

St John Bosco Arts College

Address: Storrington Avenue, Croxteth, Merseyside, L11 9DQ

Unique reference number (URN): 104715

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is typically close to national averages over time. Leaders demonstrate a detailed knowledge of pupils' barriers and patterns of attendance. They have implemented a wide range of effective strategies to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils. Leaders act quickly to support pupils who find it difficult to come into school. For example, the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) shows improvement. This highlights how leaders' strategies are having a positive impact. However, leaders are aware that more still needs to be done to improve the attendance of all pupils, especially for pupils with SEND.

Leaders have well-established behaviour routines that pupils follow. On the whole, the school is calm and orderly. Pupils typically have positive relationships with staff. This is a strength of the school. Pupils consistently show respect for differences and diversity between people. Pupils report that derogatory language is not used, and they know this would not be tolerated. Pupils typically behave well. They show positive attitudes to their learning. In lessons, pupils are focused and listen to each other and their teachers carefully. There are few examples of low-level disruption. When it does occur, staff address it promptly, and pupils respond by improving their behaviour. During breaktimes, pupils generally manage their behaviour well. They enjoy socialising together. Pupils typically do not perceive bullying to be an issue, and when it occurs, it is dealt with well by staff.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders put vulnerable pupils at the heart of their decisions. Leaders regularly reflect on what is in place, ensuring that there is a positive culture of support around vulnerable pupils.

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and effectively using a range of impactful approaches. Staff are appropriately trained, and information about pupils' needs is well communicated to them. Leaders closely track how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are learning. In the main, recommended adaptations are in place during lessons to support pupils with SEND effectively. This helps them to access the curriculum and improve on their learning over time.

A clear 'team around the child' model is evident. Leaders work closely with families and a wide range of agencies to meet pupils' needs and reduce their barriers to learning. Leaders are continuing to improve the support for vulnerable pupils, including those who are known to social care. Leaders acknowledge that improving the attendance and outcomes for pupils with SEND remains an area for continued focus.

The pupil premium strategy is evidence informed and well understood by staff. Additional funding is helping to reduce barriers and improve the attendance and academic attainment of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, gaps in outcomes are closing for disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including governors, understand the context of their school. They have a clear vision and high aspirations for all pupils. They act in the best interests of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. The effective pastoral support around these pupils is testament to this. The school works closely with vulnerable families and understands the importance of its role within the wider community.

Leaders and governors are aware of the areas that need improving. Governors are committed to the school and are supportive of leaders. They ask leaders probing questions and check the accuracy of the information that they receive. Governors respond appropriately and sensitively to any areas that fall short of leaders' expectations. Together with leaders, governors are focused on ensuring that pupils reach their full potential and are better prepared for their next steps.

Leaders' actions are yielding positive results. For example, the impact of leaders' work can be seen in the improvements in curriculum development, pupils' reading skills and attendance. However, leaders and staff acknowledge they are at the early stage of improvement in some areas, such as teaching practice, which is still variable across some subjects. The staff professional learning offer is evidence informed and comprehensive. This is beginning to develop the skills and expertise of staff.

Staff, including those new to the profession, feel that leaders are considerate of their wellbeing. They are well supported with their workload. Staff appreciate the training opportunities that they have to develop their subject knowledge.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The personal development programme has been carefully designed. Pupils learn statutory content such as age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education. They know how to stay safe, both on and offline, and recognise risks. Pupils receive high-quality pastoral support care. This helps them to feel valued.

Pupils have access to a wide range of clubs and activities, such as drama, music, choir, a school editorial board and debating. These help to develop pupils' confidence and skills. Pupils enjoy participating in a wide array of sports and trips, including to theatres, museums, residential field courses and a zoo. These serve to develop their wider interests and talents. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as ambassadors and members of the school council, which develop their leadership skills.

Leaders regularly check the impact of the personal development programme. They track pupils' participation in enrichment activities. Where a pupil misses such an opportunity, leaders put plans in place to ensure that a suitable alternative opportunity is given to them.

Pupils typically respect each other. Pupils know the importance of equality, for example through activities during national events such as International Women's Week. Pupils learn about different religions. This helps them to develop tolerance of others. However, the depth

of some pupils' knowledge about certain aspects of fundamental British values, such as law and democracy, is less secure.

Pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. They have access to one-to-one impartial careers meetings throughout their school lives. Pupils have many opportunities for engagement with employers. Pupils who may have barriers to attending these activities are well supported by the school through a range of strategies to secure a place for their next steps. An increasing number of pupils move on to appropriate education, employment and training.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a 16 to 19 study programme that meets students' needs. This has been improved using student voice and local labour market information to expand the range of academic and vocational courses. For example, they have introduced health and social care and criminology.

Subject curriculums are typically designed well. Considerably more students follow vocational courses than academic ones. On vocational courses, students make progress that is above the national average. In the recent past, students on some academic courses did not achieve well. However, due to leaders' actions, students on these courses benefit from increasingly positive teaching. Teachers use effective strategies to support students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Students produce work that is increasingly of high quality. Overall, most students achieve well in sixth form.

