

Inspection of Saint Pius X Catholic High School A Specialist School in Humanities

Wath Wood Road, Wath-upon-Deerne, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 7PQ

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides pupils with a safe and welcoming environment in which to learn. Staff know and care for pupils well. The school promotes the development of the pupil as a whole, alongside pupils' academic studies. This approach is informed by the school's Roman Catholic ethos.

Pupils experience an inconsistent quality of education at the school. In some subjects, pupils are enthused about their learning. They are well-supported by staff and develop a secure understanding of the curriculum. However, this is not consistent across the school. Pupils at the school do not achieve as well as they could, or as well as the school want, in public examinations. In too many cases, this is reflected in weaknesses in the curriculum that pupils study or how it is taught.

Pupils benefit from a number of opportunities to enrich the school's curriculum. For example, key stage 3 pupils attend 'retreat' residentials. These allow pupils to enjoy a range of outdoor education activities. The school also uses these to strengthen pupils' understanding of its values.

Expectations for pupils' conduct are clear and well understood. Adults work to support and re-engage pupils in their learning if they struggle to meet these. Bullying and other kinds of unkind behaviours are infrequent. When they do happen, the school take appropriate actions to address them. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

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

The school's curriculum matches the aims and ambition of the national curriculum. In the school's strongest subjects, such as history, these aims are carefully broken down and sequenced to provide clarity about what pupils are expected to learn and in what order. This enables teachers to precisely focus pupils' learning to secure these small steps. When this happens, pupils achieve well.

In several subjects, pupils do not benefit from this strongest quality of education. In these subjects, the aims of the curriculum are not sufficiently broken down. Teachers lack clarity about the precise purpose of a lesson or series of lessons. Sometimes, the approach that teachers use or the work that pupils complete in lessons is not well chosen to realise the intent of the curriculum. Some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, do not develop as secure and detailed a body of knowledge and skills as the school intends. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could in public examinations.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, are fully included in opportunities that the school provides. The school provides teachers with information about how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers use this effectively to support pupils in lessons.

In some cases, strategies are not as focused to the specific needs of individual pupils as they could be.

The school understands the importance of promoting reading. It has introduced a number of new approaches to strengthen the support that pupils receive. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read, particularly in younger years, receive additional help to catch up. For some pupils, this is proving successful. The school recognises that there is currently less support available to pupils in key stage 4. It has plans to expand support for these pupils to help them catch up.

During the personal, social and health education lessons, pupils learn a range of important information. This includes how to keep safe online and about healthy relationships. The school has developed a strong programme of careers advice and guidance. Pupils participate in opportunities such as work experience, visits from external speakers or mock interviews. These ensure that pupils are well-informed about their possible next steps in education, employment or training.

Most pupils attend school regularly. The school has a clear understanding of the reasons why some pupils attend less often. Leaders work with pupils and their families to improve the attendance of these pupils. Despite this, pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium grant are more likely to be persistently absent than their peers. These pupils miss important learning.

Those with responsibility for governance share the same ambition for pupils as school leaders. In some aspects, particularly around the quality of education that pupils receive, there has been insufficient scrutiny on the impact of the school's work. Actions are not consistently focused on the most important areas. Some actions are not securing the improvements intended by the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the end points that the school want pupils to achieve are not sufficiently broken down. Teachers sometimes lack clarity about the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. Sometimes pupils progress to complex tasks before they have secured the knowledge to achieve these. The school should ensure that the end points they want pupils to achieve are carefully broken down.
- The activities that pupils complete or the pedagogical approaches used in some lessons do not support pupils to learn the intended curriculum. Pupils do not develop the intended body of knowledge and skills as well as they could. The

school should ensure that how the curriculum is taught is tightly aligned to the aims of the curriculum.

- Too many pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium grant are persistently absent from school. These pupils miss important learning. These gaps in knowledge prevent pupils from achieving as well as they could. The school should further embed its attendance strategy to support regular attendance for these pupils.
- The school, including those with responsibility for governance, has not ensured that the actions taken to improve pupils' education are having sufficient impact. Pupils receive an inconsistent quality of education that varies across subjects. The school should ensure that it effectively evaluates the impact of any actions to improve pupils' education and uses these findings to inform subsequent actions.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106962
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10297195
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Frances Walsh
Headteacher	Sue Smith
Website	www.saintpiusx.school
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- This school has a Roman Catholic denomination. The school is part of the Diocese of Hallam. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2016.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing board.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed curriculum documentation, samples of pupils' work and visited a sample of lessons in mathematics and geography.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. They looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from governing board meetings as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector visited the unregistered provision setting used by pupils from this school.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Hallam.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Senior	Ofsted Inspector
Erica Hiorns	Ofsted Inspector

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