

St Julie's Catholic High School

Speke Road, Woolton, Liverpool L25 7TN

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school.
- Work is not always appropriately pitched at the right level for pupils and there is a lack of challenge for the most-able pupils in particular.
- In 2015 at GCSE level, the progress made by pupils in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages was significantly below national averages.
- Although showing improvement, the progress made by pupils currently in the school is not consistently strong.
- The school's policy on marking is not consistently followed. This means that pupils do not always receive high-quality feedback on their work to enable them to enhance their learning.
- The objectives set for teachers' performance management are too vague and do not support school improvement robustly or hold teachers to account for pupils' progress.
- Leaders' action plans to target areas for improvement lack specifically measurable outcomes and do not provide a helpful tool in supporting school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, courteous and respond well to instructions.
- Pupils attend well. Attendance is above the national average.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- The rate of progress of pupils in English at GCSE level is significantly above the national average.
- Processes to keep pupils safe are strong. Pupils feel safe and are safe in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The information, advice and guidance given to pupils about the next steps in their education and employment are effective and as a result, pupils make well-informed choices.
- The governing body provides strong support and challenge for school leaders.
- Progress made by learners in the sixth form is good and particularly so in the vocational subjects.
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities that broaden pupils' experiences.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the performance management of teachers and thereby support school improvement by ensuring that targets set are measurable and precise and hold teachers to account more robustly for pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of action plans to support improvement by ensuring that plans are precise, sharp and focused on measurable success criteria.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils by:
 - ensuring that work is appropriately challenging, in particular for the most-able pupils
 - improving the quality of questioning to provide pupils with opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding and articulate their thinking
 - ensuring that the school's marking policy is consistently applied so that pupils receive high-quality feedback which enhances their learning
 - sharing the good practice that exists in school and evaluating the impact of this work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leaders want the best for the pupils at the school, they have not been successful in ensuring that teaching across the school in all subjects is of good quality. At the time of the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to ensure that teaching consistently meets the needs of pupils. This aspect of the school's work still requires improvement.
- There are detailed processes and structures in place for checking on the quality of teaching and learning but the impact of these structures is variable. Inspectors noted that some of the evaluations made by senior leaders following joint lesson observations were over-generous and did not readily identify the areas for development in teaching.
- Objectives set for teachers' performance management are vague, frequently lacking in measurable outcomes and not sufficiently challenging. Inspectors observed little difference between the challenge of the objectives set for experienced teachers with posts of responsibility and less experienced members of staff. As a result, performance management does not target or support school improvement robustly enough.
- Action plans produced by middle leaders to tackle areas where improvement is needed are superficial and lack specifically quantifiable outcomes. Consequently, they are not a helpful tool in driving improvement.
- Senior leaders have implemented effective systems for tracking the progress made by pupils. They analyse the performance of groups of pupils and provide detailed information to governors, which enables them to have a clear view on pupils' progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to enhance the achievement and engagement of disadvantaged pupils. Funding is used for a range of aspects, including providing additional staffing, specific learning materials, practical support and financial contributions towards school trips and visits.
- Leaders have successfully addressed the improvements previously needed in the sixth-form provision. This aspect of the school is now strong and the sixth form is led well.
- Processes for tracking and targeting the attendance of pupils are effective and as a result, attendance levels are high.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders value the study of modern foreign languages and all pupils study either French or Spanish until the end of Key Stage 4. Recent changes have been made to the curriculum in science to ensure that pupils are directed to more appropriately aspirational courses.
- An extensive range of extra-curricular activities is provided. These include clubs, trips and visits, which enhance pupils' broader experiences and their social and cultural understanding. Parents who completed the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, commented very positively on the range of opportunities on offer to their children and the impact this has on them.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted well and daily opportunities for reflection in 'sacred time' are valued by the pupils. They are provided with opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures, develop a good understanding of diversity and take part in work for charities. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use effective strategies for gathering the views of pupils and ensuring that they are active participants in the running of their school. Pupils are regularly asked for their opinions and there is a school council which helps to bring about improvements to the school environment.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is a strength of the school. Governors know the school well and offer significant support and challenge to the leadership of the school. The minutes of the governing body meetings indicate that governors ask challenging questions of school leaders.
 - Governors are fully involved in the life of the school through their links with departments and regular visits to the school. They received detailed information about the performance of groups of pupils and they are knowledgeable about how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact of this expenditure.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is given a high priority in the school and systems for staff recruitment and safeguarding training are secure, robust and rigorous. As a result, staff, pupils and their parents endorse that St Julie's provides a safe environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Although inspectors noted some areas of strong practice, the quality of teaching over time is not consistently good across the school.
- Work is not always appropriately pitched for pupils in the class. There is a lack of challenge for the most-able pupils in particular, and some tasks set for this group of pupils are pitched far below their ability level.
- The school's marking policy is not consistently embedded and applied. Some marking is cosmetic and cursory, with generic comments that do not move pupils' learning on.
- Questioning does not always push pupils to develop their thinking further or check for misunderstandings. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' oracy skills further by the use of questions to encourage them to articulate and explain their learning.
- Inspectors saw evidence of teaching assistants supporting learning well but not all additional adults in lessons are deployed effectively to support pupils' progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and show interest and enthusiasm for their subject areas. Where teaching is most effective, this knowledge is used effectively to inspire and motivate pupils.
- There are positive relationships between teachers and pupils and clearly established classroom routines. Pupils are generally keen to learn.
- Inspectors saw evidence in some areas of a strong focus on the development of pupils' cross-curricular literacy skills. This was noted as a particular strength in art and dance.
- Homework is set regularly and this helps pupils to develop good study habits.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and this is endorsed by almost all parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, and by all of the staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Pupils value the high visibility of staff around the school and comment that the school has a calm feeling.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They demonstrate a clarity of understanding around sexual exploitation, e-safety, social networking and radicalisation and extremism.
- Bullying is rare and pupils spoken to by inspectors and the vast majority of pupils who completed the online questionnaire said that if bullying did occur, the situation was resolved effectively by members of staff.
- Pupils are taught tolerance and respect for all. They are given opportunities for reflection during their morning 'sacred time' and this enhances pupils' sense of spirituality well. Pupils learn about faiths other than their own during religious education lessons and have opportunities to learn about a range of issues including citizenship, democracy and elections in their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education studies. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are provided with independent and effective careers education, advice and guidance. As a result of this guidance, pupils make appropriate choices about the next steps in their education.
- The welfare and attendance of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are closely monitored by regular communication between the staff at St Julie's and the alternative providers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite to staff and to visitors and they wear their uniform smartly.
- Pupils understand the behaviour policy of the school well and, although showing an increase in the last academic year, the rate of exclusion from school has been below the national average over time.
- Pupils respond well to instructions given by their teachers and show generally positive attitudes towards their learning. Where teaching is less effective, however, pupils' attitudes towards their learning are not as strong.

