

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Sixth Form College

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

If you are making an application for this post, we will be happy to provide by request, sight of our most recent self-assessment report and staffing structure; therein you will find a lot of contextual information and performance indicators related to the College. This information summary is just to offer a snapshot of some historical and current information about St. Francis Xavier College.

In 1985 SFX Sixth Form College was the first Catholic Sixth Form Colleges to be established in London, emerging from the reorganisation of Catholic secondary education in the Archdiocese of Southwark in the early 1980s. It is fair to say that these reorganisations impinged more on inner London Catholic institutions than outer and the consequence was that SFX College was one of three Catholic Sixth Form Colleges established in inner London. As a faith-based Catholic institution we are “in trust” to the Archdiocese of Southwark and enjoy a strong and constructive relationship with our trustees.

As we approach our “34th Birthday” it is a good time to reflect on how the College has grown and diversified in that time. It is now almost double its original size, with 1300 students currently on roll. With the movements to academisation and the former “presumption” for sixth forms in “good schools” in favour of opening post-16 provision, only one of the eight former partner schools of the College remain as 11-16 schools. For that reason, the College has had to become increasingly competitive and independent in its recruitment strategy. We operate, effectively, as a “Pan-London” college, drawing from over 170 institutions at enrolment and from almost every inner and outer borough of London. Granted, there is a strong pattern of enrolment from the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Croydon and other boroughs to the south of London, but we do have students who travel a greater distance to get to the College. We are thankful for the Greater London Authority’s continuing support for subsidised travel for the 16-19 age group in full-time education as this makes such mobility and choice possible.

Since 2012 we have been working directly to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, an executive agency of the DfE. We are clear and assured about the contribution we make to the increase of engagement in education at the ages of 17 and 18: we run programmes of study from Level 1 to Level 3 (and to Level 4 in some of our pre-university diplomas) and our enrolment policy is accommodating. If students have a good reference, are willing to support the mission of the College and to participate in our Religious and Philosophy programme once a week, then we will offer them a place at SFX at a level appropriate to their prior achievement. Unlike General FE, we cannot offer a vast range of occupational and technical qualifications but we have a good range and breadth in our general applied and vocational provision which can lead to university or improved employment chances. Typically, 85% of our Level 3 finishers proceed to university (drawn from BTEC, UAL and A level programmes) and this is the



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“destination of choice” for the majority of our students. Each year we are delighted to see, amongst that cohort, students heading off to university who started at the College on Level 1 with few, very modest or no previous qualifications.

We are committed to equality and diversity. We were recently awarded “Investors in Diversity” status: we have one of the largest populations of Black and Minority Ethnic students and of students from disadvantaged home postcodes in the UK: these students are achieving strong and competitive outcomes and we are committed to breaking down barriers to progression. Why is a commitment to diversity so critical to our endeavours? Many of our students are from “non-traditional” backgrounds with respect to university education and parental employment categories. It is very common for the parents of our students to be pursuing a degree, alongside employment, at the same time as their children are engaged in secondary education. Our parent body is extremely enthusiastic and committed to the leverage of post-16 education and the contribution that it can make to transformative opportunities for young people. Many of our parents are economic migrants, the majority from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the power of education is a very tangible force to them. They are committed to upward social mobility for their children and it is our mission to assist those aims. We feel privileged and committed to working with this body of parents and we try to be mindful of the economic disadvantage in which many of our families find themselves – we hope SFX is a safe haven where we can provide an environment where able young people can fulfil their educational potential. This is a challenge – but a very rewarding one.

The College was most recently inspected in January 2018 and was judged to be overall “good”. We aim to be outstanding and are not complacent in anything we do. Hard work, perseverance and consistency of approach is a watchword at the College. We have been focussing on raising value-added outcomes at A level and were pleased to see this making a clear movement forward in summer 2018. Our general applied outcomes are generally excellent.

Our headline success rates place us in the median of Sixth Form Colleges although our intake is in many respects closer to that of General Further Education, particularly with respect to our A level intake. With respect to “all colleges” indicators show that we are performing above the average benchmarks for success and pass rates are high, in a high achieving Sixth Form sector.

In the last five years we have benefited from grant support to invest in capital and infrastructure works and we have been busy making the estate both more attractive and more energy efficient. We have also managed to build some extensions to the current buildings to provide additional classrooms and additional canteen and study space. This year we are benefiting from the Strategic College Improvement Fund, in partnership with St. Dominic’s Sixth Form College in Harrow. We shall continue to secure investment wherever we can to enhance the student and staff experience. Financially we are in a sound position, our financial health is “good” with significant reserve in the bank, however one cannot stress enough the impact which a significant cut in grant income is making, and we have had to be creative and determined in delivering many things more efficiently. We have tried to protect the breadth of the curriculum and the staff members’ employment position.



Education through a Christian Community





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CATHOLIC MISSION

The College sets out to serve the needs of all who wish to be part of its community. We welcome students of other or no faith and we celebrate those differences and exploit the learning opportunities it provides. Whilst we make many accommodations to serve the needs of our individual students, we also require that individuals recognise that we all must be mindful of the greater needs of the community and that tenet is a significant part of the induction of new students to the community. We want our students to recognise and respect difference and to approach it positively. The energy of our young people is palpable and our objective is that they should be happy and productive leaders in the future.

THE ROLE

It should be reiterated that there is not a Vice Principal role at the College. Instead there is a model of more distributed leadership with two Associate Principals and this role of Associate Principal Business and Resources fulfilling roles in: resource management, corporate services and data control; pastoral care and education; curriculum management. I am very responsive to people swapping and assimilating roles as they go through their career development. This role is a great opportunity to get close to the role of Principal, while still benefiting from the peer expertise of other experienced professionals in the Senior Team. The current members are all team players – we share ideas and challenges freely and we (try to!) avoid a hierarchical approach. Personally, I am very committed to managing and developing talent right across the organisation and I seek to demystify the work of the Principal for others who might be considering stepping up to the role in future.

Stella Flannery
Principal



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