

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic College

Liverpool Road, Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 5TF

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe at Sacred Heart Catholic College. Most pupils treat each other well and are happy in school.

Teachers want pupils to do well. However, staff do not have consistently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. This is especially the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils.

Serious weaknesses in the leadership of the school mean that pupils, including students in the sixth form, do not receive the education that they deserve. As a result, pupils and students do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum.

Leaders have taken some steps to improve pupils' behaviour. That said, pupils are often late to lessons and staff do not deal with this effectively. Too often, some pupils behave poorly in lessons or around the school. This disrupts other pupils' learning. Pupils are confident that staff manage any incidents of bullying appropriately when they occur.

Many pupils enjoy being involved in the wider life of the school. Through charity events such as the annual '5K run', they demonstrate their commitment to the school's values of 'effort, kindness, community spirit and empathy'. Pupils described the rich programme of sporting activities available to them.

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

Poor-quality leadership has failed to address many of the issues raised at the previous inspection. Leaders and governors do not demonstrate the knowledge and expertise required to achieve the improvements that are necessary at the school. They have taken too long to seek the external support that they need. As a result, there is considerable dissatisfaction from parents and carers about their children's experiences at the school over time.

Leaders have not done enough to improve the quality of education for pupils, including students in the sixth form. Although leaders provide a suitably wide range of subjects for pupils and students to study, some curriculum plans lack ambition. They do not set out clearly the knowledge that pupils should learn.

Weaknesses in how well the curriculum is designed prevent some teachers from choosing the most appropriate activities to deliver new learning. Sometimes, teachers do not use assessment effectively in order to check on whether pupils and students have remembered new knowledge. There are times when teachers do not identify and address pupils' misconceptions effectively. This prevents some pupils from building on their earlier learning. Consequently, pupils, including students in the sixth form, do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders provide appropriate support for the small number of pupils who need help with their reading. This is helping these pupils to read accurately and fluently. This is particularly the case for those pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read and those pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified. That said, across the school, leaders do not provide teachers with sufficient information to support this group of pupils to achieve well. Some teachers do not have the knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum sufficiently well for pupils with SEND. Staff who provide additional support for some pupils with SEND are still developing the knowledge and skills they need to do this consistently well.

Some pupils' rates of attendance are concerning. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and governors have not done enough to stem the decline in pupils' overall rates of attendance. Leaders have not successfully encouraged pupils to return to school following the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils' rates of attendance are worse than they were before March 2020 and they continue to fall.

Leaders have acted to improve pupils' behaviour, but with varying degrees of success. Some pupils continue to cause low-level disruption, which impacts on the learning of their peers. Added to this, some pupils do not regulate their behaviour sufficiently well during social times.

Very recently, leaders have introduced a well-designed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum for younger pupils. In key stage 3, well-trained staff deliver this curriculum effectively. This includes suitable careers education, information, advice and guidance for pupils. However, leaders are still in the process of developing their PSHE curriculum for older pupils, including students in the sixth form.

Leaders have strengthened their efforts to engage with staff. Most staff acknowledge the recent improvements in how well leaders listen and respond to their concerns. Increasingly, leaders consider what they can do to reduce staff workload and support staff with their well-being. However, some staff do not share this view.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff help pupils to develop a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe and manage risk.

Leaders ensure that staff are knowledgeable about potential risks to pupils at the school. Consequently, staff are appropriately vigilant, and they report any concerns promptly.

Leaders work well with those pupils and their families who need help. Leaders provide well-designed bespoke support for individuals. In doing this, leaders make good use of safeguarding expertise from within school and from their external partners.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors do not have the knowledge and skills to secure the necessary improvements to the quality of education for pupils. This means that pupils have not received the education they deserve for too long. They are hindered in developing their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Leaders and governors should ensure that they access appropriate support to acquire the knowledge to lead the much-needed improvements to the quality of education that pupils receive.
- Leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to halt the decline in pupils' attendance. This means that too many pupils are regularly absent from school. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Leaders should take swift action to implement more effective approaches that secure improvements in pupils' rates of attendance.
- Some subject leaders' curriculum plans lack ambition. They do not support teachers to choose suitable pedagogical approaches or approaches to assessment that focus well enough on whether pupils have learned the knowledge that they need. This means that pupils are prevented from building effectively on earlier learning and achieving well across subjects. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the knowledge and expertise they need to strengthen their curriculum plans, and support teachers to deliver ambitious curriculums well.
- Leaders do not have a strong enough oversight of the support provided for pupils with SEND. Leaders do not use or share information about these pupils consistently well. Some staff are not skilled enough to support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not receive the support that they need to achieve well. Leaders should ensure that staff have the information and the support that they need to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils benefit from a well-planned set of experiences to benefit their personal development. Older pupils, including students in the sixth form, do not benefit from a coherent PSHE curriculum or a carefully planned programme to help prepare them for the next stage in their education, employment or training. Leaders should ensure that all pupils and students have access to personal development opportunities that are of a consistently high quality.

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	104961
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10202329
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1135
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Furlong
Headteacher	John Pye (Acting)
Website	www.sacredheart.sefton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Catholic College has two sites in close proximity. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are mainly educated at the lower school. Pupils and students in Years 9 to 13 are mainly educated at the upper school.
- A small number of pupils are educated at three alternative providers.
- Sacred Heart Catholic College is a voluntary-aided Catholic school. It is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in February 2018.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- Very shortly before the inspection, the deputy headteacher had begun acting as headteacher.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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 deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, the local authority and the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and considered samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of employment checks and safeguarding referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for SEND and reading. Inspectors also considered information regarding support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included the free-text comments completed by parents.

Inspection team

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