

Inspection of St Edward's College

Sandfield Park, Liverpool, Merseyside L12 1LF

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Lee Fabia. The school is the only school in a single-academy trust called St Edward's College Academy Trust. The trust is overseen by the governing body, chaired by John O'Brien.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, consider it a privilege to attend St Edward's College. They, along with their parents and carers, are delighted with the positive changes that the school has recently made.

Pupils benefit from a broad, rich curriculum that reflects the school's ambition for their academic achievement. Pupils typically achieve well. Students in the sixth form move on successfully to an impressive range of university destinations.

Pupils' behaviour is improving rapidly. Most pupils behave well and act respectfully towards each other. They understand that the school's high expectations have helped them to feel happier and safer at school than in the past. When pupils report bullying or discrimination, staff deal with it effectively. Pupils have a renewed confidence in how well staff will help and support them if they have any worries.

Pupils are encouraged to play a full and active part in the life of the school. Many represent the school at regional and national sports fixtures, or in prestigious music performances. Pupils wear their college colours with pride, signalling their commitment to developing their talents and serving others. Students in the sixth form relish opportunities to act as role models, for example by helping younger pupils with reading.

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

Governors and the trust have shepherded the school through a period of leadership instability. Until recently, this instability had a detrimental effect on pupils' behaviour and welfare. During that time, some parents raised concerns over their children's experiences at the school. Governors and the trust have listened to these views. Their decisive action has successfully addressed these concerns and ensured that the school is led well.

The school has raised its expectations of pupils' conduct. This has contributed to a positive and respectful atmosphere in school. Most pupils behave well in lessons. The school recognises that a minority of pupils do not meet this higher standard. Thoughtful support is helping these pupils to improve their behaviour.

The school's ambitious curriculum is well designed. Pupils build a secure base of knowledge in key stages 3 and 4. In turn, this knowledge enables pupils to move on successfully to demanding sixth-form courses. Many pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects in key stage 4. Most pupils, and students in the sixth form, achieve well in national examinations.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They draw on this expertise to explain new content clearly. On the whole, teachers design tasks which help pupils to build knowledge well. However, a small group of pupils, including some with SEND, do not learn the curriculum as securely as their peers. This is because there is variability in how well teachers respond

to pupils' starting points during lessons. In addition, although the school has strengthened its systems for identifying any additional needs that pupils may have, some teachers do not meet the needs of these pupils as well as they should.

Reading has a high priority in the school. Pupils encounter a wide range of carefully chosen texts. As pupils move through the curriculum, they build a rich subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils who struggle with reading, including any students who join the school in Year 12, catch up quickly due to the effective support that they receive.

Most pupils attend school often. However, a small group of vulnerable pupils frequently miss school. This further hinders how well these pupils learn the curriculum. The school has not analysed the reasons for these absences well enough. Work to support these pupils is sometimes not as effective as it should be.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is at the heart of school life. Pupils relish many opportunities to contribute to their local and global communities. Many sixth-form students take on leadership roles. These opportunities help pupils and students to develop into responsible citizens. The school's extensive programme of extra-curricular activities is noteworthy. Staff ensure that these are accessible to all.

The school has recently improved the programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. This is helping pupils to be better informed about life in modern society. For example, they learn about different types of healthy relationships and the importance of consent. This, alongside the effective careers guidance that pupils receive, ensures that they are well prepared for their future lives.

Staff recognise that a lot has changed at the school in a short time. Many staff spoke highly of the school's efforts to ensure that their workload is purposeful and manageable. For instance, staff appreciate the additional subject-specific development opportunities that they have.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not adapt learning activities to take sufficient account of pupils' needs and starting points. This hinders some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, from learning the curriculum as successfully as they should. The school should ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance to enable them to support pupils to access learning successfully.

- Some pupils, particularly some of the most vulnerable pupils, do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they miss out on essential learning and they do not fully experience all that the school has to offer. The school should accelerate its plans to improve these pupils' attendance and ensure that any consequent gaps in their learning are addressed.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136735
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10348264
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1168
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John O'Brien
Principal	Lee Fabia
Website	www.st-edwards.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a single-academy trust which exercises its governance function through the school's governing body. The school is also a member of the Gaudete Trust and the Edmund Rice family of schools. These are religious organisations which do not have statutory responsibility for the school's governance.
- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due within eight years.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2024.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious allegation of a child protection nature was being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the

school in response to the allegation were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative of the Gaudete Trust. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese by telephone.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics, geography, art and design, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and students about their experiences at school and their views of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, leaders' improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff, and some parental views that were shared directly with inspectors during the inspection.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

Katy Robinson

Lindsay Brindley

Paul Slater

Scott Maclean

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2024