

Inspection of St John Bosco Arts College

Storrington Avenue, Croxteth, Merseyside L11 9DQ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that they are happy and enjoy attending this school. They appreciate the calm, welcoming atmosphere that leaders and staff create. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and trust staff to look after them. There are warm relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils and students achieve well in different subjects because leaders and teachers hold high expectations for their learning. Pupils enjoy their studies, inspired by teachers' strong subject knowledge and enthusiastic, skilful teaching. Pupils pay full attention in classroom activities and take pride in their work.

Pupils and students told inspectors that they value the opportunities staff give them to develop their character and social skills. Pupils and students take part in a wide range of clubs and activities, including choir, chess, reading, Mandarin, drama and sport. Students in the sixth form benefit from enrichment activities, such as driving skills and peer support. Volunteering opportunities and charity work are important features of school life.

Pupils behave well around the school. They are respectful towards staff and one another. They told inspectors that the leaders and staff deal with bullying quickly and effectively. They said that they feel safe at the school.

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

Leaders provide a well-planned and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Students in the sixth form choose from a range of academic and technical courses that leaders carefully select to meet student needs. In most subjects, leaders' plans set out clearly the knowledge they want pupils to learn. They carefully identify the order in which they will teach pupils and students essential information. This enables pupils and students to know and remember more over time, so they achieve well. However, in a small number of subjects, including in the sixth form, leaders have not fully identified the small chunks of knowledge that pupils need for their future learning.

Teachers know their curriculum subjects well. They plan carefully to ensure that learning activities match the aims of the curriculum. Teachers explain new knowledge clearly and check pupils' understanding regularly. They identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers help pupils and students to learn from their mistakes and to improve their work. Pupils are cooperative with staff. They behave well and work hard. Learning is rarely interrupted by low-level disruption.

Leaders have identified that some younger pupils have gaps in their ability to read. Staff provide extra support for pupils' reading to ensure that they catch up quickly with other pupils. Many pupils benefit from hearing books read to them at the school

by expert readers. In some subjects, leaders have successfully trained teachers to help pupils with understanding and reading new subject-specific vocabulary.

Leaders have clear systems to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that teachers and other adults know how to help pupils in their learning. Leaders and teachers have successfully adapted the support that they provide for pupils with SEND in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils with SEND told inspectors that they are well supported by staff.

Leaders implement a broad personal development programme for pupils and students. For instance, pupils learn about mental health, relationships and diversity. Staff support them to be resilient and tolerant of others. Teachers successfully develop pupils' moral and spiritual understanding in line with the ethos of the school. Through roles such as anti-bullying and mental health ambassadors, students in the sixth form develop leadership skills. Leaders plan well for all pupils' careers education and guidance. Pupils and students said this support is effective and tailored to their individual needs.

Staff told inspectors that they enjoy working at the school. They said that leaders take steps to reduce workload and are considerate of the staff's well-being. Staff benefit from a range of professional development opportunities. Governors know the school well, and are ambitious for its pupils and students. They understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. The school has a large, knowledgeable safeguarding team. The team ensures that all staff are well trained in safeguarding. Staff act quickly to report any concerns they have about a pupil's well-being. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about healthy relationships. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, including in the sixth form, leaders have not fully identified all the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. This weakness limits teachers' ability to implement the planned curriculum. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans set out the essential knowledge that staff will teach pupils.
- Some younger pupils have gaps in their reading ability. This means that these pupils do not learn as well as they should in a range of subjects. Leaders should

fully implement their new reading strategy and ensure that pupils catch up quickly in their reading.

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

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| Unique reference number | 104715 |
| Local authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 10200338 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1092 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 197 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | John Gibbons |
| Headteacher | Darren Gidman |
| Website | www.stjohnboscoartscollege.com/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 8 and 9 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school has a Catholic ethos. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2018.
- A small number of pupils are educated through five alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead and the head of sixth form, middle leaders, teachers and members of support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body of the school, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector also spoke with the local authority school improvement officer and the archdiocese school improvement officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, geography, mathematics, science and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils and students about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' and students' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects. They visited a sample of lessons in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. They reviewed a range of documents in relation to safeguarding, including the school's pre-employment checks on staff. They spoke to staff and pupils about wider aspects of safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents and carers about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes, lunchtimes, in corridors and during lessons. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of their behaviour. Inspectors also discussed pupils' and students' programmes of wider personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Stephanie Gill, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Tim Long | Ofsted Inspector |
| Philip Wood | Ofsted Inspector |
| David Roberts | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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