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have not achieved well over time. This is partly because of the negative impact of turbulence in senior leadership. However, leaders' recent actions are helping to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

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

Leaders have responded swiftly to the concerns raised at the additional monitoring inspection in March 2021. Their actions are having a positive impact, particularly in relation to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Leaders have ensured that subject leaders are focused on reviewing curriculum plans and supporting staff to deliver these plans more effectively.

Leaders have provided training to staff to develop their expertise in managing pupils' behaviour. Leaders have improved the quality of record-keeping of pupils' behaviour. This is helping leaders to analyse behaviour trends and respond quickly to any incidents of poor behaviour and bullying. Most pupils and all sixth-form students get on well with each other during lessons and social times. However, the new behaviour system is not used consistently well by all staff. This means that some staff allow boisterous behaviour to go unchecked during lessons and social times.

Leaders have improved pupils' awareness of the importance of tolerance and respecting peoples' differences through assemblies and the personal, health, social and economic education (PHSE) curriculum. Leaders and teachers challenge any inappropriate comments made by pupils. Staff and pupils told inspectors that most pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils learn about different religions and about democracy. However, some aspects of the PHSE curriculum are

not well planned. This means that some content, such as healthy relationships, is not always age-appropriate.

Some subject curriculums in key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form focus precisely on what pupils and students need to know and when they should learn this content. This helps pupils to build on their knowledge and deepen their understanding. However, some curriculum plans are not planned well enough. The content that subject leaders want pupils to learn is not clearly identified. Consequently, some pupils and students do not have the knowledge that they need to be successful in their future learning. In these subjects, assessment strategies are not effective. This is because teachers are unsure of the key knowledge that pupils should know. This means that their checks on pupils' learning do not provide good enough information about what pupils are remembering.

Pupils in key stage 4 now have more choice in their GCSE options than they did before. This is particularly true for those pupils who wish to study a language. Consequently, the uptake of the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is rising.

Leaders assess and identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. However, until recently, teachers have not received enough clear information or suitable training to equip them to support these pupils' needs. As a result, some teachers do not adapt the way that the curriculum is delivered to these pupils. This means that some pupils with SEND are not able to progress through the curriculum as well as they should.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Pupils have access to high-quality texts in the library. Pupils who struggle to read get extra support to develop their fluency and confidence with reading.

Pupils and students benefit from effective careers information, advice and guidance, such as careers fairs. Students in the sixth form value the support that they receive for applications to university and apprenticeships. Leaders ensure that all pupils and students are supported to move on to education, training and employment.

Most staff enjoy working at the school and feel that leaders are considerate of their workload. Teachers early in their careers feel well supported.

Over time, governors have not held leaders to account effectively for the weaker aspects of the school. However, more recently, they are beginning to provide more effective challenge and support to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have increased the capacity of the school's safeguarding team. They have established a culture of vigilance in the school. Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. They know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff know

how to raise any concerns they may have. Leaders work well with external agencies, including the police, to make sure that pupils receive timely support if needed. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when working online. Leaders work closely with alternative providers to ensure that pupils are well supported, attend well and are safe in their placements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders have not identified the precise knowledge that pupils should know and when this content should be taught. This hinders pupils and students from building on what they already know and can do. Subject leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans identify key knowledge and the order in which subject content should be delivered. They must also check that these plans are followed by teachers so that pupils and students learn more and remember more.
- In some subjects, teachers are unsure of the key knowledge that pupils must know. This hinders their checks on pupils' learning. It means that they do not have a firm understanding of what pupils remember or what they need to revisit. Subject leaders should ensure that teachers understand the essential knowledge that pupils need to gain. Leaders should also make sure that teachers are able to use assessment strategies effectively to keep a check on pupils' progress through the curriculum.
- Until recently, leaders have not provided teachers with clear information about the needs of pupils with SEND. Added to that, teachers have not had enough training to help them know how to support these pupils in their classes. This means that pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff are suitably trained and receive useful information about the needs of these pupils so that they can adapt their teaching appropriately.
- Some staff do not follow the new behaviour policy. As a result, some lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. This impedes pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is consistently applied by all staff and understood by all pupils so that pupils' behaviour improves in lessons and around the school.
- Some aspects of the PHSE curriculum are not developed well. This limits how well pupils are prepared for their future lives. Leaders should ensure that they carefully plan and implement a coherent PHSE curriculum so that pupils and students learn the age-appropriate information that they need.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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	138463
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10184312
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy convertor
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1097
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	108
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lisa Riccio-Jones
Headteacher	David Hayes
Website	www.sfx1842.org
Date of previous inspection	30 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Catholic ethos. The school had its most recent section 48 inspection in June 2018.
- The current headteacher formally took up the post in April 2021. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- A new chair and vice-chair of governors were appointed in September 2021.
- The school uses eight alternative providers for off-site provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspectors deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors held telephone calls with a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool, a representative of the local authority, and representatives of three alternative providers.
- Inspectors spoke to many pupils and students about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed their behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and students to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art and design, art technology, history, mathematics and science. Inspectors met with staff, visited lessons, looked at pupils' and students' work and spoke with them about their learning. In addition, inspectors reviewed the curriculum planning for English, computing, geography, physical education and PHSE.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector

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