

All Saints Catholic High School

Roughwood Drive, Northwood, Knowsley L33 8XF

Inspection dates	28–29 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Overall progress and attainment figures for pupils have improved since 2014. However, too many pupils still do not make good enough progress across a range of subjects.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing, but this is not happening quickly enough.
- The quality of teaching varies throughout the school. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- The most able pupils are not challenged consistently to reach their potential.
- Strategies introduced to improve pupils' literacy have not had enough impact.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has high expectations of everyone within the school community. He leads with both rigour and humanity.
- Under the principal's effective leadership, the school has travelled a considerable distance in a short time. As a result, the quality of teaching, behaviour and pupils' achievement have all improved.
- Governors are highly committed. The governing body provides effective challenge and support to the school's leaders.
- Pupils behave extremely well around the school. They are polite and friendly. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and based on mutual respect.
- The welfare and personal development of pupils is a very high priority for all staff.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to fulfil their potential.
- Sixth form students benefit from high-quality provision that is both inclusive and aspirational.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that all teachers:
 - have the highest expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - provide the right level of challenge, particularly for the most-able pupils
 - use questioning effectively to check and deepen pupils' understanding.

- Increase the impact of the strategies introduced to raise the standard of pupils' writing, reading and speaking throughout the school by:
 - subject leaders making sure that all teachers are following the school's policy on improving literacy
 - senior leaders making regular checks to ensure that the strategies are bringing about the required improvement.

- Improve outcomes for pupils by sustaining a clear leadership focus, with clear plans, checks and accountability at all levels, on:
 - ensuring that, in all subjects, pupils make at least good progress relative to their starting points
 - building on recent improvements to close quickly the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
 - ensuring that the most able pupils attain the highest possible grades.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **is good**

- The principal is a quietly inspirational leader. Since taking up his post at the start of the summer term in 2015, his strong leadership has enabled the school to move to a position where it no longer requires special measures. Particularly impressive is the way he has taken the whole of the school community with him on this journey of improvement. He blends rigour with humanity and consequently staff and pupils feel valued and positive about their school.
- The principal is well supported by a strong group of senior leaders. He has empowered existing leaders to develop their skills and capacity, and he has added new members to the team. Senior leaders work very effectively together as a strong team, all driven by the desire to make this a good school.
- Leaders, including governors, are quite rightly proud of the distance they have travelled, but their self-evaluation is very clear about the areas that still require further improvement. The strategic development plan provides a clear road map for the next stage of the journey as the school moves towards this further sustained improvement.
- The quality of middle leadership has improved significantly since the last inspection. In the very small number of areas where it is not yet good, senior leaders are taking action to improve it. Subject leaders work alongside senior leaders to check the quality of teaching in their departments and evaluate the impact that it has on pupils' progress. In the short time that she has been in post, the temporary head of mathematics has made significant improvements to the department which are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in this subject.
- Leaders responded swiftly and effectively to the concerns raised about English at the last monitoring inspection. As a result, the progress made in this subject by pupils in Year 11 will be significantly better than in the previous two years. Leaders have secured funding from the local authority and archdiocese to create two new classrooms and improve the learning environment in this department.
- This is a school that values individuals, recognising that everyone is different but equal. This creates an environment in which pupils feel safe and comfortable. It also gives them confidence, for example to be open about their sexual orientation or identity. Leaders have identified the need, however, to provide further training to ensure that all staff deal effectively with any incidents of pupils using homophobic or transphobic language.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is strong. Leaders have responded well to the concerns raised at the previous inspection and put in place sustainable strategies that are improving the quality of teaching. Clear systems of accountability for middle leaders have resulted in greater consistency within and across departments. Senior leaders have an accurate overview of the strengths and areas requiring further improvement in teaching across the school. Staff welcome the move away from generic training towards professional development that is matched to individual needs.
- Procedures for managing teachers' performance are now robust. Teachers have sharp, measurable targets that are linked to the school's development plan. This new system is only in its first full cycle but it is already contributing to delivering better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders work closely with partner primary schools to ensure that pupils can make the transition from Year 6 successfully and 'hit the ground running' when they arrive in Year 7. Staff work together to ensure that there is continuity and pupils do not waste time repeating aspects of the curriculum unnecessarily.
- From September 2015, modifications were made to the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Leaders have allocated more time to mathematics and English, reflecting the priority they give to ensuring that achievement in these subjects is strong. However, they have been careful to ensure that this does not restrict pupils' access to a wide range of other subjects, including practical and vocational courses.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a high priority for leaders and is at the heart of the ethos of the school. It guides all areas of school life, such as the assembly and tutorial programme, curriculum content and the way everyone in the school community interacts with each other. The emphasis given to this aspect of development reflects leaders' commitment to preparing their pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders are reviewing the personal, social, health and economic education programme to ensure that it contributes effectively to this preparation. Pupils have the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities in areas such as sport, music and drama.
- This year, leaders have introduced the 'Scholars Programme' to tackle the issue of the underachievement of the most able pupils. Throughout the year, 40 of these most able pupils in Year 10, of whom half are disadvantaged, have been involved in a range of activities including workshops, presentations and visits

to universities and theatres. Pupils involved in this programme feel it has improved their confidence and skills, as well as giving them ideas for future career choices. This programme is now being rolled out to other year groups.

