

St John Bosco Arts College

Stonedale Crescent, Croxteth, Merseyside, L11 9DQ

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students enter the school with attainment that is well below the national average.
- They make outstanding gains in their learning during their time at school and leave with overall attainment that is well above the national average.
- Given their start points the proportion of students making expected and better than expected progress in mathematics is high when compared to other schools across the country.
- In 2012 English did not perform as strongly as mathematics but this slight decline has been reversed. The school's accurate tracking data confirm that students have progressed exceptionally well so far in Year 11, maintaining an improving three-year trend overall.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve outstandingly well also.
- Teaching has remained outstanding since the last inspection and provides high levels of challenge for the girls and is often inspirational.
- The marking of work helps students understand how they have done but is a little variable in its effectiveness across departments. Guidance on how to improve and opportunities for students to respond to teachers' comments are inconsistent.
- Students are hugely proud of their school and appreciate all that the teachers and adults do for them. They feel very safe and extremely well cared for.
- Attitudes to learning are excellent. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Students are polite, well-mannered, always keen to do their best and very often help support one another in lessons.
- Leaders and managers, including the exceptionally strong governing body, manage the day-to-day running of the school and its strategic direction outstandingly well. At the heart of everything they do is the academic and personal development of all students.
- The sixth form is good and improving rapidly. Students who stay on into Year 12 and 13 are progressing quickly because of the outstanding quality of teaching they receive.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 42 part-lessons across each key stage. Joint observations were undertaken in four lessons with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with girls from each year group, teaching staff, middle and senior leaders, and representatives from the governing body
- A telephone conversation was held with the school’s Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: students’ work; data relating to the progress of current year groups and individual students; records of the monitoring of teaching; minutes of meetings held by the governing body; the school’s self-evaluation documents and the school development plan. A wide range of policies were scrutinised also.
- Inspectors took account of the school’s own analysis of recent parent responses and staff responses from those who returned the questionnaires. There were no responses to Parent View on the Ofsted website.

Inspection team

Peter Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Harris

Additional Inspector

Gary Kelly

Additional Inspector

Linda Clare

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St John Bosco is a slightly-smaller-than-average-sized all girls secondary school with a sixth form.
- It received Teaching School Status in March 2013.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education.
- There is an above-average proportion of girls known to be eligible for the pupil premium. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of girls from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of those girls supported through school action is nearly twice that seen nationally. However, the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with other schools in the country.
- The school meets the current government floor standards that set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that students receive regular and consistently high-quality feedback on their work which aids and supports further progress by:
 - improving the variety of types of feedback given by teachers
 - implementing ways in which to ensure that students follow up on advice given and that when corrections are requested they are revisited and marked.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students join the school in Year 7 with attainment that is significantly below the national average.
- Attainment at the end of Year 11 in 2012 was overall significantly above average. The proportion of girls achieving five or more A* to G grades at GCSE continued the three-year trend of being significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of those achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, in 2012 was above average and has remained so for the last three years. However, there was a decline in English attainment which has since been addressed.
- Accurate monitoring data put the current Year 11 cohort on course to do even better this year in English and mathematics. Given the low starting points of the students this represents outstanding progress over time. The proportion of girls making and exceeding the expected levels of progress is high when compared to schools nationally.
- Those students who are disabled or with special educational needs also make outstanding progress from their individual starting points because of the excellent support they receive throughout their time at school.
- Inspection evidence confirms that standards in literacy and numeracy are above average. These skills are learned extremely well in English and mathematics lessons as well as in other subjects across the curriculum. Students read a wide range of literature in and out of school. They are impressively articulate and often present their work to a very high standard.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals attain results in English and mathematics, as shown in their average point scores, far in excess of those attending other schools in the country. Inspection evidence confirms the gap to be narrowing significantly in school between those believed to be entitled to free school meals and those who are not.
- Students arriving in Year 7 with low reading scores are successfully helped to catch up through well-targeted and successful support.
- There is a well considered policy for students to enter GCSE examinations in a number of subjects early, which does not stifle their potential.
- Attainment on entry into the sixth form is below average. Many higher-ability students go elsewhere to continue their post-16 studies. The progress that students make throughout the sixth form is good and improving rapidly, helped by the high proportion of outstanding teaching and the sixth form's strengthening overall effectiveness.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching across all key stages and in all subjects is never less than good and much of it was seen to be outstanding, confirming the high rates of progress made by students over time. The teaching of English and mathematics is outstanding and provides students with very secure understanding and skills in numeracy and literacy. These high-level skills prepare them exceptionally well for their next stages in life.
- High expectations of teachers and students and excellent classroom relationships allow learning to proceed at a rapid pace. This was seen in a Year 7 Spanish lesson where all girls were highly engaged in speaking, listening and reading the language to help describe how they get to school. During the lesson girls celebrated each other's achievements and enjoyed the active learning that was achieved through games, paired work and vibrant teaching.
- Teachers demonstrate expert questioning of their students that checks their understanding and supports them very well in moving on at speed having secured much knowledge. Teachers plan the learning in lessons and the range of activities at the right level of difficulty so that students' abilities, interests and needs are met.