- Pupils attend well. The rate of attendance is above the national average and persistent absence is below average. The rate of attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved over a three-year period but remains lower than the attendance rate of other pupils in the school. This is an area that the school is targeting.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The progress made by pupils at GCSE level in 2015 in mathematics, modern foreign languages and some courses in science was significantly below that made by pupils with similar starting points nationally. In mathematics, the progress made by middle- and high- prior-attaining pupils in particular was poor.
- Although improving, the progress of pupils in some subject areas is not yet good. Assessment information seen on inspection indicates that the progress of pupils in modern foreign languages and in core science in particular continues to be of concern.
- The progress of pupils currently in mathematics is showing improvement and assessment information indicates that the achievement of pupils in Year 11 at GCSE level this year is likely to be closer to the national average. Inspectors noted, however, that progress in this subject is not yet consistently strong for all pupils in the school.
- In a number of subjects and across year groups, the most-able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently and therefore they do not make as much progress as they should.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs or disability currently in the school has been identified by school leaders as an area of focus.
- In 2015, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from their starting points was broadly average overall. In humanities, the progress of this group of pupils exceeded that of their peers. However, the progress made by this group of pupils in modern foreign languages was significantly below national figures. In mathematics, the proportions of middle-ability pupils in the group who made expected and better than expected progress were well below the national figure. There continues to be some variability in the progress of this group of pupils across different subject areas and year groups but this is being tracked, monitored and targeted effectively.
- The rate of progress made by pupils in English in 2015 was significantly above the national average. The proportions of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in this subject area exceeded national figures and data indicate that this positive picture is set to continue.
- Pupils attain very well in English literature; in 2015, a very high proportion of pupils attained good grades in this subject area.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The sixth-form provision has improved since the last inspection.
- Achievement in the sixth form shows an upward trajectory. In 2015, the progress made by learners in vocational pathways was significantly above the national average; progress in A-level subjects improved to be slightly above the national figure. The school's own data indicate that this positive trend is set to continue.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is carefully monitored and the school has implemented a Key Stage 5 teaching and learning strategy. This has improved the quality of teaching and outcomes. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and learners engage and behave well.
- The sixth-form curriculum offers a broad range of subjects and this is enhanced by the partnership with St Francis Xavier College. Retention rates on courses in 2015 were in line with national figures.
- All learners benefit from work-experience placements which take place in the summer term of Year 12. A diverse range of placements impacts positively on learners' aspirations and ambitions.
- Learners receive effective careers education, advice and guidance, which helps them to make informed choices about the next steps in their lives. As a result of this guidance, destinations for learners in the sixth form are strong, with the majority progressing to university study. Destinations of learners are carefully tracked and monitored. Data seen by inspectors indicate that in 2015, all learners who had special educational needs or disability, and a high proportion of disadvantaged learners, progressed to undergraduate study.

