

Inspection of a good school: St Wilfrid's Catholic High School & Sixth Form College: A Voluntary Academy

Cutsyke Road, Featherstone, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF7 6BD

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 November 2021

Outcome

St Wilfrid's Catholic High School & Sixth Form College: A Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly school where pupils are supported by caring staff who are focused on helping them to succeed. The school's core values, including the desire to thrive and show respect, thread through the school's work. Parents say that there is a positive and nurturing environment. They value the pastoral care their children receive.

Pupils feel safe and happy. They say that teachers are friendly and help them in lessons. Pupils know that if they have concerns that they can go to any member of staff and they will get the help that they need. Pupils attending the communication and interaction resource thrive. They are well supported by enthusiastic and caring staff.

Leaders have high expectations for how pupils behave. Most pupils behave well at school. Lessons are calm with clear routines. This enables pupils to focus on their work. Pupils say that there is little bullying here. On the rare occasions when bullying happens, staff act quickly to deal with it.

The school's Catholic ethos supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils act respectfully towards each other. They know the importance of kindness towards others. Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities they are offered. A newly formed dissection club is popular with younger pupils.

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

Leaders have high ambitions that every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will thrive and succeed. Subject leaders have planned a curriculum that sets out the specialist vocabulary and important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. However, at key stage 3, pupils do not have enough time to cover new learning. Consequently, some pupils struggle to remember important concepts. They find the jump to key stage 4 difficult.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. Pupils say that teachers bring lessons to life. This is particularly the case in sixth form, where students say that their teachers' enthusiasm 'rubs off on them'. Leaders support teachers in developing their practice. There are a range of training courses available to staff. Teachers value these opportunities. They feel that leaders support their professional development and their well-being.

Leaders recognise the importance of reading. They are keen to develop a culture and love of reading across the school. Students in sixth form receive training to support younger pupils to help them with reading and in other subject areas. Pupils starting school are assessed to find out how well they can read. A range of support strategies are put in place to help weaker readers. However, pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read do not receive the specific help they need to recognise unfamiliar letters and sounds.

Leaders continue to refine the personal development programme. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and different faiths and beliefs. Many pupils have the confidence to directly challenge those who make homophobic or racist comments. Nearly all pupils would report this to a member of staff. Pupils value the emotional support they receive. This helps them to cope with issues such as bereavement.

Leaders have put a new behaviour system in place. Pupils say that the system is fair and that teachers apply it consistently. Some parents disagree. A few pupils struggle to behave well at school. A range of specially designed support packages have been developed to help them reflect on their actions and make different choices. 'Student services' is seen by pupils as a safe space where they can go if they need to report a concern, share a worry or have some quiet time. Pupils who repeatedly misbehave may attend to carry out their work in isolation. Staff support these pupils in talking through what has happened. Pupils spoken to said that the support they receive helps them to change their behaviour.

Leaders work hard to ensure that the needs of every pupil are met. There is a shared determination that every pupil will succeed. Leaders, teachers and support staff are keenly focused on disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Leaders ensure that teachers meet the needs of pupils with SEND well. Teachers use the information provided in support plans to enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum.

Governors know the school well. They challenge and support the headteacher and wider school leaders to ensure that the right decisions are taken. Leaders and teachers value the wider support given by the Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know how to report a concern and that staff will take their concerns seriously. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They know the signs that suggest a pupil might be at risk of abuse. Staff pass on any concerns quickly and leaders take appropriate and swift action to ensure that pupils are safe. Where necessary, leaders refer concerns to appropriate external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not have enough opportunity at key stage 3 to learn the important information that leaders intend for them to know and remember. This is because the sequence of planned lessons does not allow sufficient time for this knowledge to be understood and revisited over time. As a result, some pupils struggle with the increased demands of key stage 4. Leaders should ensure that pupils have the time to secure this important knowledge by the end of key stage 3.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are not effectively supported to become confident and fluent readers. This is because teachers do not provide pupils with the specific support they need to unpick the links between letters and sounds. This lack of clear phonics teaching limits reading progression for weaker readers. Leaders should ensure staff are trained to deliver an effective phonics programme for those pupils who require this support.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the third section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College, to be good in March 2012.

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	138951
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10199817
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1532
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	270
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charles Gillott
Headteacher	Philip Dore
Website	www.st-wilfrids.bkcat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the school leadership. A new headteacher is in post. Interim leaders have been recruited to add further capacity.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs in communication and interaction, managed by the local authority. This currently caters for 20 pupils.
- The school is part of the Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school is within the Catholic Diocese of Leeds. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2017.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including curriculum leaders and a range of staff including teachers, support staff and pastoral staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair and vice-chair of the academy council. Meetings were held with the school's designated safeguarding lead and leaders supporting pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and history. They reviewed curriculum plans with subject leaders. Inspectors talked with pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with teachers.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements. Through discussions with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how well pupils are kept safe. Inspectors looked at safeguarding records and documentation. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding arrangements and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about pupils' behaviour and about workload in the school.
- The inspection team considered 108 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 78 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lyndsey Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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