

Xaverian College

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Xaverian College is an open-access inner city Roman Catholic sixth form college established in 1977 as part of the Catholic re-organisation of its secondary education in Manchester. A new principal was appointed in September 2007. The college is two miles south of the city centre in Rusholme in the diocese of Salford. It has 1,577 students, of whom 70% are from Manchester with a further 29% from Greater Manchester. Significant numbers of students enter the college with a lower than average points score. The college offers a broad range of courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. It offers 38 GCE A level subjects, and BTEC national and applied A levels in seven curriculum areas for 86% of its learners. The college also offers level 4 foundation courses in pre-medical and biological sciences. The student cohort is almost entirely full-time aged 16 to 19.
2. The college's values are articulated through the mission of the college; "to commend to students a way of life which is rooted in the love of God and our neighbour through excellent education and example". It has a distinctive ethos which underpins all of its work. The college has links with several Manchester high schools in the local area, particularly the six local Catholic high schools. Students come to the college from 58 schools.
3. The city of Manchester is made up of 33 wards of which 27 are among the most deprived 10% nationally. The college draws from a diverse community, and 64% of its learners are from disadvantaged areas. Some 39% of learners identified themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group in 2007/08. The minority ethnic population is concentrated in the wards of Ardwick, Hulme, Rusholme and Whalley Range where the ethnic minority population is 30% - 40%, which reflects that of the college population.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Outstanding: Contributory Grade 1</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

4. Xaverian College is outstanding in all aspects of its provision. The college offers students a happy, welcoming and spiritually open environment in which they feel safe to explore their own values and faith and that of others. The progress made by learners is excellent. Pass and retention rates are high at levels 1 and 3. Retention rates at level 2 are around the national average. Progression rates to higher education are excellent. Teaching and learning are good, supported by the college's excellent award winning virtual learning environment (VLE), which is well integrated into curriculum areas and highly valued by students. The college offers a flexible and responsive curriculum at all levels which meets learners' needs well.
5. Guidance and support for learners are outstanding. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The specific needs of each learner are met and work very effectively. Leadership and management are outstanding. Catholic values are central to the life and work of the college. The personal commitment of governors, the principal and senior managers to the college's mission and ethos sets the tone and direction for all staff and students. Quality assurance arrangements are effective in securing improvements. Judgements on most aspects of provision are accurate and areas for improvement are tackled quickly and effectively. The outcomes of the observation of teaching and learning are not always used to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning to inform individual and cross college staff development.
6. Social and educational inclusion is outstanding. The college's Catholic ethos and the Xaverian tradition of the pursuit of social justice are at the heart of its highly inclusive culture. The college works tirelessly to ensure that barriers to education are eliminated so that students can reach their potential. Achievement and standards are outstanding. The vast majority of students achieve grades that are much higher than those predicted by their prior attainment at Key Stage 4. Varied enrichment activities and the religious education programme enables students from all backgrounds and cultures to enhance their personal development. Progression to higher education courses is excellent.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

7. Capacity to improve is outstanding. College targets are challenging and have been exceeded. There is a clear strategic direction which is understood by all staff. Governance is strong. Leadership and management are excellent and there is a clear commitment by all staff to meet the needs of every learner. Quality assurance systems are well established and successfully promote improvement. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. It identifies clearly where there are variations in performance. Managers take effective actions where improvements are needed. Staff very effectively use

the data provided by the excellent management information systems to analyse and improve the performance of students. Human and physical resources are deployed very effectively.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

8. The college has taken outstanding steps to improve. All key weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been tackled. A range of measures have been put in place and these have been effective in improving overall retention rates year on year since the previous inspection. Punctuality is monitored very carefully. The curriculum has been extended and includes provision for students from level 1 through to level 4. Group tutorial provision has been strengthened by the development of a specialist team of tutors, who oversee content and ensure consistency in delivery. Attendance has improved further and is very high. Procedures for quality assurance have been strengthened. Staff across all areas of the college are involved in the self-assessment process and this has helped to secure further improvements and high quality college provision. The promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities is rigorous and highly effective.

