

Inspection of a good school: St John Fisher Catholic High School

Baytree Road, Springfield, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 7RN

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 November 2021

Outcome

St John Fisher Catholic High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in this school because staff have high expectations of them. Staff plan carefully for pupils' personal development. This is so that pupils develop the characteristics which will enable them to contribute to an ever-changing modern society.

Pupils and staff value and respect each other's differences. Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous. They behave well in lessons, and are calm and orderly around school. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that teachers deal with any poor behaviour quickly and effectively. Pupils said that they felt safe. They are confident that staff respond well to any bullying that happens.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are eager to gain a deeper understanding of the subjects that they are studying.

Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular activities and social events provided by leaders and staff. Pupils display a sense of community and appreciate the many opportunities to develop their interests and talents. For example, some pupils are looking forward to visiting London in 2022 to enhance their learning in science.

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

Leaders have an ambitious and well-planned curriculum in place. All pupils, including those pupils with SEND, study a broad range of subjects. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and encourage them to choose courses in Year 10 that are part of the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Leaders accurately identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained so that they support pupils with SEND effectively in lessons and across the school. This ensures that these pupils benefit from the same ambitious curriculum as others in the school.

Skilled subject leaders have developed well-organised plans for how their subjects are taught in the school. Most teachers use these curriculum plans effectively to choose appropriate activities so that pupils can learn new knowledge. They use questioning and discussions in lessons well, to check that pupils are remembering more of the curriculum. However, some teachers do not make sure that pupils have securely remembered what they have learned. On occasions, some pupils do not develop the body of knowledge that they need to achieve as highly as they could.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to provide clear explanations for pupils about new learning. They also use assessment strategies effectively to identify any mistakes. Pupils value the 'therapy lessons' which allow them to correct their misconceptions. Most pupils enjoy their lessons. Low-level disruption is not a barrier to pupils' learning.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff know which pupils need to catch up quickly on the knowledge that they need to read accurately. Staff use a raft of reading strategies, including phonics, to ensure that pupils become more confident and fluent readers.

Leaders provide effective careers education across the school. Pupils learn interview skills and receive support in completing applications for further education and/or employment. Teachers make sure that pupils know about the career options linked to the subjects that they study. Leaders organise careers fairs and career curriculum days to raise awareness and aspirations for pupils' next steps. As a result, Year 11 pupils find meaningful and sustainable forms of education, employment and training.

Leaders help to shape the character of pupils through an extremely well-planned personal development curriculum. Pupils play an active role in deciding what is taught so that it is suited to their needs. For example, pupils are taught how to manage stress and anxiety, and how to stay safe when they are using the internet. They also learn how to avoid online identity fraud.

Leaders and governors are supportive regarding the well-being and workload of staff. Leaders use effective strategies to support the mental health of staff and pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are committed to safeguarding pupils. Leaders use their expertise to provide effective support for pupils. Leaders follow up concerns with external agencies tenaciously, so that families and pupils get the support that they need. There are clear policies and procedures for reporting concerns, and staff know how to use these.

Leaders use their knowledge of local and national safeguarding issues, so that training for staff and information for pupils are relevant. For example, recent staff training focused on recognising the signs of mental health issues among pupils, and the effective strategies

for support. Leaders provide parents and carers with advice and information on current safeguarding topics.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of the curriculum, some teachers do not make sure that pupils have securely remembered what they have learned. As a result, pupils sometimes do not achieve as highly as they could in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained to help pupils to remember important learning so that they can flourish.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2010.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	106535
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10199715
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Catholic voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	995
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Mallin
Headteacher	Alison Rigby
Website	sjfhs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and other senior leaders. They met with a group of governors, two school improvement partners, local authority officers and representatives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, mathematics and modern foreign languages.
- Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers. Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. They also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks carried out before staff are appointed.

- Inspectors spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. They also analysed responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Dawn Platt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kath Harris

Ofsted Inspector

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