- Learners in the sixth form are integrated well into the life of the school. They provide support for younger pupils and are conscious of their role within the community. They value the faith dimension of their school and demonstrate tolerance and an understanding of diversity.
- Learners who have not secured a grade C or above in mathematics or English at GCSE are provided with opportunities to continue working on these subjects and to re-sit their examinations. The success rate for re-sits in English was significantly above the national average in 2015. In mathematics, however, the success rate was significantly below the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	104712
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10002878

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	978
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sister Margaret Walsh
Headteacher	Tim Alderman
Telephone number	0151 428421
Website	www.stjulies.org.uk
Email address	reception@st-julies.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 February 2012

Information about this school

- St Julie’s Catholic High School is an average-sized secondary school. The school is for girls in Key Stages 3 and 4 and there are a small number of boys in the sixth form. The school operates a collaborative sixth-form provision in conjunction with St Francis Xavier College in Liverpool.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The school uses two providers of alternative education for a very small number of pupils. These are Everton Free School and Harmonize Free School.
- Since the last inspection, the governing body has been reconstituted and a new Chair of the Governing Body has taken up post. There have been a number of changes at senior leadership level, including the appointment of two new deputy headteachers.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils’ performance at the end of Key Stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. A number of lesson observations and learning walks took place jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors looked closely at the work of pupils in lessons and conducted a separate work scrutiny of the work of pupils in Year 9. This took place jointly with a member of the leadership team.
- Inspectors visited morning tutor time and two assemblies.
- They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, three groups of pupils and a group of learners in the sixth form, and a group of four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority and telephone conversations took place with representatives from the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and the two providers of alternative education used by the school.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised which included: the school development plan; subject action plans and documents relating to the school's evaluation of its performance; achievement and attendance data; information relating to the behaviour of pupils in the school; records of the monitoring of teaching, learning and professional development; anonymised performance management information of staff; documents relating to safeguarding and the school's single central record of pre-employment checks; and records of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors analysed the 74 responses and 40 free-text comments from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- They looked closely at the 103 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 44 responses submitted to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Julie Yarwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Long	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Peckett	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

