

Inspection of Xaverian College

Inspection dates: 7 to 10 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Information about this provider

Xaverian College is a Catholic sixth-form college for the community in Rusholme, Manchester. Students attend the college from across the wider Greater Manchester (GM) area. They come from a diverse range of backgrounds.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2,827 students studying education programmes for young people. Almost all study at level 3 on A-level programmes, vocational programmes or a blend of both A levels and vocational courses. The college offers A levels in 33 subjects, with some of the most popular being psychology, biology, mathematics, chemistry, art and design, and business studies. Students on vocational programmes study a variety of subjects, including health and social care, information technology, music technology, business, sport and applied science. There were 40 students studying vocational programmes at level 2 alongside GCSE English and/or mathematics. Eleven students follow a foundation learning programme. There were 17 students in receipt of high-needs funding following study programmes across all types and levels.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students enjoy their time at Xaverian College. They would recommend the college to siblings, friends and peers. Students feel welcome and well supported. They appreciate the work of their teachers in helping them to achieve their potential. Students are proud to be Xaverians.

Students have an overwhelmingly positive attitude to their learning. They speak very highly of the support they receive from staff across the college. Students are highly respectful of their teachers and peers. Teachers constantly promote the importance of attendance and punctuality as part of being a good student and preparing for success. As a result, students' attendance is very high and they arrive on time.

Teachers set high expectations for learning from the outset, modelling what success looks like. Students display exemplary behaviour both in learning sessions and around the campus. They develop good study habits, are ready to learn, come to sessions prepared and are ambitious for what they can achieve. Students benefit from a warm, welcoming and aspirational culture.

Staff at all levels are proud to work at Xaverian. They support students to grow, flourish and achieve. Students benefit from an extensive offer of extra-curricular activities. They participate in a range of clubs and societies in sport, drama, music, debating and crafts for well-being. Many students take part in the college's extensive range of trips and residential visits. They commit themselves fully to their studies and to many activities in and outside college.

Students understand how their courses prepare them for their next steps in education, training or work. They benefit from a broad range of specific support and guidance to develop their confidence and skills to prepare for progression. Students are well informed about moving on to higher level study. Several are of the first generation in their family to do so. Students know what they want to do when they finish college and are ambitious to progress to their chosen destinations. Most students gain places at their first-choice university. Others progress into apprenticeships and employment.

Students feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe at college and in their personal lives. They describe the learning environment and campus as safe, friendly and inclusive. Staff and students do not accept bullying, harassment or discrimination. Students say that should incidences ever occur, staff deal with any issues quickly, fairly, consistently and effectively.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders work effectively with local school and college partners to identify the current and future skills priorities for the city of Manchester and the GM region. They have established a close working partnership with local Catholic colleges and feeder

schools as part of the Manchester Catholic Education Partnership. Leaders receive regular updates from the local authority, which include skills priorities such as the need to increase capacity to support and educate the growing number of young people entering post-16 education in the local area.

Leaders have developed a college skills strategy which considers and reflects the skills priorities identified through local and national industrial, workforce and skills strategies. They continue to focus on their role as a sixth-form college to provide a mostly level 3 curriculum that helps most students to progress to higher level study. Leaders offer additional programmes to enhance employability in specific areas, such as the extended project qualification for students to further develop their independent research skills, an access programme for students aspiring to careers as medics, dentists and vets, and conducting qualifications for music students.

Leaders have developed access programmes with higher education partners that support students from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve and progress in priority subject areas such as science. They have developed a foundation programme with the University of Manchester, offering pathways into biomedical sciences, dentistry, pharmacy and medicine.

Leaders have recently strengthened their expectation for all curriculum areas to be more proactive in establishing partnerships with different external stakeholders to promote and develop the skills of their students. Teachers in a few subjects make effective use of their relationships with different partners and stakeholders to influence the design and implementation of the curriculum. For example, teachers in film studies have introduced more practical camera work to help students develop the skills they need for the degree course at Manchester Metropolitan University. However, this is not yet fully consistent across all curriculum areas.

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

Leaders plan a highly ambitious curriculum that develops students and prepares them for aspirational destinations. They work closely with other GM providers to provide a Manchester-wide curriculum offer that meets the needs of their diverse and growing post-16 community of students. Leaders, managers and teachers provide a consistently high-quality education. They understand the important role they play in responding to social disadvantage and meeting the needs of students who aspire to progress to university.

