

Inspection of a good school: Bellerive FCJ Catholic College

1 Aigburth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool, Merseyside, L17 3AA

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 October 2021

Outcome

Bellerive FCJ Catholic College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, enjoy coming to Bellerive FCJ Catholic College. They describe it as a happy and safe place to learn.

Pupils told inspectors that they trust that staff have their best interests at heart. Staff support and care about pupils as individuals. They expect pupils to flourish.

Pupils understand and value each other's differences. They told inspectors about the strong relationships that they have with one another. Pupils feel confident to be themselves because staff foster a positive culture of tolerance and respect.

Bullying is rare. Pupils told inspectors that staff resolve any incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and learning. Pupils behave well during social times and in class. They are keen to learn. In lessons, pupils concentrate thoroughly on their work.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, enjoy an extensive range of activities to support their wider personal development. Pupils and students access a wide variety of clubs, enrichment activities, and meditation and mindfulness sessions.

Leaders, including governors, do all that they can to ensure that pupils and students are well prepared for their future lives. Pupils and students in the sixth form, receive an effective quality of education. They achieve well.

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

Leaders make sure that pupils and students receive a high-quality, broad and ambitious curriculum across all key stages, including in the sixth form. Leaders take care to ensure that this includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs

and/or disabilities (SEND). As such, leaders have increased the number of subjects that pupils can choose to study in key stage 4. Around half the pupils in key stage 4 choose to follow the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Leaders have judiciously reviewed subject curriculums to ensure that they are well planned. Subject leaders are clear about what they intend pupils to learn and why. They have thought carefully about the order in which to deliver this content, so that pupils learn and remember the essential knowledge that they need. Leaders' and teachers' effective planning helps pupils, and students in the sixth form, to learn the curriculum well.

Teachers choose appropriate activities to help pupils to learn and remember more. They check pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. Teachers use assessment information skilfully to address pupils' misconceptions and to help pupils move on to new learning. Consequently, pupils, including those with SEND, progress well through the curriculum. Leaders' identification of pupils with SEND is accurate. Teachers and other adults make effective use of the information that they are provided with to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are well met.

In some subjects, curriculums are especially strong. Where this is the case, pupils, and students in the sixth form, achieve exceptionally well. In these subjects, teachers routinely draw upon the wide knowledge that pupils know and remember. Pupils then apply this knowledge to investigate challenging and complex ideas. Leaders have plans to refine the curriculum further in a small number of other subjects, including in the sixth form. While these curriculums are effective, and they enable pupils to achieve well, they do not afford pupils the opportunity to develop the depth of knowledge that they could.

Classrooms are vibrant places for pupils to learn. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is extremely positive. They are polite and respectful. Disruption to learning is incredibly rare. Pupils are eager and curious. They are confident and ambitious when faced with new ideas and knowledge. Pupils are resilient if they make mistakes.

Leaders have strengthened the reading curriculum. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, read regularly and widely. Pupils' avid reading is a strong characteristic of this school. Leaders have ensured that pupils read extensively for pleasure and to support their development of subject-specific knowledge and vocabulary.

Leaders accurately identify those pupils who have fallen behind with their reading. They have put in place a successful reading programme to help these pupils to catch up quickly. Students in the sixth form also use their reading expertise to help with younger pupils to develop their reading fluency. As a result, by the end of key stage 3 most of these pupils read with confidence.

Leaders have successfully overhauled the personal development curriculum. Pupils and students value the support that they get from staff for their well-being. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, receive effective careers education. Leaders have appropriately extended the range of extra-curricular activities on offer to take account of pupils'

interests, including those pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and students in the sixth form.

The majority of staff appreciate how leaders and governors protect them from excessive workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are appropriately trained to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders are raising pupils' and staffs' awareness of the risks of peer-on-peer abuse. They are providing additional training for staff and pupils.

Pupils told inspectors that they seek help from staff if they need it. Pupils are confident to report any worries that they may have. Staff process this information in a timely manner. Adults identify quickly if pupils require additional support from external agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families get the help that they need. Leaders ensure that there are suitable checks in place when recruiting staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' planning of a small number of subject curriculums, including in the sixth form, does not enable pupils to develop a deep and rich body of subject knowledge. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders should complete their work in refining and finalising these curriculum plans, so that pupils and students achieve as highly in these subjects as they do elsewhere.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bellerive FCJ Catholic College, to be good on 13 June 2012.

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	138183
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10200163
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	864
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Bliss
Headteacher	Niamh Howlett
Website	www.bellerivefcj.org
Date of previous inspection	5 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at three registered providers.
- The school was last inspected under section 48 in June 2017 by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.

- The lead inspector met with a representative of Liverpool City Council. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked pupils how they learn how to keep themselves safe and what they would do if they have any concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and students from Year 7 to Year 13 and considered the 288 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online parental survey. This included the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the views of the parents who contacted them during the inspection by email.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography and mathematics. Inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work from some other subjects.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Steven Caldecott

Ofsted Inspector

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