Students relish taking on leadership roles in the school, including supporting younger pupils and being student councillors. Students benefit from a broad enrichment programme that builds their social and personal skills. This includes voluntary work, first-aid courses and Mandarin classes.

Students, including those with SEND, receive bespoke careers advice and guidance. They profit from meaningful work experience placements. This helps them to make well-informed choices about their next steps and future careers. The majority of students complete their courses of study and go on to university or apprenticeships in a context where many of them will be the first in their family to progress to this level.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Overall, published outcomes show that pupils do not achieve well at the end of key stage 4. Although attainment has begun to improve, it is below national averages in a range of subjects over time. Pupils do, however, achieve well in vocational subjects.

The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is close to the national average overall. However, their attainment and progress are inconsistent across a range of subjects.

Leaders' recent initiatives to improve pupils' outcomes have started to have a positive impact in certain areas of the school's curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making increasingly secure progress through the curriculum across key stages. However, due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, some pupils do not acquire the knowledge they need across the curriculum. Overall, pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps as they should be.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

On occasions, teaching is not sufficiently matched to support pupils in securing the knowledge they need. This means that sometimes tasks are too easy for pupils and do not provide appropriate challenge, particularly for pupils with high prior attainment. In addition, checks on pupils' understanding are not consistently carried out to identify gaps in knowledge or inform subsequent learning activities that would support pupils to make better progress through the curriculum.

Most curriculum subjects are sequenced appropriately. Staff typically use their secure subject knowledge to provide clear explanations. In the main, they adapt teaching appropriately for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders typically have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. They have identified key areas of classroom practice for focused professional development. This is increasingly improving teaching across key stages and supporting improvements in pupils' learning. This is particularly the case in vocational subjects. The impact on pupils' experiences, however, remains inconsistent.

Leaders have demonstrated an unwavering determination to improve pupils' communication skills, literacy and ability to read. Leaders have improved the systems to identify and support pupils who find reading difficult. This is supporting pupils well to become fluent and confident readers. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure during form time.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

St John Bosco College is a welcoming and caring community. Pupils enjoy being at the school. The school builds trusting relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to develop a strong sense of belonging and feel safe. Pupils know who to seek help from when they feel worried. Instances of bullying are rare, and when it does occur, staff deal with it quickly.

Pupils have access to an ambitious curriculum, including academic and vocational subjects. However, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn better in some subjects than others. This is because the curriculum is not taught consistently well. This leads to gaps in pupils' essential knowledge and slows the progress of some pupils through the curriculum.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils generally behave well. Pupils are taught about equality and learn to respect others. They socialise well together at break and lunchtimes. In lessons, pupils listen well and follow instructions. Pupils benefit from high-

quality pastoral care. This supports their mental health and wellbeing. Staff make appropriate adjustments that enable pupils who face barriers to learning to access the curriculum. Attendance is improving. This is because of bespoke support and close work between leaders and pupils and their families.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of clubs that develop their interests. These include sports, the eco-club, the 'faith in action' team, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Monday mindfulness and the young editors programme. Leaders make adjustments to enable all pupils to be included in these activities.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to take part in competitions, such as for debating and performing arts, which the school has had great success with. These help to develop pupils' confidence and wellbeing.

A number of overseas visits, including to New York, Berlin and Rome, help pupils to develop an understanding of the wider world. Leaders support pupils with financial barriers to participate in trips and visits.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers routinely check pupils' understanding to identify and address gaps in their knowledge so that they can achieve more and at least be in line with national averages.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils receive appropriate and challenging activity choices matched to their prior learning so that they deepen their understanding.
 - Leaders should continue their efforts to improve pupils' attendance, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that their attendance continues to improve.
 - Leaders should continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of their actions to ensure that their range of strategies is having the intended impact.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Cath O'Leary.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority, the archdiocese and the virtual school headteacher. He also spoke with a group of governors that included the chair of the governing body and the school's excellence improvement partner. An inspector spoke with representatives of the alternative providers that the school uses.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. It is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2024.

The school makes use of four registered alternative provisions.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The chair of the governing body and some members of the senior leadership team have taken up their posts in recent years.

Headteacher: Darren Gidman

Lead inspector:

Ahmed Marikar, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Anne Murphy, Ofsted Inspector

Katie Sharp, Ofsted Inspector

Tom Theobald, His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Corrigan, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,051

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,064

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

49.27%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.24%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.46%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	19.5%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.8%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	39.4	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	39.7	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	42.8	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.47	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.40	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	11.3%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	13.3%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	16.9%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	31.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.2	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.0	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.78	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	11.3%	53.1%	-41.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	13.3%	53.1%	-39.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	16.9%	52.4%	-35.6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	31.1	50.4	-19.3
2023/24 (final)	32.2	50.0	-17.8
2022/23 (final)	37.0	50.3	-13.3

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.78	0.16	-0.94
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	0.17	-0.92

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	86%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	98%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	23.76	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.61	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.94	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.6	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.7	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	9.1%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.1%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.2%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	23.4%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	34.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	28.1%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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