

# St Francis Xavier School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121715
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	395640
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Selby

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	467
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jim Whiston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joe McAuley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Darlington Road Richmond DL10 7DA
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

David Selby  
David Griffiths  
Julie McGrane

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons taught by 28 teachers and visited registration sessions and an assembly. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and groups of students. Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of attendance and behaviour, bullying and racial incidents logs and the single central record of safeguarding checks. They scrutinised a broad range of students' work through sampling their books and files, including in lessons. Inspectors considered the completed questionnaires from 100 students, 32 members of staff and 213 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

St Francis Xavier School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. It is a joint Catholic and Church of England School and admits students of both faiths and other backgrounds who live across a wide area which includes the town of Richmond and Catterick Garrison. Most students are of White British heritage with very few speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Overall, there is a lower proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs than is found nationally. The school exceeds the current floor standards which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- St Francis Xavier is an outstanding school. It provides an environment where students are known well and cared for as individuals and where there is an emphasis on and expectation of high achievement. The exemplary behaviour of students makes an exceptional contribution to learning and is supportive of all.
- Students make very rapid progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science, which has contributed to attainment which is well above the national average and is increasing. Current information indicates that this trend will continue this year.
- Teaching is good overall. This, together with the highly effective curriculum and students' excellent attitudes, leads to outstanding achievement. There are, however, a few examples of only satisfactory practice. The school has excellent systems for further developing and sharing best practice. These are leading to improvement at a pace but have not yet impacted fully.
- The behaviour of students is outstanding and reflects the school's values. The school has a very calm and purposeful atmosphere where students show respect for each other. Students feel very safe with any incidents of bullying being extremely rare and their parents and carers agree. Attendance is above average and students are punctual to lessons.
- The curriculum ensures the excellent development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and enables them to develop into confident and responsible young adults as they grow through the school.
- The headteacher and other leaders provide clear and principled leadership and management with a confidence to make decisions in the best interests of the students. There is a rigorous and systematic approach to self-evaluation and school development. Performance management is used very effectively and contributes to strong arrangements for the professional development of staff which are leading to a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching.

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

- Ensure that teaching is outstanding and all lessons are at least good by extending the school's existing best practice to the few remaining lessons which do not reach the highest standards.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Most students enter the school with attainment which is above the national average, make very rapid and continuing progress and gain well above average GCSE results. Progress is especially strong in English, mathematics and science. This has contributed to a continuing upward trend in the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics which is increasingly high. The school's careful and precise monitoring of students indicates that GCSE results will increase further this year. The curriculum is distinctive with GCSE courses only in Key Stage 4. This makes some comparisons with the performance of all schools more challenging. School leaders have very high aspirations for all students and their expectation is that all will succeed. Students understand this and work hard and learn very well to make sure it happens.

The school's close knowledge of all its young people and, in particular, disabled students and those with special educational needs helps it ensure that all make very rapid progress. The school describes accurately and impressively the commitment to learning and achievement of young people particularly for those who have a parent or carer serving in the army.

Questionnaires and discussion with students indicate that almost all feel they learn effectively and are helped to do as well as they can. Inspection findings confirm this. Inspectors saw very rapid progress in lessons although this was slower in a few cases when teachers had not planned activities to match the needs of the different groups of students in their classes. Students communicate confidently and use information and communication technology (ICT) very well as a tool for learning.

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to their Ofsted questionnaire and of these almost all were happy with the education provided and feel that young people make good progress.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching is good and, together with the very strong curriculum and the students' exceptional contribution to their own learning, helps students' achievement to be outstanding. However, it is not consistently good across all lessons. The large majority of teaching observed by inspectors was good or outstanding but there was a small proportion of satisfactory practice. The school commits itself to ensuring that there is active teaching until the end of each term, although the timing of the inspection meant that students in Year 10 were working on shorter topics before completing their year with two weeks work experience and Year 11 students had completed their study and were not in school. This meant that teaching patterns were not fully typical of the majority of the year. A few

teachers were not available through medium- to long-term absence and the teaching of these classes was less strong.

In the best lessons teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to provide explanations which lead and challenge students to learn. This was seen in a Year 10 chemistry lesson where students then advanced their progress further by their natural support for each other. In other lessons, teachers use very different but equally effective approaches, as in a Year 8 technology class where students worked independently on a detailed ICT supported design task and were given precise and individual encouragement for their own, independent learning. In the small minority of cases where teaching was less effective the teacher talked for too long and individuals were not sufficiently challenged because planning did not take account of the available information on individual students and their previous learning. In contrast, the teaching of disabled students and those with special educational needs is very effective because of the way this knowledge is used. The school's strong commitment to including all equally means that the needs of students with special educational needs are met within their mainstream classes. Teaching assistants are deployed well and balance work with individuals with assistance to all students. The quality of marking in a few subjects is inconsistent. There are some very good examples of regular and constructive marking which give very good advice to students on how they can improve their work but this is not the case in all books.

