

# Sir John Cass's Foundation & Red Coat Church of England Secondary School

Stepney Way, Stepney, London E1 0RH

**Inspection dates** 6–7 October 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, supported by the other senior leaders, has driven improvement relentlessly to bring about rapid change. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are now effective. These are supported by excellent partnership working with parents and outside agencies. At the same time, leaders have ensured that high-quality teaching and outstanding achievement have been sustained.
- The governing body knows the school well. It is very supportive but also rigorous in checking and challenging leaders to ensure high quality of welfare and outcomes for pupils.
- Personal development, welfare and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about their learning, are keen to achieve well and conduct themselves with great maturity. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Attendance is above the national average.
- The curriculum is especially well designed so that pupils learn in pathways that are best suited to their needs.
- Pupils' outstanding outcomes in Key Stages 3 and 4 are directly attributable to the outstanding quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and progress tracking.
- Teachers plan their lessons exceptionally well so that they build pupils' secure knowledge and understanding in interesting and varied ways. By the end of Year 11, pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics and consistently achieve above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able all achieve exceptionally well.
- The school's inclusive ethos, focus on British values and outstanding promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are good rather than outstanding. This is because teaching in the sixth form is not outstanding, and not enough of the small number of pupils who enter the sixth form without a grade C in English and mathematics achieve this level when they resit these examinations. In some advanced level lessons, teachers do not consistently develop the academic subject skills pupils need to ensure the highest achievement.
- Those on vocational courses achieve exceptionally well. All pupils, including those who are new to the school, are well cared for and have in-depth awareness of how to stay safe online.

## **Full report**

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching in the sixth form is outstanding, by:
  - making sure that all pupils on academic courses achieve as well as those following vocational subjects
  - developing pupils' advanced level subject skills needed in order for them to perform at the highest level
  - improving the support given to those who have not achieved a grade C or higher in GCSE English and mathematics so that they are more successful in their retakes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher has shown determined and collaborative leadership, ensuring that the school is a safe place where everyone is valued. He has skilfully built a team of committed senior leaders, empowering them to take on key aspects of the school's work and drive improvement. Leaders have maintained the academic excellence of pupils and the school's inclusive ethos. They have risen to the challenges of the past year with enthusiasm, delivering rapid and sustainable change and demonstrating that there is much capacity for even further improvement. Despite the many changes, staff are proud to be part of the school and value the support they receive.
- The school's latest development plan firmly focuses leaders on the next steps in the school's journey. It is based on rigorous self-evaluation and a relentless pursuit of excellence. However, pupils' academic achievement at A level, while improved, is not well enough above the national average to make it outstanding. This is because teaching is not outstanding on some of these courses. Furthermore, outcomes for GCSE English and mathematics retakes in the sixth form are too low, although better in 2015 than 2014.
- The leadership of safeguarding is exemplary. Clear roles of responsibility and accountability have been established for different aspects of safeguarding. These include recruitment, child protection, online safety and preventing extremism. All of these are overseen by the headteacher and are clear to all. Other senior leaders are also doing everything they can to ensure pupils' safety and welfare, creating a culture of shared responsibility and vigilance. Since the last inspection, pupils, staff, leaders and governors have undertaken extensive training in all aspects of safeguarding including on the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. This has ensured that all school members, including pupils, have a clear understanding of potential risks, and can spot and report early signs.
- When concerns arise, use of the rapid support system by leaders ensures that help is provided in partnership with parents and outside agencies, as necessary. These key messages about safeguarding are shared very well with parents and carers through workshops, newsletters, an information booklet and direct contact. The new policies and systems are regularly reviewed and improved to ensure that the new high standards are maintained. The school is now rightly seen by the local authority as a model of good practice. Parents, staff and pupils all say that the school is a safe place.
- The outstanding curriculum is balanced with a strong focus on English and mathematics alongside a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. Pupils are guided to appropriate pathways which ensure equality of opportunity and the best life chances through academic success. All pupils take part in a wide range of after-school activities, including many that are performing arts or sport related. These successfully promote the school's ethos of inclusion and belonging. Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore freely and learn about issues that affect their lives, both now and in the future. These include the revised programmes of personal, health and social education, the equalities group, debating society and faith groups. Carefully vetted visiting speakers, special events, trips and visits also raise aspirations and broaden pupils' educational experiences.
- The quality of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding and at the heart of the school's work. Learning about other faiths, cultures and fundamental British values is central in helping pupils to have a sense of community and respect for diversity. High expectations of mutual respect and courtesy promote the school's inclusive values. Daily routines such as the use of classical music to mark lesson times, assemblies and the morning prayers provide shared moments and build a sense of belonging. These aspects, coupled with pupils' academic achievement and personal development, prepare pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. A parent exemplified this by saying, 'I am overwhelmed by what the school has done for my child'.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are of the highest quality in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. A significant contributory factor is teachers' consistency in applying the school's expectations for teaching, such as the shared development of pupils' literacy, assessment systems and challenge for pupils of all abilities. Close tracking of each pupil's progress based on accurate assessment information contributes to pupils' outstanding achievement over time. Accuracy of assessment and carefully targeted help is provided for those with additional needs, or at risk of falling behind, ensuring that these pupils achieve equally well.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment in the main school is outstanding. Senior leaders routinely monitor the quality of teaching and provide accurate and developmental feedback to staff. They use this information exceptionally well to sustain and develop the teaching quality. As a result, staff are positive about the support they receive and those new to the profession are helped and guided very

