

Saint Francis Xavier College

Inspection report

Provider reference 130422

Published date June 2009

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Audience | Post-sixteen |
| Published date | June 2009 |
| Provider reference | 130422 |

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Background information | 3 |
| Summary of grades awarded | 5 |
| Overall judgement | 6 |
| Key strengths and areas for improvement | 7 |
| Main findings | 8 |

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. St Francis Xavier College is a Roman Catholic sixth form college situated near Clapham Common in the London borough of Wandsworth. In autumn 2008 there were around 1,320 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and approximately 30 students aged over 19. Almost two thirds of the students come from the nearby London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. The remainder come from across south London attracted by the Catholic ethos and values. Currently, about half the students come from eight partner schools but this is changing as the schools develop sixth form provision.
2. The college offers provision in 11 of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) sector subject areas along with a community education programme and a day nursery. The vast majority of students are following advanced courses such as General

Certificate of Education (GCE) AS and A levels and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) National programmes. Most students take courses in history, philosophy and theology; science and mathematics; languages, literature and culture; visual and performing arts; and social sciences. However, around 10% take BTEC introductory or first diplomas and a small number follow a full GCSE programme.

3. The college proclaims Christian values in the Roman Catholic tradition and endeavours to ensure that all individuals are given full opportunity to fulfil their potential. Over half of the students are baptised Catholics and there is a small minority of Muslim students. About three quarters of the students come from minority ethnic backgrounds, half of whom identify themselves as Black African or Black Caribbean. This is a much higher proportion than that present in the local boroughs. Many secondary schools in the vicinity have sixth forms and some are very successful. Competition for post-16 places is intense. Clapham and environs are mixed socio-economically with areas of deprivation next to areas of affluence. Around 60% of the students at the college come from disadvantaged backgrounds and over 830 are in receipt of education maintenance grants.

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. The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding. St Francis Xavier is a very well led college where educational and social inclusion in a Catholic ethos is successfully promoted. Success rates have remained consistently high for the past three years, especially for advanced courses. Students make outstanding progress relative to their prior attainment. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are well planned and provide a wide range of interesting activities for students. The lesson observation system is well developed and has brought about improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment is thorough and students' horizons are broadened by a good range of interesting and challenging enrichment activities. Arrangements to meet students' needs and interests are outstanding. Support and guidance are also outstanding. Support for those with dyslexia is particularly thorough, as are arrangements for students with sensory impairments. Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers and governors work well to give a clear strategic direction and to demonstrate their commitment to promoting the Catholic ethos of the college. Quality assurance is well developed and continues to bring about improvements across the college. Equality of opportunity is extensively promoted and the college's approach to educational and social inclusion is exemplary. Child protection procedures are in place and staff and governors have received appropriate training. The governors are outstanding and well informed. Financial management is very good; the college has substantial reserves and provides very good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

5. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. Success rates have been maintained at high levels and students make outstanding progress. Teaching and learning have continued to improve and students' progression to further and higher education is good. Quality assurance has brought about continued improvements and the college self-assessment judgements are accurate and evaluative. Information management is very effective and managers regularly receive accurate data to inform student tracking and to help with self-assessment. Managers have a clear understanding of the college's key strengths and areas for improvement. Plans to bring about improvements are thorough and are regularly monitored for progress.

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

6. Very good progress has been made in improving the areas for development identified at the last inspection. Teachers successfully encourage all students to contribute during lessons. Self-assessment is now more self-critical and evaluative and students' views are more effectively used to drive improvements.

Key strengths

- consistently high success rates, especially on advanced courses
- excellent progress by students on a wide range of programmes
- outstanding teaching and learning
- good range of interesting and challenging enrichment activities
- outstanding guidance and support for students
- outstanding senior leadership and governance
- very strong financial management
- outstanding promotion of equality of opportunity
- highly effective use of management information
- very strong and supportive Catholic ethos.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low GCSE English and mathematics success rates
- inconsistent focus on learning in lesson observation judgements.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

7. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Almost all enrolments at St Francis Xavier are by students aged 16 to 18. Their success rates have remained consistently high for the past three years, especially for students on advanced courses. In 2007/08 the overall success rate was 88%, around four percentage points above that year's national average for sixth form colleges. The success rate for level 1 courses improved to 92% in 2007/08 but the rate for level 2 courses declined. Most 16 to 18 year olds take GCE AS and A-level programmes and in 2007/08 the success rate for A-level subjects was very high at 97%.
8. Retention is high and recently improved to 94% for advanced courses. In 2007/08 retention at level 1 improved but declined slightly at level 2. Pass rates have been above national average for some years and in 2007/08 over 30 subjects at A level showed 100% pass rates. Around half the students at AS and A level were awarded A or B grades in 2007/08. Whilst pass rates at level 1 and vocational courses at level 2 were good, GCSE A* - C grade passes for English and mathematics in 2007/08 were below the national average. The college has analysed these atypical results and is working hard to improve GCSE pass rates in the current year.
9. The college has an inclusive recruitment policy and encourages students to aim high. Analysis of students' achievement relative to their prior attainment shows outstanding progress. Students on advanced courses, and those at other levels, achieve examination successes well above those predicted by their GCSE results. Progression to employment and further training is very good and in 2007/08 over 400 students progressed to higher education. In addition, progression from level 2 courses to level 3 and from AS to A2 is also good.
10. Attendance is excellent and is currently around 93%. The students enjoy their studies and achieve a wide range of other successes, notably in competitive sports and the arts and drama. They use safe working practices, make significant contributions to the local community and are making excellent progress in adopting healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

11. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are well planned and provide a wide range of interesting and challenging activities for the students. Teachers are careful to encourage contributions from all students and to check learning by sensitive questioning. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Inspectors agree with the self-assessment report that most teaching and learning is at least very good. Teachers use information learning technology well and students have good access to computers across the college. The recently developed virtual learning environment contains an excellent range of materials for use in lessons and students regularly access these from home to help their studies. Assessment is thorough and regular.

Relationships between students and teachers are good and students receive prompt and effective feedback on their progress.

12. The college has made very good progress in continuing to develop the lesson observation system. The moderation of grades is robust and includes joint observations with staff from partner colleges. Observation findings inform effective individual and cross-college developments. Inspectors' judgements closely matched those of college staff on jointly observed lessons. The current teaching profile grades 83% of lessons as good or outstanding. However, although judgements are sound, records of lesson observations have insufficient focus on learning. Some contain little information on students' attainment or the standard of their work.
13. Arrangements to meet students' needs and interests are outstanding. The level 3 curriculum is extensive and vocational programmes have continued to be developed at levels 1 and 2. A well developed and popular religious education programme at level 1 is followed by all students. The college now provides work experience opportunities for all students on vocational courses.
14. Students' horizons are broadened by a good range of interesting and challenging enrichment activities, including spiritual development, sports and the arts. Very effective AimHigher work develops aspiration and successfully helps them to progress to higher education. A wide range of local, national and international links brings an exceptional variety of opportunities for enrichment. Subject enrichment includes notable appearances at the Edinburgh fringe, New York collaboration and London Fashion Week. An exchange with China is linked to the Olympics. An articulate and active student council promotes students' interests and organises successful social events and charity fund raising.
15. Support and guidance for students are outstanding. There is a clear and highly effective focus on developing the whole person. Student ambassadors act as good role models representing the college. Many students develop responsible attitudes and skills through mentoring others or a range of volunteering activities. Very thorough and detailed arrangements identify and support a wide range of needs including additional learning support. Support for dyslexia is particularly thorough as are arrangements for students with sensory impairments. A very productive and longstanding relationship with a local special school provides exceptionally good support for deaf students.
16. Tutorials are good, covering a wide range of topics to develop students' independence and their social and emotional maturity. Tutors use the improved data systems very effectively to monitor students' personal development, attendance and punctuality which are all excellent. Reviews are highly effective in challenging and motivating students although some targets set in individual learning plans are not sufficiently focused or measurable.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: grade 1

17. Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior managers and governors work very well together to give a clear direction to the college and to demonstrate their commitment to promoting the Catholic ethos of the college. Policies and procedures are successfully framed to reflect the values of the college and focus consistently on inclusiveness and mutual respect. Communication is good and staff morale is high. Management at all levels is effective and outcomes for students continue to be high. Good progress has been made in addressing all the areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection.
18. Quality assurance is well developed and continues to bring about improvements across the college. Self-assessment is highly evaluative and accurate. The key strengths of the college and areas for improvement identified by inspectors are accurately reflected in the college self-assessment report. Information management and data analysis are very effective. Centrally held data are accurate and up-to-date. Curriculum leaders and other managers regularly receive accurate data to inform student tracking and monitoring and to help with self-assessment. Well thought through action plans for improvements are in place and are regularly monitored for progress. However, some curriculum team self-assessments are less rigorous than others and do not always evaluate the effectiveness of team leadership and management.
19. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. The college is very successful in recruiting students from the boroughs of south London. Many students come from disadvantaged areas and the majority are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Success rates are high and all students make equally good progress, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background. Equality of opportunity is extensively promoted across the college and the Catholic ethos is central to this. Diverse cultures are celebrated and students and staff see each other as individuals. The college effectively seeks the views of the students and works well with the students' council to improve and develop provision.
20. The college is an extremely safe place in which to work and the accommodation is old but fit for purpose. All teaching blocks are fully accessible to those with restricted mobility. The only building not accessible will shortly be returned to the diocese. Overall, learning resources are good and specialist equipment is in good supply. Child protection policies and procedures are in place and staff and governors have received appropriate training. Criminal Record Bureau checks are up-to-date and carefully recorded. The college is fully compliant with race equality, disability discrimination and child protection legislation.
21. The lesson observation system has continued to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Recent developments have brought more

