

Inspection of a good school: St John Payne Catholic School, Chelmsford

Patching Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4BS

Inspection dates:

16–17 October 2019

Outcome

St John Payne Catholic School, Chelmsford continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are taught in a caring and supportive environment. Pupils and staff describe it as being part of a community and some a 'big family'. Pupils are safe, well cared for and valued. Pupils know that staff are there for them, especially the pastoral team. Pupils say their doors are always open for pupils.

The school is calm and orderly. Behaviour in lessons is good because pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. Any off-task behaviour is swiftly dealt with by teachers. Pupils told us there are occasional incidents of poor behaviour at break and lunch times. Staff are quick to take action when this is the case.

All staff want the very best for pupils. This means teaching them well, to get good examination results and preparing them to be well informed, active citizens. The school ethos encourages pupils to be thoughtful, kind and respectful. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and safe and about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Pupils support events in the local community such as raising money for the Chelmsford homeless.

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to achieve well. Pupils study the full national curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Key stage 4 pupils are offered the full range of English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. Yet, the proportion of pupils who take the EBacc is well below average. This is because the numbers of pupils studying a modern foreign language is low. Languages has not been popular with pupils. The new head of department is improving pupils' experience in the subject by making lessons more interesting to improve the take-up at GCSE.

In most subjects the curriculum is coherently planned. Staff understand what pupils are to learn and how learning will be assessed. This is especially strong in English, geography and physical education (PE). In subjects where leaders are new, the curriculum is still

being refined.

Teachers plan lessons well to develop pupils' subject knowledge. Teachers are good at making links between topics; for example, making the link between types of soil and erosion. Pupils told us 'teachers make sure we've learned something before we start something new'. Teachers make effective use of assessment to check pupils' understanding.

Sixth-form students receive excellent provision. Students are mature and motivated to succeed. They are proud of their school and take an active role in supporting younger pupils, for example acting as mentors for key stage 3 pupils. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and a secure understanding of examination requirements. As a result, the proportion of students who attain higher grade A levels meets and often exceeds the national average.

Learning support assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, teachers often set work that is too easy or difficult for pupils with SEND. Teachers need more training in how to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND achieve their best.

A small number of key stage 4 pupils attend alternative education placements. The provision meets their needs well. Pupils take appropriate qualifications, receive support with their behaviour and achieve well. Staff check on the pupils' achievement and well-being regularly. Currently there is no leader who has oversight of this provision.

Pupils achieve well in school. Year 11 pupils gain the qualifications they need to continue their education or go on to training or employment. A high proportion of Year 11 pupils decide to stay on in the sixth form.

Leaders have created a culture of respect and tolerance. The Catholic values are at the heart of the school but the beliefs of pupils from all faiths are respected.

Staff turnover is low as staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued and appreciate the steps leaders have taken to make their workload manageable.

Governors play an active part in the life of the school. They have amended their practices so they are more effective in monitoring the work of leaders. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is given high importance in the school. There is a well-established culture of safeguarding. Staff are trained annually in the latest guidance. They know the pupils well and are quick to identify and report any signs that suggest a young person may be at risk. The safeguarding team use their expertise to work with external agencies to provide effective support for pupils.

Pupils are confident that there are adults they can talk to and who will help them if they have a problem. Pupils speak highly of the support provided by the pastoral care team.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils with SEND receive good support from learning support assistants because they know the needs of the pupils well. The range of particular needs which pupils have has changed over time. The school needs to make sure that staff are trained in how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- In most subjects the curriculum is well planned to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school needs to continue to support new subject leaders so that curriculum plans make it clear what pupils know, remember and can do.
- The school ensures that pupils in alternative education provision are safe, attend regularly and are achieving well. However, information about the pupils is held by different members of staff. The school needs to ensure that there is a member of staff with oversight of all aspects of provision in order to evaluate its impact.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 12–13 January 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	115238
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10088726
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
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	1,147
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Barber
Headteacher	Thomas Coen
Website	www.sjp.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 January 2016

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for one year. He was deputy headteacher at the time of the previous inspection.
- This is a Catholic faith school in the Diocese of Brentwood. The school admits pupils from other religions. The school received its last Section 48 diocesan report in November 2017. The school uses Keys Co-operative Academy Trust, Heybridge to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of English, science, modern foreign languages, geography and PE. Inspectors discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and

spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum. Inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders when visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work.

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and reviewed processes and procedures related to safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour as they moved between lessons and at break and lunchtime, where they gathered the views of pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 88 members of staff who completed the school's own questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account the 188 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the 88 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Batty	Ofsted Inspector

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