effectively into their teaching careers.

- The considerable amount of additional pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is closely tracked. The school assessment and self-review cycles ensure that it has the maximum impact on pupils' learning, well-being and personal development. All staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in ensuring that any gaps in the performance of disadvantaged pupils are narrowed. The school has a wide range of approaches, such as 'The Rocket Group' in Year 7, academic support tutors in every year, and funding for the outdoor centre in the Brecon Beacons.
- The school has clear and precise systems in place to manage the performance of staff in line with the school's pay policy. Appraisal and pay awards are closely linked to pupils' progress and literacy development and to the quality of teaching. These are regularly assessed by senior leaders. Any underperformance is rigorously tackled. Staff who wish to develop their careers are supported to do so through, for example, the National College for Teaching and Leadership courses for aspiring and new middle and senior leaders.
- The local authority has continued to provide support for the school while recognising that the improvements in safeguarding and governance are now firmly embedded practices. Consequently, the frequency of monitoring through the targeted improvement group has reduced.

#### ■ **The governance of the school**

- The new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, very well supported by a small cohort of others, have worked tirelessly and with determination to bring about change and ensure that effective governance is in place. Other members have brought expertise to the governing body which is used highly effectively to support the work of the school. Regular training ensures that governors are well-equipped to ask meaningful and challenging questions in holding leaders to account and driving improvement.
- Governors now have clear individual roles. This includes links with different subject areas including mathematics and modern foreign languages, as well as remits such as special educational needs or safeguarding. They make regular visits into school to see the different aspects of the school's work for themselves, such as the school recruitment systems and the Year 12 induction programme. As a result, all governors are now very well informed about the school's work and understand the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. These include the areas previously identified for improvement.
- Governors have established a full programme for reviewing the school's policies and procedures. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met and the school's systems are effective. They have been particularly vigilant in checking the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Governors have undertaken training in analysing school assessment information. They keep a close watch on the progress being made by pupils across the school as well as the performance of particular groups such as disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able. Through their visits and discussions with senior leaders, governors have a good grasp of the quality of teaching and the link to pupils' outcomes. Consequently, they are ensuring that the performance management of staff is linked to pupil progress and that their success is rewarded.
- Governors, representatives from the Diocese and the local authority continue to work with the Foundation Trust on the reconstitution of the governing body.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **is outstanding**

- Pupils benefit from high quality and energetic teaching across the curriculum. Teachers' enthusiasm and commitment for every pupil to succeed is infectious, creating highly positive classroom learning environments.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They use this to pitch their teaching accurately, providing challenge which meets pupils' learning needs and abilities. Teachers use their in-depth knowledge of pupils to plan highly structured lessons. This enables pupils to build their knowledge and understanding over time and make exceptionally good progress. However, teaching in the sixth form, while improved, is good rather than outstanding because teachers in academic subjects do not always ensure that pupils develop the higher level skills needed at advanced level.
- Pupils find activities interesting and varied. Resources for teaching are well designed and used effectively across all lessons supporting effective teaching.