Key strengths

- strong Catholic ethos based on the Xaverian mission
- outstanding leadership and management
- very high success rates on level 1 and level 3 courses
- consistently outstanding value added
- much good teaching and learning
- highly responsive and flexible curriculum
- highly inclusive culture
- extensive partnership working to encourage widening participation
- highly effective governance
- outstanding personal and learning support arrangements
- highly effective information, advice and guidance
- excellent financial management
- very effective quality assurance leading to improvements.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- retention on level 2 courses
- identification of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning to inform individual and cross-college staff development.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

9. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Many learners enter the college with low or average prior attainment levels. Overall success rates at level 3, which covers the vast majority of learners, have remained above the average for sixth form colleges for the last four years. Success rates in 2005/06 for level 1 courses were above the national average and have improved by 8% in 2006/07. For learners on level 2 courses, success rates have consistently improved over the last four years to around the national average.
10. Progress on GCE AS level and A level courses is excellent; learners' achieve much better grades than might be predicted from their GCSE results. Progress at GCE A level as measured by the advanced level performance system (ALPS) is consistently outstanding and excellent in many subject areas. In 2006/07, outstanding or excellent value-added was recorded on 17 courses at GCE A level. Learners make excellent progress with 86% of leavers in 2007 progressing to higher education, of whom nearly two thirds were from areas of deprivation. The college's analysis of performance by different groups of learners correctly identifies that all groups achieve well.
11. Pass rates in GCSE English and mathematics are excellent, with 95% of learners achieving A to C grades in English and 86% in mathematics. Overall success rates at level 2 have improved to around the national average. Achievement rates on level 2 courses are high at 99%. The college recognises that retention rates on level 2 courses, although demonstrating some improvement, have not kept pace with the improvement in pass rates.
12. Learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Attendance is very good at 93% and it is monitored rigorously. Standards of students' work seen in sessions are good. Learners receiving additional learning support make good progress.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The college is committed to continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. The process for observation of lessons is good. Observations are regular and detailed. Teachers receive useful feedback on their performance. However, insufficient use is made of the outcomes of the observation process to prepare individual teacher's development plans or fully inform the cross-college staff development programme.
14. Teachers have high levels of subject expertise, and are enthusiastic. Learners benefit from well planned lessons and a wide range of learning activities that ensure they are involved actively in lessons. The college has developed a highly effective VLE, and staff and students routinely use these

facilities to support teaching and learning. Regular assessment includes good feedback on how students can improve their work. Progress is monitored frequently. Students are highly motivated and keen to learn. Parents and carers are well informed about students' progress and about the work of the college.

15. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the range of programmes to meet the needs of learners is outstanding. The college offers a flexible and responsive curriculum at all levels. The broad range of A level provision and vocational routes from levels 1 to 3 includes a mixed programme of academic and vocational courses where appropriate. There is a successful bespoke foundation course for a small number of learners at level 1. At level 2 there are opportunities for learners to re-sit GCSE programmes of study including English, mathematics and science and vocational courses. Links with high schools are very good. Enrichment opportunities at the college are outstanding and participation is high.
16. All students follow a programme of general religious education designed to foster a culture of respect and tolerance amongst learners and to develop a deeper understanding of faith. The programme engenders an ethos of care and is valuable to learners. The course contributes to the college's commitment to social cohesion as students from a variety of faith and non-faith backgrounds listen to and learn from one another through open discussion and prayer, as illustrated by the Christian and Muslim faith sharing groups. The college has appointed a full-time chaplain to respond to staff and student needs for spiritual direction. Chaplaincy activities such as meditation, sign language, discussion of human rights themes, liturgy preparation and links with local and national social justice groups are wide-ranging and inclusive.
17. Support for students is outstanding and fully integrated with the college ethos and culture of inclusivity. The college's prospectus celebrates the Catholic values of the Xaverian community, including respect and care for the individual, and outlines the levels of support that are widely available. Course guide information is detailed and helpful. Advice and guidance is delivered through successful road shows, interview evenings, open evenings, taster days and parents' conferences.
18. Initial assessment for all learners is well managed. Screening takes place at enrolment and is followed up by further diagnostic assessment where appropriate. The delivery of learning skills support is an outstanding feature of provision. The college has invested in specialist accommodation and resources, including an open access learning skills centre, a dedicated team of learning mentors and three additional support specialists. Take-up of additional learning support is high, and links with subject and pastoral staff are frequent and effective.
19. Tutorial support is well planned, though consistency of delivery is being addressed by the college. Tutorial sessions are successful in safeguarding welfare and encouraging personal and social development. Careers guidance

is outstanding and embedded within the tutorial process. Learners can access up-to-date information on higher education and employment and on-line training. They book appointments with specialist advisors through the college's VLE.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: Grade 1

