

# St John Rigby RC Sixth Form College

Sixth-form college

## Inspection dates

14–17 February 2017

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is an outstanding provider

- The principal and his leadership team have worked relentlessly to ensure transformational change since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of provision is excellent.
- Management of data is outstanding. The college's tracking and monitoring of students' progress are exceptionally strong and effective in enabling any underperformance to be recognised and swiftly tackled.
- Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the college is incisive. They accurately identify the many strengths and the very few areas for improvement, swiftly implementing highly successful actions to improve further the quality of provision.
- Governors provide high levels of challenge and rigorously hold leaders and managers to account.
- Excellent teaching results in a high proportion of students making exceptional progress from their starting points. Consequently, most students achieve, and often exceed, their aspirational target grades.
- The Catholic mission and values permeate the college and are highly effective in developing students' positive attitudes to learning. As a result, students have an excellent understanding of life and values in modern Britain.
- Students' achievements are outstanding. Most students, across all levels of learning, make exceptional progress. In a small minority of A-level subjects, students do not achieve the highest grades expected of them.
- Teachers skilfully assess students' starting points and meticulously plan to meet the vast majority of students' needs. Occasionally, teachers' questioning does not probe the understanding of most-able students.
- Outstanding careers guidance helps students to make informed and realistic, yet ambitious, plans to meet their career aspirations.
- Students develop an excellent range of personal, social, moral and independent study skills, which prepare them particularly well for further and higher education, apprenticeships or employment.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- St John Rigby College, an inclusive Roman Catholic sixth-form college under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool, is situated in the west of Wigan. The college attracts students from its Catholic partner schools and other schools in the area. The vast majority of students attending the college are from the Wigan area. Levels of worklessness in Wigan are higher than the national average. School leavers' achievement of English and mathematics at grades A\*–C is just below the national average. The college offers courses at entry level, level 1, level 2 and an extensive range of A-level and level 3 vocational programmes.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve high grades in the few A-level subjects where students do not always achieve the high grades expected of them.
- Ensure that the most able students are challenged through insightful questioning to explain their reasoning and thereby deepen their thinking skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The principal and his leadership team have worked relentlessly to ensure sustained improvement at the college since the previous inspection. The setting of high aspirations and expectations for students and staff has led to significant improvements to the quality of provision. Leaders and managers have worked hard to continuously improve teaching and learning through the expert development of teachers' skills and incisive management of staff performance. As a result, the vast majority of students make exceptional progress and achieve, and often exceed, their aspirational target grades.
- Leaders and managers have been highly successful in developing a range of systems to monitor and rapidly improve the quality of provision. Managers and staff are held rigorously to account for improvement actions through challenging departmental monitoring, resulting in swift improvement across almost all departments in the college.
- Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the college is incisive and highly precise. In the pursuit of excellence, leaders and managers accurately identify the many strengths across the provision while also identifying the few areas that require improvement. As a result, they have a detailed understanding of areas requiring improvement and monitor these frequently and very thoroughly to ensure that necessary improvements are made. For example, where improvements in teaching, learning and assessment are identified, leaders and managers monitor actions very closely. If no or very little improvement is achieved, they initiate performance management processes to tackle underperformance swiftly.
- Managers and teachers set very high, aspirational targets for students to enhance their skills, knowledge and outcomes and ensure that students realise their personal and career aspirations. Teachers receive exceptional support from both the college's teaching and learning development team and external organisations such as the Archdiocese of Liverpool. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- Leaders have nurtured particularly effective partnerships with a diverse range of external organisations to support students' high aspirations. For example, they work closely with the Greater Manchester local enterprise partnership, The New Economy, to align the curriculum to regional skills priorities and to provide students with regular updates regarding employment and apprenticeship opportunities in the Greater Manchester area.
- Managers use relevant policies and procedures to promote equality, celebrate diversity and uphold the values of St John Rigby of faith, courage, integrity, commitment, freedom and forgiveness. Managers have developed and implemented an extensive 'values for living programme' to support students' development within the college ethos. Consequently, students show excellent standards of behaviour and respect for their teachers, peers and visitors.