- Leaders are now using the pupil premium funding more effectively and consequently the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving. However, the gap between their achievement and that of their peers is not closing quickly enough.
- Leaders see helping those pupils who are supported by the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium as a high priority. As a result, the majority of these pupils are making faster progress.
- Over the last two years, leaders have introduced a range of strategies to improve pupils' literacy and oracy, focusing particularly on key stage 3. These have had some impact, for example on the improved reading ages of younger pupils. However, leaders are aware that standards in writing, speaking and listening throughout the school are still not high enough. Too many pupils in Year 10 and 11 continue to struggle with basic skills.
- Responses to the online parent questionnaire and the school's own parental surveys indicate that parents are generally very positive about the school. They particularly appreciate the support and care that the school provides.
- The local authority has played a significant part in helping the school to move to a position where it no longer requires special measures. The model it has used to support the school throughout this journey has been successful. The local authority's officer who has been working 'on the ground' alongside senior leaders has had significant impact. Her work has developed the capacity of leaders across the school to the extent that they are now driving sustainable improvement successfully themselves. Going forward, the local authority is now in a position to provide the appropriate, but different, continued support.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body provides the right balance of challenge and support to leaders in school. Working closely with the local authority and archdiocese, the executive monitoring board has played a significant part in bringing about improvements across the school. Governors are highly committed and possess the necessary skills and experience to work alongside the principal and his team as the school continues on its journey of improvement.
 - Governors are reflective and have a clear focus on the impact of actions on pupils' achievement. The new committee structure enables the governing body to carry out its strategic leadership role more effectively. Going forward, the chair of governors is keen to maintain the model of a small group, including external representation, to monitor the continuing improvement of the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The work the school does to keep its pupils safe is of a high standard. Staff engage effectively and appropriately with parents, carers and other stakeholders to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. Procedures to ensure that all staff receive relevant training are robust, as are the protocols and practices for record-keeping. Staff have received a range of training on potential areas of risk for young people, including radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Leaders' actions have brought improvements to the quality of teaching, but it still varies too much, both within and between subjects. Many pupils are benefiting from good and better teaching but this is not consistent throughout the school. Some pupils do not receive high-quality teaching in their lessons, which prevents them from making the best possible progress.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve. This lack of challenge is preventing some pupils, particularly the most able, from making good progress. Teaching, particularly teachers' questioning, too often limits rather than deepens and extends pupils' thinking and understanding.
- Many teachers are following the school's marking policy and giving helpful feedback in pupils' books on how they can improve their work. When pupils respond to this, it helps many of them to make progress. Not all pupils are making use of teachers' feedback, however, and some teachers are willing to accept this, alongside untidily presented and incomplete work.
- The school's policy for marking for literacy is not applied consistently. Too many teachers do not pick up basic spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes. Too many teachers do not follow up pupils who do not do spelling corrections, or do them carelessly so the spelling is still incorrect. This is detrimental to pupils becoming proficient in basic writing skills. Some pupils rise to the challenge of extended writing tasks, but these opportunities are not consistent across subjects.

- Pupils value the positive relationships that they have with many of their teachers and these make a strong contribution to the quality of learning. Where teaching is effective teachers use their expertise and passion for the subject, coupled with their knowledge of their pupils, to enthuse and involve them in their learning. These teachers use questioning skilfully to check and extend pupils' understanding, assess progress effectively and use this information to plan the next stage of learning.
- Although the most able pupils are not being challenged consistently across the school, some teachers are doing it very effectively. This was particularly evident in a Year 10 drama lesson, where the teacher has clearly equipped pupils with the knowledge and skills to work at an extremely high level. Her high expectations have empowered the pupils to be confident about challenging themselves and each other. This very strong teaching is a significant factor in pupils in the group being on course to achieve very high grades.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors commented on the improvements they have noticed in the quality of teaching and how it is helping them to make progress. They feel teachers are planning their learning in a more helpful way, with better resources. They value the more detailed feedback that they are receiving.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know and care for their pupils well. The school's nurturing ethos creates an environment in which pupils feel safe, are happy and can thrive.
- Conversations that inspectors had with pupils during the inspection indicate that many of them feel very positive about their education. They feel supported by staff in school, particularly by members of the mentoring team.
- Pupils' views and the school's information indicate that bullying is rare and that when it does happen it is dealt with effectively. Some pupils say that there is some use of homophobic language, and that when this occurs they feel that staff do not take it as seriously as racist language. Leaders are aware of this and have identified the need for further staff training.
- Leaders ensure that the personal development and welfare of those pupils attending alternative provision is a high priority. Systems and procedures for checking their attendance and progress are robust. There are clear lines of responsibility between the assistant headteacher who has strategic oversight of this and the learning mentor who works closely with the individual pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and behave extremely well around the school. During break and lunchtime their behaviour is mature and calm and they show respect to each other and to staff.
- Staff and pupils say that behaviour has improved significantly and acknowledge the positive difference that the principal has made in this area. The school has high expectations of behaviour and pupils value this. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are usually positive and low-level disruption is rare. In lessons, pupils typically show respect for their teachers and their peers.
- Since the last inspection there has been a reduction in the number of fixed term-exclusions. Far fewer pupils repeatedly demonstrate challenging behaviour and leaders believe this is clear evidence that the school's focus on restorative practices is working.
- From a very low baseline, overall attendance has improved significantly although it remains below the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has also declined significantly. Leaders are aware that more work is required to ensure that disadvantaged boys attend school regularly. Leaders have also identified that improving punctuality is a key priority and have recently introduced new strategies to tackle this, although it is too early to see what impact they have had.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, but it did in 2015. Over recent years, leaders' predictions of the school's performance have proved accurate as they are based on robust assessment procedures including external moderation. They indicate that the improvement seen in overall attainment and progress figures in 2015 is set to continue in 2016. The school's information also indicates that the steady improvement in pupils' progress in mathematics and English will continue, along with

