

Inspection of The Academy of St Francis of Assisi

Gardners Drive, Kensington, Liverpool, Merseyside L6 7UR

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Jo Leech. This school is part of The Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Heather Duggan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matt Elliott.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to this vibrant school community where diversity is cherished. For example, during a recent culture day, pupils celebrated their different cultural heritages with pride. Many pupils join the school at different times during the academic year. Some speak little English when they arrive. They are warmly welcomed. This helps most pupils to feel happy in school.

Pupils strive to uphold the school's values. Recently, the school has strengthened its approach to managing unacceptable conduct. Pupils' behaviour is improving as a result. However, a small group of pupils continue to cause some disruption.

The school wants the best for pupils. Work is ongoing to design a curriculum that will enable pupils to meet these expectations. However, in several subjects, the curriculum is at an early stage of development. Currently, some pupils do not build a secure body of knowledge in each subject. They do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils value the wide range of trips and visits that are on offer. They spoke enthusiastically about what they had learned from trips linked to different subjects, such as a recent university visit to enhance their learning about computing.

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

The school is emerging from a period of turbulence in staffing. Some leadership positions have only recently been filled. This has slowed improvements to the quality of education at the school. Staffing is now stable. Trustees and members of the local governing body have strengthened their systems for gathering information about the school. They are now better equipped to offer appropriate support and challenge.

The school has thought carefully about how the curriculum reflects the diversity of its community. Similar attention is given to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of where they live. This helps pupils, including those new to the country, to develop a sense of belonging in the local area.

In some subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. Staff introduce new information in a logical order so that pupils can connect it to what they already know. In these subjects, pupils are beginning to learn successfully. However, this is not the case for several subjects across the curriculum. This means that pupils' achievement is variable.

Staff are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They frequently check what pupils have learned. However, some staff do not use the information that they gather from these checks well enough to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, some pupils' learning does not build securely over time.

Recently, the school has increased its expectations of what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) should learn. It identifies the additional needs of these pupils quickly and accurately. However, some staff do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum well enough for these pupils. This hinders the learning of some pupils with SEND.

The school is in the early stages of providing support for those pupils who struggle with reading. Staff identify gaps in the reading knowledge of Year 7 pupils. These pupils benefit from appropriate support to help them to read well. However, this is not the case for pupils in other year groups. This affects how well these pupils access the curriculum and limits how well they learn.

The school has prioritised pupils' personal development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn a wealth of useful information, including about healthy relationships. Pupils readily recall this learning. When appropriate, groups of pupils receive well-designed support to learn about important topics, such as the dangers of gang violence. The school has strengthened its careers provision. Pupils receive guidance that helps them to make judicious decisions about their futures.

The school has recently reviewed its systems for managing behaviour and for improving attendance. There is a well-coordinated approach to ensuring that the school has the whole picture about pupils. For instance, staff bring together information about pupils' behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and additional needs. In the main, classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils' rates of attendance are beginning to improve. However, some pupils do not have positive attitudes towards their education. They do not behave well. In addition, too many pupils, including some vulnerable pupils, do not attend school as regularly as they should. The school has suitable processes in place to address low attendance and unacceptable conduct. These are beginning to take effect.

Staff share the school's determination to improve the quality of education that it provides. Typically, staff are supportive of the positive changes that are being made. Most appreciate the school's consideration of their workload. For example, staff are given additional time to develop their subject curriculums.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In several subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils should learn has not been clearly identified. This makes it difficult for staff to teach some of the intended curriculum. It also hinders pupils' achievement. The school should provide clarity

around what should be taught within each subject and ensure that these curriculums are delivered as intended.

- Some staff do not use assessment strategies effectively in order to check what pupils know and how well they remember what they have previously learned. This hinders staff in designing appropriate learning activities and results in some pupils having residual gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that staff use assessment strategies effectively, so that they can accurately identify, and then address, gaps in pupils' learning when they need to revisit previous learning.
- Some staff do not use the information that they are given about the additional needs of pupils with SEND in order to adapt the delivery of the curriculum well. This means that some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should. The school should support staff to meet the needs of these pupils more effectively.
- Some pupils who struggle to read, particularly those in key stage 4, do not receive the help that they need to improve. This hampers how well they access the curriculum. The school should ensure that appropriate support is in place to help these pupils to read well so that they learn all that they should.

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 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	144493
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10294405
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	910
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matt Elliott
CEO of the trust	Heather Duggan
Headteacher	Jo Leech
Website	www.asfaonline.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12, December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of The Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust, which is also known as The All Saints Multi Academy Trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic and Church of England school, sponsored by the Archdiocese and the Diocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in March 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2026.
- Since the previous inspection, several new staff have joined the school. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2022.
- The school uses six registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- 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.

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.

- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the trust and of the local academy council.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese. An inspector also spoke with an educational consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, geography, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andy Burton	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Renwick	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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