- Teachers capitalise well on pupils' positive attitudes and get lessons off to a swift start. They move learning at pace while also giving pupils time to reflect and develop their thinking. Within lessons, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to provide clear explanations when pupils are unsure. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' learning, provide challenge, and deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Strong working relationships between teachers and pupils create an open culture so that pupils feel able to ask and seek help should they need it. Pupils report that teachers willingly provide extra help and support and are always there for them.
- Across the school, all teachers develop pupils' literacy as an integral part of their teaching. In particular, there is strong focus on subject vocabulary, reading aloud and extended writing which contribute well to pupils' successful learning over time. This very effectively supports higher achievement in the most able as well as for those who are learning to speak English as an additional language or have below average levels of literacy.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This is due to high-quality teaching, well-planned support and, for some, help from teaching assistants.
- The school has a clear system in place for marking and assessing pupils' work, which teachers use with an exceptional level of consistency. They provide helpful comments on pupils' work, correcting errors and misconceptions well. Furthermore, teachers routinely provide more detailed feedback and set additional challenges for pupils. In most instances, dialogue between pupils and teachers is of high quality. Pupils find this helpful and it clearly contributes well to their learning and progress.
- The school has high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work. Most pupils and teachers rise to this challenge, with books showing high quality work. However, in a few instances, this is not the case and teachers do not pick up weak presentation.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of teaching and the progress that their children make.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are articulate, proud of their school and keen to participate in the many and varied activities offered. They are highly positive about their learning and responsive to the high aspirations set by the school.
- Pupils value their education, seeing how this will help them fulfil their potential and be well prepared for the future. They appreciate that successful learning requires commitment, responsibility, strong communication skills, a willingness to ask questions or seek help, and a desire to achieve well. Consequently, concentration levels are high and pupils work with purpose and determination in lessons.
- Pupils' well-being and welfare is at the heart of the school. They thrive in the school's caring and welcoming ethos where everyone is valued. The school's exceptional focus on British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by developing in them a strong sense of community and belonging. Pupils continue to benefit from the daily prayer, assemblies and opportunities across the curriculum to learn and reflect together about different faiths and cultures. These, together with the revised personal, social, health and economic education programme, help pupils become active citizens both within school and the wider community.
- The school has set a very open culture where pupils can raise and discuss any issues. Links with the Stonewall Trust are used to bring memorable experiences such as a recent visit by Sir Ian McKellen. Consequently, pupils speak with confidence about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobia. They show exemplary tolerance and respect for each other, regardless of faith, background and ability. The use of derogatory or inappropriate language is extremely rare.
- Over the past year, the school has acted swiftly to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate awareness of how to stay safe online and how to spot the signs and symptoms of bullying or possible radicalisation in their peers. They are clear about the importance of reporting any concerns in order for the right help to be put in place, if needed. The school's new 'moderate pathways' workshop is proving instrumental in providing a forum for debate, and for helping vulnerable pupils who may be at risk to explore their thoughts and ideas in a constructive and supportive way. Parents value the support the school provides to keep their children safe online and from potential dangers of extremist views. Pupils and staff are confident in the school's ability to listen and be responsive to concerns.
- Pupils are keen to make positive contributions to school and the wider community, for example, as school ambassadors or in providing help for local homeless people. The school council listens to pupils' views and

takes their ideas to senior leaders, most recently in developing ideas for improving facilities in the outside social areas. Pupils of all ages say that the new arrangements of mixed playgrounds have quickly become embedded and are improving their social skills. Parents also share this view.