Leaders ensure that teachers are qualified and experienced subject experts. Teachers benefit from a highly effective continuous professional development (CPD) programme that focuses relentlessly on improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders personalise CPD to improve the learning experience for students. Many teachers are examiners in their subjects. They use their expertise very well to teach inspirational lessons that motivate students to work hard and do well. Leaders promote an approach of 'trial, reflect and adapt', using the teaching and learning

toolkits that underpin the CPD programme. As a result, students benefit from consistently high-quality teaching and learning.

Teachers plan the curriculum very effectively. In psychology, teachers are mindful of increasing numbers of the local population with mental health needs. In response to this, they include topics such as schizophrenia so that students have a better awareness of the impact on people in their local area. In religious studies, teachers include a focus on ethics, as many students require this underpinning knowledge to progress on to law degrees.

Teachers ensure that the curriculum provides students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for their next steps into university or employment. They spend the first few weeks of term finding out about what students know and can do. In business, teachers provide students with a 'crash course' so that they quickly understand key concepts that are included in the course. Students first learn about enterprise, how to set up a business and then how to grow a business. In mathematics, teachers' planning and teaching help students to move on from GCSE. Students study familiar topics, such as linear functions and quadratics, to embed and enhance their knowledge before progressing to new and complex subject matter.

Teaching is well planned to help students understand and remember key concepts. Lessons are appropriately paced and full of challenge. In mathematics, teachers design progressively more challenging levels of practice questions so that students access a topic, move through the different levels of challenge and secure knowledge and understanding over time. Teachers use innovative approaches to help students remember key concepts. For example, they use animated film characters to illustrate different leadership styles, such as 'Peter Pan' as laissez-faire, 'Mufasa' from 'The Lion King' as paternalistic, 'Elsa' from 'Frozen' as autocratic, and 'Woody' and 'Buzz' from 'Toy Story' as democratic. This makes learning and content memorable and enjoyable.

Teaching and learning support for students with high needs and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are highly effective. Teachers benefit from useful, specific training on topics including autism spectrum disorder, mental health training or working with students with visual impairments. They are well prepared to help all students thrive and achieve. Teachers know their students well. Students with high needs and SEND make excellent progress and excel in line with their peers.

Teachers take a methodical approach to assessing students during lessons, through peer assessment, through weekly homework and through mock examinations. They provide precise feedback that helps students to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers help students to identify common mistakes and to learn how to avoid them. They reinforce the importance of learning from mistakes as well as successes. Students consider teachers' feedback very carefully to improve the quality of their work. This builds students' confidence and resilience as they progress through the course and tackle more complex topics. Students routinely produce work of a very high standard.

Students enhance their understanding of fundamental British values, inclusivity and diversity, and healthy relationships through their tutorial and religious education programmes. They develop a sense of citizenship and community, strong values, tolerance and respect, which permeate the college.

Leaders and teachers take effective action to improve and monitor the quality of education across the college. They carry out lesson observations, listen to the student voice, and analyse assessment results, high-grades and value-added information to identify the many strengths and the small number of areas for improvement in the provision. Leaders help subject staff secure swift improvements and share best practice.

Leaders are considerate of staff's welfare and workload. Leaders care for and value their staff. Staff are extremely positive about working at the college. They feel well supported and talk enthusiastically about how their well-being is a priority for leaders. Staff say that the college is well led and managed. They feel part of the college family and are proud to work at Xaverian.

Governors are highly ambitious and committed to the college vision and mission to provide high-quality education for students in an inclusive, aspirational environment. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the college's strengths and the few areas that could be improved further. Governors have extensive knowledge and expertise that they use incisively to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of provision. They support leaders in future planning, including development of the accommodation strategy to increase capacity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics provision for the Manchester area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding as being everyone's responsibility. They ensure that the safeguarding team members have the experience and training to carry out their roles effectively. Leaders have worked extensively with staff to ensure that staff know how to spot signs and report concerns about students.

Leaders recruit staff safely. They carry out appropriate pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with young people.

The safeguarding team members use well-developed policies and processes to record, action and follow up on any safeguarding concerns. They make effective use of external agencies to refer concerns beyond their expertise to the appropriate organisation. They have a clear oversight of concerns raised, and swiftly prioritise support for those in need.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130504
Address	Lower Park Road Manchester M14 5RB
Contact number	0161 224 1781
Website	www.xaverian.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Anthony Knowles
Provider type	Sixth-form college
Dates of previous inspection	29 January to 1 February 2008
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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