## The governance of the provider

- Governors have a wide range of skills, experience and expertise from a range of backgrounds including education, finance and the public sector, which they use well to help the college continuously improve the quality of provision and uphold the values of St John Rigby. Governors are motivated, enthusiastic and wholly committed to the success of the college. Governors achieve their own challenging objectives very well.
- The skilled governing body provides high levels of challenge and rigorously holds leaders and managers to account.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place that are used well to support students and to ensure that they are kept safe in college and in their personal lives. Consequently, students feel safe and know to whom they should report any concerns.
- Staff training in safeguarding is excellent. Staff who are new to the college receive detailed safeguarding training as part of their induction. All staff receive annual safeguarding update training. In 2016, staff benefited from training from the Wigan Safeguarding Children's Board on the issues of forced marriage, human trafficking, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation. Staff have a good awareness of the threats of radicalisation and extremism as a result of training in the 'Prevent' duty from the local police force.
- Managers have developed very effective working relationships with external organisations to safeguard students at the college. They work particularly effectively with local social care departments to support recent care leavers and children who are looked after. Managers have implemented highly effective processes to support vulnerable students' transition into college. This results in the vast majority of vulnerable students making excellent progress and achieving their qualifications.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Teachers know their students well and are committed to ensuring that they reach their full potential. Teachers' enthusiasm and passion for teaching and learning are infectious, motivating and challenge students to try their very best. Students are keen to learn both inside and outside the classroom. They develop excellent independent study and higher order thinking skills. As a result, most students make excellent progress, achieving, and often exceeding, their aspirational target grades.
- Teachers skilfully plan highly effective teaching that meets the needs of most students and enables them to make rapid progress. Teachers are particularly accomplished at setting work that builds on previous learning to extend students' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers often provide additional support and guidance beyond lessons, for example, in study groups, one-to-one support sessions, drop-in support and revision sessions. They provide students with every opportunity to achieve their qualifications at the highest grade possible.

- Teachers carefully track and monitor students' progress. Teachers challenge underperformance in class tests and homework rigorously. Students are required to repeat assessments if they do not achieve their target grade. If underperformance continues, students are required to attend mandatory study sessions or discuss the reasons for underperformance with the academic board. The vast majority of students who attend study sessions or the academic board improve their performance and are quickly back on target to achieve the high grades of which they are capable. Teachers, in discussion with students, amend targets to higher grades for those students whose performance is particularly strong.
- Support for students is outstanding. The needs of students are thoroughly assessed. The additional learning support team works very effectively with schools to enable a smooth transition to college from school for students who have additional learning needs. Support for students identified as having high needs is excellent and helps them gain independence and to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. Students who fall behind in their work are identified swiftly and teachers are skilful in providing support to help them catch up quickly. Students value highly their excellent academic and pastoral support, including individual and group tutorials.
- Most teachers are skilful in the use of questioning techniques to extend and challenge students' learning. However, a few teachers readily accept students' first answers, particularly from the most able, and do not challenge them to reflect more deeply in order to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Teachers assess students' work regularly. They provide concise and informative feedback, in line with the college's policy, to help students improve their work. Students provide useful written constructive feedback for their peers that deepens their own learning.
- Teachers have a very strong focus on the requirements of examinations and assessments and prepare students well through regular testing, formal assessments and homework. As a result, most students make exceptional progress.
- Teachers promote English and mathematical skills very well and support students highly effectively to develop their skills. Students' development of specialist vocabulary is very good. For example, in psychology, students discuss precisely and competently the definition of concepts such as disinhibited attachment theory.
- Students benefit from excellent accommodation and resources, including drama and dance studios, music technology laboratories, sports facilities and the extensive learning resource centre, which are used highly effectively by teachers.
- Students' academic and recreational achievements are celebrated regularly, and this creates a sense of pride in students and the college community.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

- Students, staff, leaders and managers work together harmoniously. Students display high levels of self-respect along with respect for their teachers and peers. The college is fully inclusive and follows the mission: 'give me roots to grow and wings to fly' and St John Rigby's values. As a result, students of the Catholic faith, other faiths or no faith are confident and self-assured, have excellent attitudes towards their learning and make exceptional progress. Students take great pride in their work. Behaviour in classes and around the college is exemplary.
- All students participate in a programme which focuses on attendance, study skills, practice, independence, resilience and effort. The programme promotes a positive and highly effective approach to students' studies and, as a result, students are highly committed to their studies, motivated and enthusiastic.
- Teachers provide outstanding information, advice and guidance for students before they start college and the exceptional impartial careers guidance students receive during their time at college raises their aspirations for the future. Students, with the support of teachers and careers advisers, skilfully select programmes of study to ensure that they make clear, realistic yet ambitious plans for the future. Most students on A-level programmes and a high proportion of students on level 3 vocational programmes progress to university. Many students are the first in their family to go to university.
- Students benefit from a wide range of well-planned activities such as enrichment, external work experience and work-related learning to develop employability skills. Very good attendance at enrichment activities such as British sign language, poetry by heart, student action group and the future leadership programme develops students' personal, social, moral and employability skills exceptionally well. Excellent external work experience and supported internships further support students to develop employability skills and make informed choices about future careers. For example, future medical students attend an eight-week placement at a local hospital where they shadow staff ranging from hospital porters to surgeons to gain experience of all aspects of care and support at the hospital. Future engineers work on live projects with the British nuclear industry and future teachers attend extended work placements in nursery, primary and secondary schools.
- Students with high needs quickly gain skills of independence because they receive good-quality support and guidance from learning mentors and support staff. Students value the support they receive and are able to identify how it has helped their progress and developed their confidence. Because of the high-quality support they receive, most students with high needs make exceptional progress.
- College managers, staff and students have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying, discrimination, unfair treatment and harassment. Perpetrators, in the very few instances reported, are identified and dealt with swiftly.
- Students' safety is of high priority. Students report that they feel safe and are kept safe. They have a very good understanding of safeguarding and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Students know how to keep themselves safe online and have a good understanding of the dangers associated with social media. They know how to report any concerns.