performance in many other subjects. However, this is not the case for science, history and geography. Leaders are aware of the reasons for this and are taking action to improve outcomes in these areas. Leaders are also aware that the rate of improvement across a range of subjects needs to be increased.

- Although disadvantaged pupils are making better progress and attaining higher standards, the gap between their achievement and that of their peers is not closing quickly enough.
- This year, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made significantly better progress and attained much higher standards than in the previous two years. Gaps between the achievement of these pupils and that of their peers have been closed. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and children looked after receive high-quality support to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- Not enough pupils attain the highest possible grades at GCSE. While some teachers have very high expectations of their most able pupils, this is not consistent throughout the school. The level of challenge for these pupils is too low in too many lessons. The achievement of the most able is a key priority for leaders, as seen in the introduction of the 'Scholars Programme'.
- Staff monitor closely the progress of the pupils attending alternative provision off the school site. These pupils are all taking accredited courses appropriate for their ability and interests. The qualifications they are set to achieve are designed to help them move smoothly to further education or training.
- Destination information for pupils leaving Year 11 shows that pupils are being well prepared to move to further education or training. Leaders see effective careers education, information, advice and guidance as a high priority. They plan to improve this provision further by focusing more on this area in the personal, social, health and economic education programme in key stage 3.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The school's sixth form provides an inclusive and aspirational education for its students. Effective leadership in the sixth form means that students benefit from their post-16 experience.
- The sixth form benefits from clear strategic leadership. The school has played to its strengths and been successful in developing a curriculum that meets the needs of its students. Consequently, the quality of teaching and students' achievement have risen.
- All students follow appropriate personalised study programmes that enable them to move on to higher education, training or full-time employment after leaving the sixth form. An increasing number of students are taking up university places; 62% of the students in Year 13 are due to do so this year. All other students in this year group have secured apprenticeships or other forms of vocational training.
- All courses in the sixth form are vocational, apart from A-level art and design. High-quality teaching means that outcomes for students are above national averages, with many attaining Distinction* grades. Teachers plan the learning in ways that enable their students to make strong progress throughout their courses. Students demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their learning.
- A strength of the sixth form is the focus on careers and the development of employability skills. The school has strong links with several local companies that provide placements, internships and mentors.
- Students benefit from a range of enrichment and personal development opportunities, several of which involve working with younger pupils, such as mentoring those in Years 7 and 8. Leaders recognise that opportunities to develop cultural and political awareness are rather limited and are planning to expand them.
- All learners who have not attained a grade C in English or mathematics receive appropriate teaching and support. The success rates when learners retake these examinations are better in English than mathematics. Leaders have identified some weaknesses in how mathematics sessions are delivered and have planned changes for next year.
- Attendance rates in the sixth form are increasing, but leaders have identified this as an area that requires further improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	135470
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	10013070

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	929
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Thornhill
Principal	Tony McGuinness
Telephone number	0151 477 8740
Website	www.allsaintschs.org.uk
Email address	info@allsaintschs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2014

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and, therefore, supported with additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well above the national average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and for children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- At the time of the inspection, 24 pupils follow alternative education provision off the school site at the following providers: New Horizons, Everton Free School, Evolve Merseyside, MV Training, Skills-base, Educate, Centre 63, Crosby Furniture, Dream Academy, SALT and Alt Valley Resource Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets the requirements for the publication of specific information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons across a range of subjects, including some joint observations with senior leaders. They carried out a work scrutiny with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with a group of sixth form students and three groups of pupils, and talked with others informally during breaks and lunchtimes. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, classroom teachers and newly qualified teachers. A meeting was held with the chair and another member of the governing body along with a representative from the archdiocese.
- Inspectors took account of the 56 responses to Ofsted's online 'Parent View' survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and development plan, information about the school's performance and a selection of policies, including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Anne Seneviratne, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kath Harris	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Gartside	Ofsted Inspector
Steven Caldecott	Ofsted Inspector

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