While the vast majority of parents and carers who completed the Ofsted questionnaire felt that teaching was effective, a few indicated that they had concerns over its consistency particularly when regular teachers are not available. Inspectors found that teaching is good overall and the school works robustly to ensure that teaching remains as strong as possible if permanent teachers are not available.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students typically behave exceptionally well in and around the school. School leaders consciously set models for the very high standards of behaviour and quality of relationships which means that these are fully established as a fundamental part of the school's culture. This was summed up by students saying to inspectors in different conversations that, 'We look out for each other'. Behaviour in lessons is very often exemplary and this contributes to students' excellent rates of progress. Students listen very well for extended periods. Inspectors saw no instances of disruptive behaviour which affected the pace of learning. Students approach all aspects of their school experience with impressive maturity and respect for their peers and adults.

Students talked openly about how safe they feel in school and this was confirmed in very nearly all of the responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaires. A similar very high proportion indicated that they feel standards of behaviour are good. Instances of bullying are very rare and if they do occur are dealt with effectively. Students are aware of different types of bullying but explain that bullying linked to stereotypes is most unlikely to occur because of the way individuals are valued in their school.

The effectiveness of the school's policies and procedures to manage behaviour is indicated by the very low rate of exclusion from school and the absence of permanent exclusions in recent years. The attendance of students is above average and rates of persistent absence are very low.

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## Leadership and management

The headteacher and leaders at all levels in the school have a common vision and ambition for the work of the school. This rightly emphasises academic achievement together with care for and value of individuals. Students know and understand how these principles involve them and their attitudes and behaviour are shaped by the highly effective leadership approaches. Governors know the school very well and use their wide range of skills to support and challenge its work. The school has well planned systems for detailed self-evaluation which are integrated into its systematic planning approach. This tackles any areas of less strong performance with improvement actions for individuals being proportionate and monitored to ensure they have a rapid impact. Strong improvement in the outcomes for students has resulted from this. The school has the confidence to take its own decisions but works well with external partners when it decides this is needed.

Performance management and professional development are integral to the school's systems and many staff identify how much these have helped them meet the school's high expectations. The leadership of teaching has developed very strongly since the previous inspection. Middle leaders have increasing responsibility and accountability for the quality of teaching and they are now having a marked impact on improvement, although in a few cases this is still work in progress.

The highly effective curriculum is exceptionally well planned and delivered in a way which ensures that all students achieve very well. It contributes significantly to the very low proportion who leave school without moving to further education, employment or training. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of musical, sporting, study and other activities for students. These often take place during lunchtime to give equal access to students even if they have to travel large distances to school. Extra-curricular activities and the regular educational visits at home and abroad both make a strong contribution to the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills. Inspectors saw this in the final rehearsal for a concert involving current and past students. Not only did this practise and extend students' skills and demonstrate their talents but also had an international theme and supported one of the school's current charities.

The school has a very secure base for further progress and development. This is shown clearly in the outstanding current leaders' deep and embedded values, increases in already strong achievement and effective responses to less strong areas. There are well-planned arrangements for the induction of and transfer to a new headteacher for the next school year.

The school commits itself to be inclusive and its policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity and ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The work of the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has strengthened the very successful approaches to ensure that disabled students and those with special educational needs engage in all the school has to offer and achieve well.

The arrangements for safeguarding students are comprehensive and rigorous and meet national requirements.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

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## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



5 July 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of St Francis Xavier School, Richmond, DL10 7DA**

Thank you for the help you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. Our particular thanks go to those of you who gave up your time to speak to inspectors and to those of you who completed the questionnaires. Your views helped us build our picture of your school.

The inspectors judge St Francis Xavier School to be providing you with an outstanding education. We were pleased to see the excellent relationships you have with each other, your teachers and visitors and the way your exemplary behaviour helps you approach your learning. The school helps you to make very rapid progress and this leads to high attainment. Your attendance rate is higher than in most secondary schools. You told us that you are happy and feel safe in school and your parents and carers agreed.

The headteacher, governors, senior leaders and other teachers are determined to improve the school still further and have plans to help them do this. We agreed with you that sometimes the teaching in the school varies in its quality. We have asked the school to make sure all lessons match the very best. The school is keen to do this because it will help you do even better now and in the future.

You have an important part to play by continuing to try as hard as you can to meet the school's high expectations and working together as well as we saw during the inspection. We are sure that you will aim to do these two things.

On behalf of all the inspectors, I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Selby  
Lead inspector

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