20. Inspectors agree with the college's self assessment report that leadership and management are outstanding. The recently appointed principal, very ably supported by an experienced and very dedicated senior management team and the governors, provides a clear vision for the future of the college, based on Catholic values. Quality of provision is outstanding. Curriculum areas are very well led and managed. Lines of accountability are clear and team work is excellent. There is a sustained focus to drive up already outstanding standards and to extend provision.
21. The college is prominent in the local community, where it plays an important role in providing an excellent education both for young Catholic people and for many students from other faiths and cultures. Collaboration and partnerships with local further and higher education providers, partner schools and employers are very good.
22. Governors take great pride in the college and have carefully considered its future development, particularly in relation to learners aged 14 to 19. They are both supportive and challenging and use their expertise to very good effect. They protect and uphold Catholic values. Governors' links with curriculum areas are outstanding. Clerking arrangements are robust.
23. Arrangements for quality assurance are highly effective in securing improvements in the college's provision, particularly in the achievement of learners. The system of observing teaching and learning is well established and understood by all staff. However, the outcomes of observations are not always used to identify the college's key strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning. The college's self-assessment report is broadly accurate. Key strengths and variations in performance are clearly identified. Support has been put in place where performance, in a very few areas, is judged satisfactory and this is leading to improvements.
24. Financial management is outstanding. Resources are of high quality and some specialist resources are very good, for example, in media and in science. The college has improved the overall quality of its accommodation. However, it is aware that the size and shape of some classrooms are inappropriate; a detailed accommodation strategy is in place to address this. Teachers are extremely well qualified and they appreciate the wide range of professional development opportunities available to them. The college has made a considerable investment in dedicated resources to promote the Xaverian mission, including a team of specialist religious education teachers,

a discrete religious education programme for each cohort of learners, a full-time lay chaplain and chaplaincy accommodation, to offer a welcoming and inclusive environment to students.

25. The college's approach to inclusion is outstanding. Requirements for safeguarding children are met in full. The caring Catholic ethos is central to the life of the college and provides an environment where students of all cultures and beliefs can thrive and achieve well. The college meets fully with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2002. The equality and diversity plan is monitored robustly. Training for staff and governors is comprehensive.
26. An excellent management information system provides easily accessible, accurate and timely data to enable staff to monitor all aspects of learners' performance.
27. Success rates have continued to rise year on year since the previous inspection. The progress made by the vast majority of students compared with their previous attainment is outstanding and exceptional in some subject areas. All key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. The college gives outstanding value for money.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	03/04	61	77	71.2	5.8	n/a			
	04/05	120	82.5	66.3	16.2	n/a			
	05/06	125	71.2	68.1	3.1	n/a			
	06/07*	165	82	**		n/a			
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	22	54.5	*	*	n/a			
	04/05	22	77.3	*	*	n/a			
	05/06	21	81	*	*	n/a			
	06/07*	22	95	**		n/a			
Other	03/04	39	89.7	72.2	17.5	n/a			
	04/05	98	83.7	66.1	17.6	n/a			
	05/06	104	69.2	67.9	1.3	n/a			
	06/07*	143	80	**		n/a			

* college data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

** national rate not available

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	03/04	560	71.6	74.1	-2.5	4	100	52.9	47.1
	04/05	509	72.1	74.5	-2.4	4	100	53	47
	05/06	590	75.9	80.1	-4.2	1	100	60.3	39.7
	06/07*	651	80	**	**	n/a			
GCSEs	03/04	322	72	77.2	-5.2	1	100		
	04/05	252	71	78.3	-7.3	3	100		
	05/06	261	79.7	82.9	-3.2	1	100	64.7	35.3
	06/07*	444	78	**	**	n/a			
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	55	65.5	68.8	-3.3	1	100		
	04/05	38	76.3	72.8	3.5	n/a			
	05/06	22	68.2	82.6	-14.4	n/a			
	06/07*	10	80	**	**	n/a			
Other	03/04	183	72.7	65.9	6.8	2	100	49.5	50.5
	04/05	219	72.6	63.8	8.8	1	100	40.3	59.7
	05/06	307	73.3	72.3	1	n/a			
	06/07*	197	84	**	**	n/a			

* college data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

** national rate not available

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	3,633	78.3	73.3	5	15	86.7	59.9	26.8
	04/05	3,740	79.4	74.9	4.5	22	81.8	57.9	23.9
	05/06	3,913	80.6	77.4	3.2	12	83.3	66.9	16.4
	06/07*	4,337	83	**		4	100	**	
A/A2 Levels	03/04	1,167	89.9	88	1.9	11	100		
	04/05	1,390	90.9	89.5	1.4	11	81.8		
	05/06	1,103	92.3	91.5	0.8	6	83.3		
	06/07*	1,390	94	**		1	100	**	
AS Levels	03/04	2,323	74	66.7	7.3	2	50		
	04/05	2,146	73.3	69.2	4.1	8	75		
	05/06	2,515	78.1	72.6	5.5	2	100		
	06/07*	2,639	77	**		n/a		**	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	129	48.1	66.5	-18.4	0			
	04/05	135	61.5	64.5	-3	1	100		
	05/06	110	57.3	64.6	-7.3	n/a			
	06/07*	n/a				n/a			
Other	03/04	14	100	70.7	29.3	2	50		
	04/05	69	71	64.9	6.1	2	100		
	05/06	185	60	67	-7	4	75		
	06/07*	308	79	**		3	100	**	

* college data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

** national rate not available