- Students enjoy learning because lessons are lively and pacy with exciting resources and practical activities laid on that progress learning extremely well. Teachers are often inspirational and enthusiastic, always wanting the best from their students, who flourish in all subjects and achieve outstandingly well during their time at school.
- Teaching assistants, who are often highly qualified in the subjects they assist in, provide very effective support, particularly for those who are disabled or with special educational needs. This effective support enables these students to progress as well as their peers.
- The school goes the extra mile to include all students no matter what their ability or background. One young girl spoke of how the school moved lessons to the ground floor, as at that time she was unable to climb the stairs.
- Students' communication skills, and particularly oracy, are very well developed.
- High-quality marking exists but there is currently too much variance, both within subjects and across the school. Students do not routinely respond to teachers' marking or comments.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding and, as a result, the progress students are making is rapidly improving.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. The strong empathy for the feelings of others and how well students respectfully listen to each other is impressive. Students speak of enjoying their lessons very much.
- They acquire excellent personal skills through a carefully structured programme of study taught across many subjects. Personal development and confidence of each student are a high priority for the school. One girl said, 'I have developed well as a person; I am now more comfortable with me!'
- Students feel very safe and well cared for in school. They understand how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. They consider the school a safe haven and a 'large extended family, where teachers never lose hope in you'. They have outstanding manners and have a clear pride in their school where they feel valued by each other and adults.
- Bullying is infrequent but dealt with promptly and effectively when it does occur. Students understand the different forms bullying can take and, along with the school, do not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- The parents who responded to the school's questionnaires and the teachers and support staff who responded to the questionnaire issued during the inspection consider the behaviour of the girls to be good.
- The police officer who has an office within the school and who works with several other schools in the community speaks passionately about the high-quality behaviour and attitude of the girls attending St John Bosco and the outstanding life chances the school provides for them.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is led outstandingly well by the headteacher. She is highly thought of by the students, who consider her to be an excellent role model, an 'inspiration to us all' and an example of 'how women can achieve and reach the top of their profession'.
- Along with a highly committed and equally outstanding extended leadership team that offers fixed-period opportunities for experienced middle leaders to gain experience, the school has maintained its outstandingness since its last inspection. It successfully demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve further.
- All leaders, managers and governors demonstrate a tireless energy in ensuring that the high ambitions are realised. They understand the importance of high-quality teaching and are relentless in making sure that most of it is outstanding. They do this by regular monitoring of teaching and developing bespoke training when the needs arise. The quality of teaching judged

by the school in its self-evaluation documents is accurate. The school knows itself extremely well.

- The outstanding curriculum across all key stages meets exceptionally well the interests, abilities and needs of all the students. The school goes the extra mile to ensure that individual students' needs are met. For example, one student is intent on studying engineering at university and the school have arranged for her to take A-level physics next year at a nearby sixth form as the school does not offer that subject.
- A well-planned and coordinated approach to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is evident across the school. A rich experience of different cultures exists along with a palpable sense that students understand their moral obligations to society. A strong sense of community permeates everything the students do and say.
- Teachers, including senior leaders, understand the importance of improving their practice and accelerating students' progress even further towards meeting the challenging targets set. It is understood by all how this links to the management of their performance and any pay progression.
- Some heads of department are relatively new to their posts and have grasped the opportunities with zeal. They are committed and effective individuals who are very well supported by their senior colleagues and governors.
- The outstanding achievement of all groups of students, as seen during the inspection and as shown in the data, demonstrates the school's full commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all.
- The local authority has provided effective, additional support to strengthen subjects and help improve the quality of teaching. This support is ongoing.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding are exemplary and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The outstanding governing body knows the heartbeat of the school because it clearly understands the context in which it works, the community it serves and the students in its care. It knows how the school functions extremely well, including how well students achieve, because of the rigour with which it holds the school to account in everything it does. No stone is left unturned in the governing body's pursuit of excellence. It understands very well the standard of teaching and fully supports improvement strategies; no one is allowed to become complacent. It is very clear about how the performance of teaching staff is managed and how this links to pay progression. It knows how the pupil premium is spent and has a very firm hold on the school's finances.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104715
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	412407

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	872
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gibbons
Headteacher	Anne Pontifex
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2010
Telephone number	0151 5466360
Fax number	0151 5485949
Email address	enquiries@stjohnbosco.org.uk

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