

Inspection of St Edward's College

Sandfield Park, Liverpool, Merseyside L12 1LF

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Edward's College as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils and students in the sixth form, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils and students achieve well across a range of academic and vocational subjects.

Pupils and students feel safe and are proud of their school. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In the main, pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. When bullying is reported, staff deal with it promptly and effectively. That said, some pupils are subjected to derogatory and discriminatory language from other pupils which, on some occasions, they do not feel comfortable to report. Consequently, this type of behaviour is not improving.

Pupils benefit from a rich and diverse programme of wider opportunities and experiences. This includes activities from beginner to elite level in music, sport and other areas. They value the opportunities to become active citizens by serving the local community, such as helping at soup kitchens. Students volunteer to support projects in disadvantaged communities overseas.

Despite the strengths in the extra-curricular offer, some older pupils do not receive a strong enough offer to support their personal development and understanding of relationships and diversity. This means that some pupils do not feel confident to discuss important issues such as racism and misogyny in school.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils and students to learn. These leaders have carefully considered the order that topics and themes are taught, so that pupils and students build up a secure body of knowledge as they move through the school.

Teachers use expert subject knowledge to deliver the academic curriculum effectively, including in the sixth form. This helps pupils and students to achieve well. Teachers use assessment strategies effectively to identify misconceptions and to check that pupils are learning the curriculum securely.

Leaders have developed appropriate systems to quickly identify the additional needs of pupils and students with SEND. Leaders provide teachers with a wealth of information so that they can support these pupils to learn well. Most teachers use this information effectively to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This helps these pupils to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. They promote reading for pleasure. Pupils read academic texts of increasing complexity from Year 7 to Year 13. Students in the sixth form read with pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 to help them develop an enjoyment of reading. Leaders accurately identify pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. They provide these pupils with effective support to help them to catch up quickly. Increasingly, these pupils read with confidence and fluency.

Most pupils behave well. The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. Students behave with maturity and are positive role models for younger pupils. They learn without disruption. However, some older pupils do not feel able to discuss concerns about homophobia or sexual harassment with adults. Leaders have not created a culture that enables all pupils and staff to feel confident in discussing concerns about the protected characteristics. As a result, some pupils continue to experience verbal abuse.

Leaders ensure that most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, take part in extra-curricular activities. Pupils and students receive high-quality careers advice and guidance, including about apprenticeships. This helps them to make appropriate choices about their next steps. Pupils and students value opportunities for work experience in Year 10 and Year 12.

Leaders have recently made changes to the personal development curriculum. Pupils learn about British values, citizenship, and physical and mental health. However, some aspects of the personal development curriculum are not designed and implemented well for older pupils. In particular, older pupils and students have not been taught about relationships and sex education in an age-appropriate way. This limits how well they are prepared for their future lives.

Leaders have developed a programme of staff development based on current educational thinking and research. Staff feel well supported with their workload and well-being. They value the investment that leaders make in their professional development.

Governors challenge leaders in the school about the quality of education that pupils receive. However, governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently well about pupils' behaviour towards each other. Leaders have not clearly defined how staff should record different types of behaviour concerns. This means that they are not able to analyse the impact of these behaviours on pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained about risks to pupils' safety, including relevant local risks. Staff are vigilant. They understand when and how to report their concerns. When pupils and staff report concerns, leaders take timely actions to keep pupils safe. Leaders involve outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families when needed.

Leaders use several systems to record safeguarding concerns. This sometimes results in leaders not making connections between the issues that pupils are facing as quickly as they should. Although this is a relative weakness, pupils are not put at risk of harm.

Pupils and students are taught about risks and how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils experience derogatory and discriminatory language in school. Some of these pupils do not feel able to talk to staff about these incidents and the impact of this discriminatory behaviour on their mental health and well-being. This means that these pupils continue to suffer. Leaders should ensure that they develop a culture where discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated and where pupils feel confident to report it.
- Leaders have not identified the important knowledge that older pupils and students need to know in the personal development curriculum, particularly about relationships and sex education. This means that older pupils and students have not developed a secure understanding of age-appropriate information about sexual health and different types of relationships. Leaders should ensure that the personal development curriculum is organised to allow all pupils and students to develop a secure body of knowledge.
- Leaders do not have accurate and up-to-date knowledge of the number of behaviour incidents, including reports of derogatory language and discriminatory language. This means that they are not able to analyse information about pupils' behaviour sufficiently well. Leaders should ensure that they use the information that they hold more effectively to bring about improvements to pupils' behaviour.

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.

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	136735
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10226379
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	1140
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	314
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	John O'Brien
Principal	Stephen Morris
Website	www.st-edwards.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Edward's College converted to become an academy school in May 2011. When its predecessor school, St Edward's College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2019.
- Leaders use three registered alternative providers 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

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. An inspector spoke with members of the local governing body, a trustee, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the archdiocese and the Dean of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and students about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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 evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, modern foreign languages, geography, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils and students about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' and students' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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