



# St Francis Xavier School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121715  
**LEA** North Yorkshire  
**Inspection number** 281089  
**Inspection dates** 28 March 2006 to 29 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Douglas Thorburn HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Darlington Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Richmond
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		North Yorkshire DL10 7DA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01748 823414
<b>Number on roll</b>	386	<b>Fax number</b>	01748 823946
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr J Whiston
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr J Mc Auley

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 March 2006 - 29 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281089
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Francis Xavier is a joint Catholic and Church of England school situated in the town of Richmond, North Yorkshire. It serves young people of both denominations from the town, the surrounding rural area and a large military base. Nearly all pupils are of white British heritage. Indications of disadvantage are a little less than the national average. The overall attainment of pupils entering the school at age 11 is slightly above the national average, especially so in the last few years. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average though relatively few have statements of special educational need.

This is a very small school. Its accommodation until now has been cramped and at the time of the last inspection this hindered pupils' learning. However, the premises are now being totally replaced, with the first of two phases of building currently completed. The new building includes extensive multi-media facilities.

At age 16, pupils who continue with education or training generally proceed to a neighbouring sixth form or colleges in other towns.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Francis Xavier is a good school. Pupils benefit from being members of a small but strong educational community which values all pupils equally. The school has a good sense of purpose: it gives high priority both to pupils' academic performance and to their personal development. In both respects it achieves success. Standards of attainment, already above average, are improving, and pupils' personal development is good, and in some respects, outstanding. The school gives good value for money.

Pupils enjoy school. Their attendance is good and they behave very well. They make good academic progress across the age range, though their rate of progress slows slightly in Years 10 and 11. They participate well in school activities. However, the school consults pupils less than it should, and they have too few opportunities to take responsibilities within the school.

The headteacher, governors and senior staff have a clear and reliable view of the school's strengths and its few weaknesses, and in general they have sensible improvement plans in hand. In the past, the development of the school has been severely hampered by poor accommodation and this, for instance, restricted its opportunity to provide vocational courses. The school is now part way through a major rebuilding programme which has greatly enhanced its potential. It is now in a very good position to move forward. It has a good track record of improvement since its last inspection and its capacity for further improvement is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of academic progress in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve consultation with pupils and provide them with better opportunities to take responsibility within the school.
- Extend the opportunities for vocational study available to older pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

In general, pupils' standard of attainment when they enter the school is slightly above average. Their attainment at age 14 in English, mathematics and science is above average and, at age 16, their attainment in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) is also above average. The school met its 2005 targets for pupils' attainment.

There have been overall improvements since 2001 in pupils' standards in mathematics and science at age 14, though English standards have not improved during this time. There has been a general improvement in standards at age 16 since 2001, although there has been considerable variation from year to year. While most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, performed satisfactorily or well at GCSE in 2005, standards in English Literature, French and religious education were below average.

St Francis Xavier pupils make faster progress overall from age 11 to 16 than their peers nationally. However, their rate of progress slows slightly in the GCSE years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress at a similar rate to other pupils. Pupils made good progress in the great majority of lessons seen during this inspection, both in extending their knowledge and understanding, and in developing their skills.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy school life and their attendance is good. Most show very good attitudes to work in lessons. They respond very well to their teachers, work very well in pairs and small groups, and do their best when working on their own. Very positive relationships with adults and between pupils make an important contribution to pupils' development and progress. As a result, pupils are very comfortable expressing their views in lessons and asking questions of their teachers. Pupils know that taking a keen interest in learning is valued by staff and other pupils. Behaviour is very good in lessons and at other times. Pupils confirm that rare bullying incidents, mostly teasing and name-calling, are taken seriously and generally well handled once reported to adults.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding, underpinned by the school's Christian values. Their social development is good, despite the rather limited opportunities to take responsibility within the school community. Cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural community is underdeveloped. Pupils are effectively encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles: they understand the need to eat healthy food and take good part in physical education. In general they conduct themselves safely. They have a good range of workplace and other skills, important for later life: their basic skills are good, they communicate well and act responsibly, and they have some good understanding of how society works.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons have a clear focus and teachers successfully demand high standards of work and behaviour. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and communicate information clearly, sometimes using information and communication technology (ICT) well. The best lessons inspire and challenge pupils to extend themselves, providing activities carefully planned to match individuals' needs. Teachers explain the purpose of each lesson to the class, and ensure that pupils tackle progressively more demanding material and ideas as the lesson proceeds. In general, lessons meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those of other pupils.