- From the time they join the school, usually in Years 7 or 12, pupils' aspirations are raised about what they can do and achieve. Throughout their time at the school, pupils are provided with very good advice and guidance through, for example, work experience and career days enabling them to find out for themselves about the choices open to them. As a result, almost all pupils become highly ambitious to continue their studies at post-16, either within the school or with other providers.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have outstandingly positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. They show courtesy and respect for the diversity of their peers and staff and act with great maturity.
- The headteacher sets high expectations for behaviour. These are replicated by staff and clearly explained to pupils. Consequently, they understand what is expected of them. They are clear about the sanctions to be taken if these standards are not met, which they view as fair. Pupils respond to these exceptionally well. As a result, a calm and purposeful culture and ethos for learning and mutual respect pervades classrooms, corridors and social areas. This makes a significant contribution to their progress because it enables teachers to make the best use of time in lessons for learning.
- Staff are highly consistent in the management of behaviour and are sensitive to pupils' learning and personal needs. Rapid support is provided for any pupil that experiences difficulty with their behaviour, through the strong pastoral system and the school's learning support unit. The learning support unit provides continuity in learning while pupils receive the help and support they may need should they be at risk of exclusion.
- Relationships throughout the school are very positive. Older pupils, particularly those in the sixth form, help out younger ones and provide first class role models. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and recognise that staff are working to help them achieve their potential.
- Pupils attend well because they see this as an important ingredient for successful learning. There is rigorous follow up of any whose attendance falls below the school's high expectations. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well below the national average. Pupils' exceptional punctuality to school and lessons reflects their keenness to learn and prepares them well for the world of work.

## Outcomes for pupils

## are outstanding

- By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils make exceptionally good progress from their starting points. They develop excellent knowledge and understanding in most subjects across the curriculum. For several years, the school has consistently ensured that a well above average proportion of pupils gain five or more GCSEs at A\* to C, including English and mathematics. This was also the case in many other subjects including science and modern foreign languages – both core academic subjects.
- Published information on pupils' progress in 2014 showed that by the end of Key Stage 4, the proportions making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics were higher than national averages. The large proportion of disadvantaged pupils also achieved well. Better than national rates of progress for this pupil group resulted in the attainment gap further narrowing between themselves and their peers. The school's analysis of the 2015 GCSE results indicates that this gap has narrowed further because this group of pupils made slightly better progress than their peers. It also shows higher performance than in 2014 of the most-able pupils, with almost all achieving the highest grades.
- The school's assessment information shows excellent progress rates for most current pupils across Key Stages 3 and 4 over time. Scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects also indicates strong and consistent progress rates. Progress rates for the different groups and cohorts across the school, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are equal. This is due to high-quality teaching and careful tracking of pupil progress. Boys and pupils with English as an additional language all make exceptionally good progress. The school ensures that all pupils can achieve equally well.
- Carefully planned support is in place to help those who need to develop their reading, writing and communication skills. School-wide programmes such as 'Drop Everything and Read' develops reading and improves literacy for pupils of all abilities. This strong focus on basic skills, coupled with the high outcomes by the end of Key Stage 4, means that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The school's provision for pupils in the sixth form is good. Academic outcomes improved in 2015 at A level and were above the national average, but not as significantly above as at the end of Key Stage 4.
- A small proportion of pupils who join the sixth form do so without a GCSE grade C or above in English and mathematics. Provision is made for these pupils to secure grades C or above in these subjects. However, the proportion achieving this, while much improved in 2015 from 2014, is still too low. The school recognises this and plans to provide more focused support for these pupils to help them achieve the higher grade.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Pupils commented very positively about the variety of activities and how teachers plan lessons to build their knowledge and understanding. Teachers use their subject knowledge well. However in some academic subjects, they do not always hone their teaching to develop pupils' advanced level subject skills, such as mathematical problem solving in physics. Furthermore, at times, teachers provide fewer opportunities for pupil engagement than in the vocational classes. Nonetheless, there is a strong focus on developing literacy through, for example, development of subject vocabulary and regular opportunities for extended writing in all sixth form lessons.
- The new and well-designed curriculum pathways are ensuring better success at AS-level with the highest results recorded for the school in 2015. This is because pupils are following courses better suited to their needs and starting points. Consequently, retention rates improved again in 2015 with a higher proportion entering Year 13 from Year 12 than in 2014. Leaders have been successful in reducing the variations in performance between, and within, subjects and in increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve the highest grades in academic subjects. Leaders are now working to improve the performance in the small number of subjects where variation remains. Pupils make outstanding progress on vocational courses with outcomes well above national averages.
- Sixth form leaders are determined in their pursuit of excellence. New programmes for pupils' personal, social, health and economic education are having a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils have a strong sense of community and fellowship. They develop an excellent knowledge and awareness of British values and what it means to be a responsible citizen in modern Britain.
- The school leaders' work ensures sixth form pupils' safety is excellent. Pupils are given in-depth and regular guidance about how to keep themselves safe online and from extremism. Pupils new to the sixth form are inducted thoroughly and also gain a detailed understanding of how to stay safe and quickly become integrated into all aspects of school life.
- The 'swipe card' system ensures that the school knows the whereabouts of pupils at all times. This also allows them opportunities to develop independence through varied starting times and permission to go off site at lunchtimes. Pupils say 'the school knows where we are at all times', and that there is 'no place to hide'. Any absence is rapidly followed up by both tutors and class teachers who take care to ensure that pupils catch up on missed work. This high level of care is much appreciated by the pupils who recognise the commitment of staff to ensure their safety and success.
- The first cohort of pupils entered for the extended project, which builds independence, research and critical thinking skills, achieved well in 2015 with 18 of the 20 securing the highest grades. This year, building on the success of the first cohort, 120 are undertaking the extended project.
- Pupils in the sixth form benefit from strong academic and personal support and guidance. New systems to provide more effective support from their form tutors are now embedded. Pupils requiring additional support participate in a highly effective mentoring programme. They also have additional tutorial time to help and support them with subject catch-up, literacy, study or organisational skills. Attendance rates are high.
- Excellent careers advice, the annual higher education fair and guidance and opportunities for work experience at the end of Year 12 help pupils to make choices for when they leave the sixth form. This, coupled with pupils' high aspirations and better academic success, is ensuring that almost all pupils proceed into education, employment or training when they leave. In 2015, almost 90% of pupils gained university places.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100977
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10003991

