

# Inspection of St Catherine's College

Priory Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 7BL

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Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and optimistic. They are incredibly supportive of the headteacher and the changes he and leaders have made since he started in September 2018. Pupils say the school is a very different place now.

Pupils feel safe. They are well supported by adults. Pupils appreciate the help they are given by their teachers, so they can achieve well in the subjects they study. A pupil spoke for many when they said, 'I like everything about this school.'

Leaders set very high standards for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respect these expectations. As a result, behaviour is good in this school and classrooms are calm and purposeful.

Most pupils are confident that bullying is dealt with by adults in the school. They feel that on the rare occasions bullying occurs, staff support them well to resolve it and to move forward.

Pupils are achieving better by the end of key stage 4 than in recent years. There is still some work to do to improve this further. Leaders are determined to help more pupils achieve the grades they need to be successful in their futures.

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

Leaders have rapidly improved the school. They have made effective changes to how they and staff help pupils learn. Staff are very positive about the culture of high ambition and success created by leaders. They are loyal to the headteacher and feel listened to by leaders. There is powerful team camaraderie present in this school. Staff work very well together to help pupils fulfil their potential.

Subjects, such as geography and physical education (PE), are planned well and delivered in a coherent and logical manner. Leaders are taking the right steps to ensure that this is the case for the few remaining subjects where improvements are still needed.

Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons to engage and challenge pupils to learn and remember more. For example, as part of key stage 3 English, the curriculum creates stimulating ways for teachers and pupils to discuss together the use of symbolism in the book 'The Lord of the Flies'. Most teachers check that pupils understand what they have been taught before moving on.

Leaders help staff to develop their skills and knowledge through well-considered professional development opportunities. Staff apply this learning effectively to the lessons and activities they provide for the pupils.

Leaders have not adapted the curriculum well enough to ensure that all the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met fully.

Leaders do not have a strong enough overview of how ambitious the curriculum is for pupils with SEND. As a result, not all pupils with SEND achieve the outcomes of which they are capable.

Pupils have many planned opportunities to think about their own and others' personal development. The recently introduced 'life skills' programme of study is well designed to promote pupils' awareness of issues and to help pupils develop their understanding and appreciation of diversity. Consequently, pupils have a mature understanding of the many differences that people have. This is evidenced in the pupil-led groups that meet after school to support and raise awareness of equality for those within the school community and beyond. Pupils are also active in supporting charities, such as a school-wide commitment to provide aid for local food banks.

Leaders' work to support disadvantaged pupils is helping this group achieve better across the subjects they study. For example, teachers plan interesting activities to help pupils learn about the wider world. Pupils read influential authors' views, including about the Second World War to widen their historical knowledge.

Trust leaders and governors are well placed to champion and challenge school leaders to continue improving the school. They are highly ambitious for all pupils to succeed to the best of their abilities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put in place robust systems and procedures to support vulnerable pupils. They are well trained and knowledgeable about their safeguarding duties. Staff know how to report any concerns they have about a child's safety or welfare. They know that leaders will deal with these promptly to provide appropriate support for these pupils.

Leaders work well with other agencies, so pupils and families in need are assisted properly.

Leaders carry out the appropriate checks before employing staff to work with children. Governors often visit the school to check that the safeguarding systems remain effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have taken some effective steps to design the curriculum to give pupils the knowledge they need to succeed in the future. However, not all subjects are as well designed and planned as they could be. Leaders need to ensure that they continue to address this for the few remaining subjects that need further

development, so that pupils build on the knowledge they have learned previously.

- Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum for pupils with SEND is adapted to meet the needs of pupils in this vulnerable group more fully. Leaders need to ensure that this happens swiftly, so that all pupils with SEND achieve as well as they can.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143035
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111154
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,072
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Archdeacon Luke Irvine-Capel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Solomon Berhane
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stcatherines.college">www.stcatherines.college</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up his post in September 2018.
- The school uses a number of alternative providers. Some pupils attend part-time courses at College Central (part of SABDEN Multi Academy Trust). Others study a personalised learning course provided by SABDEN on the same site and also at East Sussex College, Eastbourne.
- As a school with a religious ethos, the school was last inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2016.
- St Catherine's College converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2016. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged good overall.

## Information about this inspection

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

- We met with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, subject teachers and pupils. An inspector also met with a representative group of staff.
- The lead inspector met with a governor and spoke to a group of trustees and the

chair of governors on the telephone.

- The lead inspector reviewed the school’s website, publicly available pupil performance information and other relevant school and trust documentation.
- We considered the 114 replies to Ofsted’s Parent View survey, including free-text responses, the 180 pupil survey responses and the 84 staff survey responses.
- We reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including checking the single central record and safeguarding policies. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader.
- An inspector spoke to a representative of the diocese by telephone. An inspector spoke to leaders of the alternative providers used by the school.
- We observed behaviour at breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: English; science; personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education; art and design; modern foreign languages; mathematics; physical education (PE); history and geography. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to groups of pupils and met with teachers.

### **Inspection team**

Dylan Davies, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Sue Bullen	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Aimee Floyd	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Nicholas Simmonds	Ofsted Inspector

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