In good lessons, pupils make rapid progress because the teaching has motivated them to think about their work, to ask relevant questions, and to try hard. Many enjoy having

their work demonstrated to others or having the chance to explain their ideas to the class. Occasionally, though, lessons lack that sparkle. For example, in some instances, pupils are given insufficient time to explore complex topics fully before moving on to other material.

Teachers make effective use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and set appropriate targets. They mark pupils' work carefully, giving helpful comments to pupils on how well they are progressing and providing useful guidance about how they can improve. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of their own standard of work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum which meets statutory requirements and lives up to the school's Christian aims. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow a broad range of subjects, including two foreign languages: French and German. The national strategies for literacy, numeracy and ICT are effectively built in to the work of various subjects. In general, appropriate time is allocated to each subject but insufficient time is given to German to allow pupils to progress well. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good range of GCSE courses, but vocational programmes are underdeveloped, as a result of the constraints previously placed on the school by its accommodation. There is a very effective programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship, which includes an innovative element on managing personal finances. The curriculum benefits greatly from contributions by visiting speakers and organisations: these enhance its liveliness and relevance to pupils. A good range of specific activities and courses is designed to meet the particular needs of very able pupils and some of these pupils take GCSE examinations a year earlier than their peers.

Pupils have good opportunities to undertake interesting and useful activities in addition to their normal lessons. Many take part in music, dance, drama and other clubs at lunchtime or after school. Pupils also give good support to charities, thereby broadening their knowledge and experience. They have good opportunities to participate in residential educational visits in the UK and abroad.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of its pupils: there is a high, well justified, level of trust and confidence between adults and young people. Pupils feel supported well when they have personal difficulties, not just by teachers but by the school nurse and through a drop-in centre. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place.

Pupils settle quickly into school in Year 7, despite arriving from up to 20 primary schools. The school monitors their personal and academic progress well, sharing information regularly and effectively with them and their parents. Where there is underachievement, heads of year quickly identify what is needed to bring about

improvement. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well known and effectively supported.

The school has rightly improved the provision of career guidance in Year 9, prior to pupils choosing their option subjects for Years 10 and 11. Older pupils are well prepared for life after school. The school has good links with Connexions which promote pupils' understanding of possible careers. Pupils have valuable work placements and low attainers, in particular, undertake relevant activities to improve their self-esteem and confidence.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Under its present leadership, the school has improved considerably since the last inspection. Previous weaknesses have been rectified and, during this time, pupils' attitudes to school have steadily improved and their standards of attainment have risen. The senior leadership, in consultation with staff and governors, has identified the right priorities for further improvement of the school.

Senior leaders and middle managers evaluate the school's work effectively. The school has an accurate knowledge of its strengths and its relative weaknesses. Senior and middle managers monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly and good use has been made of an external consultant to improve managers' skills. The school analyses pupils' academic performance in detail. Managers are held to account where necessary and appropriate improvement plans are put in place. The school does not evaluate other aspects of pupils' well-being, such as their contribution to the community, with such rigour.

The governing body has steered the school well through a very difficult period when its effectiveness was hindered by inadequate buildings. It has given good support to the headteacher, but has also provided challenge to him and the staff. It has used resources well to improve standards, for instance, by reducing the size of some teaching groups. The school gives good value for money.

The school seeks the views of parents about its provision, and most are happy with the level of consultation. However, it does not give sufficient attention to seeking the views of the pupils and the school council is no longer active. Managers have ensured that good progress has been made in recent years and, given the clear sense of direction, the school has a strong capacity to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We would like to tell you the findings of our recent inspection of the school. But first we want to thank the large number of you who spoke to us during our visit. We realise that you enjoy school, and you appreciate the teaching and support you receive. We know that you are proud of the school.

We think St Francis Xavier is a good school. We think that you behave in a very responsible and friendly way, and you are generally respectful to each other and to staff. We saw that you work hard in lessons. Many of you are also involved in extra activities, such as music, physical education, sports or drama events. We do think, however, that you should have more opportunities to take responsibility within the school and should be asked more often for ideas about how the school could improve further.

We think you make good progress and that you are doing well, especially in Years 7 to 9. The credit for this should be shared between your teachers and yourselves. We saw much good teaching and we saw occasions when you joined in well in discussions and were clearly working hard. We think that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities get some helpful support. We think that individuals with particular problems generally get good help from staff.

We believe that the school plans your curriculum well, so that most of you can do courses that suit you. But we think the school should now provide more courses in Years 10 and 11 that are linked to particular careers, for those with particular interests.

We think the school is well managed, and the staff are very committed to helping you to make progress. We know that the school has improved a great deal in recent years and we are sure it will continue to improve. You have settled into the new building very well, and we believe you deserve it!