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1504
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	519
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Trevor Critchlow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Haydn Evans CBE
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7790 6712
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sjcr.net">www.sjcr.net</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@sjcr.net">info@sjcr.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9–10 October 2014

## Information about this school

- Sir John Cass's Foundation & Red Coat Church of England Secondary School is a larger than average-sized secondary school. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and many speak English as an additional language. The largest ethnic group is of Bangladeshi heritage.
- The school's sixth form is larger than average, with around half of pupils who join in Year 12 joining from other local state-funded and independent schools.
- The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or education health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional government funding through the pupil premium is around three quarters of those in key stages 3 and 4; this is well above the national average.
- A very small number of pupils have transferred to the Tower Hamlets Pupil Referral Unit in order to meet their individual needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- When the school was inspected in October 2014, it was judged to require special measures. Inspectors made two monitoring visits in January and July 2015 to evaluate the school's progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the report.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to 39 lessons to observe teaching, eight of which were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work, visited lessons to consider the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs, listened to some Year 8 pupils read, joined tutorial times and spent time in the school's social areas.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject and pastoral leaders, two groups of staff including those new to teaching, a group of parents and representatives from the Diocese and the local authority. Telephone discussions were also held with the local authority safeguarding team.
- Two meetings were held with members of the governing body which included discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors met formally with five groups of pupils as well as speaking informally to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school development plan and self-evaluation of its effectiveness; records of monitoring teaching; and records of pupils' attainment, progress and behaviour. They also scrutinised the school's policies, systems and records in relation to safeguarding, including those for the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.
- The inspectors took account of the 24 responses on the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's parental survey completed in May 2015.
- The questionnaire returns from 134 staff were analysed.

## Inspection team

Angela Corbett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Carmen Rodney	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemarie McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector
Kanjawit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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