- Students have an excellent understanding of life and values in modern Britain. The 'values for living programme', in which all students participate, prepares them well for their next steps in education, employment or apprenticeships. Topics include resilience and mindfulness, immigration, religion, moral decisions and staying safe. Students report that they regularly reflect on their learning and make changes to their lifestyles in order to make them more productive learners with a broader understanding of society. However, on occasion, teachers give too little attention to wider discussion around sensitive subjects to develop students' knowledge and understanding further.

## Outcomes for learners

## Outstanding

- Students, particularly those on A-level and vocational level 3 programmes, make excellent progress compared with their starting points. More than half of level 3 students have below-average starting points compared with similar colleges nationally. Most achieve their qualifications, many at higher grades than predicted. Almost all students progress to university, employment or apprenticeships.
- Students on entry level, level 1 and level 2 programmes make outstanding progress; they develop exceptional study skills to help them become independent learners, improve their self-confidence and realise their high aspirations to progress to higher level courses in the college, employment or apprenticeships.
- Achievement rates are high across most programmes and the vast majority of students achieve their qualifications. In a few A-level subjects, students do not always make the progress expected of them and, consequently, do not achieve their qualifications at the high grades expected of them. In a very small minority of level 2 vocational programmes in 2015/16, some students left their courses early and did not achieve their qualifications. Leaders and managers successfully reviewed and amended the level 2 vocational curriculum offer for 2016/17. Currently, more students have been retained on level 2 programmes than at the same point last year.
- The proportion of students who achieve GCSE grades A\*–C in English and mathematics is high and above that of similar colleges nationally.
- Leaders and managers use data exceptionally well to track and monitor the progress of students to ensure that they make at least the progress expected of them. Frequent and detailed analyses of a range of data sets enable leaders and managers to identify and close gaps in achievement by different groups of students, including those who are eligible for the college's bursary scheme, children looked after and care leavers. Students in receipt of high needs funding or who receive additional learning support make excellent progress and achieve as well as their peers. Students who have previously been entitled to free school meals, who qualify for the college's bursary scheme, are looked after or care leavers achieve as well as, and often better than, their peers. Male students often achieve better than females on A-level and level 3 vocational programmes.
- The vast majority of students are currently at or above the very high aspirational grades set for them. A-level students who were below their target grades at the end of their first year of study are now achieving or exceeding their target grades.

- Most students, across all levels and programmes, produce a very high standard of work and are proud of what they achieve. Students' coursework files are well ordered and clearly show the progress students make over time. Students are articulate and make reasoned arguments based on what they have learned. For example, in English A-level classes, students skilfully discuss the inspiration for Tennessee Williams' play 'A Streetcar Named Desire' from Van Gogh's painting of 'The Night Café'.
- Most students on A-level programmes progress to higher education; the very large majority go to their first choice of university. Almost all students who do not go to university progress to an apprenticeship or employment.
- Progression to higher level courses is high. Almost all entry level and level 1 students progress to higher level courses in the college. Approximately two thirds of level 2 students progress to level 3 programmes. The vast majority of students that do not progress to higher level courses gain employment or progress to an apprenticeship. Leaders and managers are able to track the destinations of almost all students, including those who leave their courses early.



## Provider details

Unique reference number	130523
Type of provider	Sixth-form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,383
Principal	Peter McGhee
Telephone number	01942 214797
Website	<a href="http://www.sjr.ac.uk">www.sjr.ac.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	22	1	71	3	1,299	1	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	47							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors	N/A							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Cocker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Beverley Barlow	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Fisher	Ofsted Inspector

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