rigour to graded judgements and, through collaboration, the college has successfully sought external moderation of grades. Staff are well qualified and very nearly all teachers, both full and part time, have relevant teaching qualifications. Staff also benefit significantly from well organised and relevant professional development activities. In addition, individual appraisals are very thorough and effective and the system relates clearly to college strategic targets.

22. Governance is outstanding. The board members bring a wealth of experience to their duties and rigorous challenge to managers. The governors are particularly well informed by the principal's briefings and benefit from excellent clerking arrangements. They are fully committed to the mission of the college and work well with senior managers to set a clear strategic direction.
23. Financial management is very good. The college is free of debt and has substantial reserves. With high success rates and very good progression to further and higher education, the college provides outstanding value for money. Recently developed plans to build new teaching accommodation have been scaled back following government cutbacks.
24. Information management and data analysis are very effective. Centrally held data are accurate and up-to-date.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with 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 | 05/06 | 124 | 81 | 71 | 10 | 11 | 18 | 57 | -39 |
| | 06/07 | 143 | 71 | 73 | -2 | 10 | 10 | 64 | -54 |
| | 07/08* | 1374 | 92 | | | 35 | 63 | | |
| GNVQs and precursors | 05/06 | 21 | 90 | 78 | 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 06/07 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 07/08* | | | N/A | | | | N/A | |
| NVQs | 05/06 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 06/07 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 07/08* | | | N/A | | | | N/A | |
| Other | 05/06 | 103 | 80 | 71 | 9 | 11 | 18 | 57 | -39 |
| | 06/07 | 143 | 71 | 72 | -1 | 10 | 10 | 64 | -54 |
| | 07/08* | 1374 | 92 | N/A | | 35 | 63 | N/A | |

* college data

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with 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 | 05/06 | 460 | 86 | 78 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 65 | 35 |
| | 06/07 | 465 | 83 | 82 | 1 | 4 | 100 | 65 | 35 |
| | 07/08* | 393 | 81 | | | 5 | 100 | | |
| GCSEs | 05/06 | 334 | 87 | 82 | 5 | 2 | 100 | 67 | 33 |
| | 06/07 | 345 | 83 | 83 | 0 | 4 | 100 | 68 | 32 |
| | 07/08* | 282 | 83 | N/A | | 5 | 100 | N/A | |
| GNVQs and precursors | 05/06 | 18 | 89 | 77 | 12 | 1 | 100 | ... | ... |
| | 06/07 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 07/08* | | | N/A | | | | N/A | |
| NVQs | 05/06 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 06/07 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 07/08* | | | N/A | | | | N/A | |
| Other | 05/06 | 108 | 81 | 70 | 11 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 06/07 | 120 | 84 | 79 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 07/08* | 111 | 78 | N/A | | 0 | 0 | N/A | |

* college data

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with 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 | 05/06 | 2759 | 87 | 84 | 3 | 73 | 92 | 65 | 27 |
| | 06/07 | 2835 | 88 | 85 | 3 | 62 | 95 | 69 | 26 |
| | 07/08* | 2982 | 88 | | | 49 | 88 | | |
| A/A2 Levels | 05/06 | 1009 | 96 | 93 | 3 | 9 | 67 | 78 | -11 |
| | 06/07 | 1064 | 96 | 93 | 3 | 14 | 100 | 80 | 20 |
| | 07/08* | 1035 | 97 | N/A | | 3 | 100 | N/A | |
| AS Levels | 05/06 | 1589 | 83 | 79 | 4 | 4 | 75 | 58 | 17 |
| | 06/07 | 1628 | 84 | 81 | 3 | 2 | 100 | 61 | 39 |
| | 07/08* | 1790 | 84 | N/A | | 1 | 0 | N/A | |
| GNVQs and precursors | 05/06 | 66 | 67 | 77 | -10 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 06/07 | 16 | 50 | 65 | -15 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 07/08* | 21 | 76 | N/A | | | | N/A | |
| NVOs | 05/06 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 06/07 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 07/08* | | | N/A | | | | N/A | |
| Other | 05/06 | 95 | 81 | 79 | 2 | 60 | 97 | 62 | 35 |
| | 06/07 | 127 | 74 | 80 | -6 | 46 | 93 | 66 | 27 |
| | 07/08* | 136 | 74 | N/A | | 45 | 89 | N/A | |

* college data