

Inspection of St Bartholomew's School

Andover Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6JP

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils recognise the very high expectations for their achievement. They strive to meet these, knowing that the school staff want the very best for them. Pupils welcome the thoughtful support and guidance that they receive. This includes help with their learning as well as care when they have any concerns or worries.

Pupils show kindness and respect to one another in lessons and around the school site. They feel safe, recognising that the majority of incidents of bullying are from some time ago. Leaders are resolute in ensuring that pupils and parents know how seriously they take the well-being and safety of the school community. The school's Personal Development Programme (PDP) reinforces this by giving pupils valuable time to debate issues around diversity and equality.

There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. As one pupil said, 'there is no wasted time at St Barts'. Pupils compete in many different sports. They can show their creativity through drama productions and exhibitions. The 'Changemakers' group meets regularly to discuss issues relevant to pupils and the community. Sixth-form students take on the leadership of many of these clubs, providing younger pupils with supportive role models.

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

Pupils achieve exceptionally well at St Bartholomew's. Leaders passionately believe in providing an education that helps everybody realise their full potential. There is a very ambitious and carefully planned curriculum embedded across the school. In key stage 3, pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need across a broad range of subjects. A high number of pupils continue to study the English Baccalaureate subjects until the end of Year 11. The majority of pupils learn a modern foreign language as part of this. Students in the sixth form welcome the rich variety of post-16 subjects on offer. They feel very well-prepared to continue their education on to university or to enter the world of work.

Staff are very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Faculty teams work closely to refine and implement excellent learning in the classroom. This means that all pupils, including the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum. The number of pupils with SEND attending the school has risen over recent years. Staff are provided with detailed information about the needs of pupils through specific plans and 'Spotlight' documents. This ensures that all staff know how to help the most vulnerable pupils achieve highly.

Leaders have put in place thoughtful learning journeys that help pupils see how their knowledge and skills will build over time. This can be seen in pupils' books as well as in visual diagrams displayed across the school. Teachers can quickly identify any gaps in pupils' learning because the content of the curriculum is so carefully

planned. Pupils can confidently apply knowledge from previous years to help them develop a stronger understanding of new topics. For example, pupils in Year 9 can confidently talk about the different gothic texts they had read in English in Years 7 and 8. They can use this to help them reflect on how different authors have portrayed dystopian societies in 20th century literature.

The school's curriculum extends through the many different clubs, residential and trips that are on offer. The well-planned PDP and assembly programme also helps pupils reflect on concepts such as individual liberty and respect. Tutor time sessions give pupils vital information about healthy relationships as well as the importance of positive physical and mental well-being. Pupils are provided with regular, unbiased careers advice that helps them explore the different career pathways open to them. Sixth-form students also benefit from talking to local businesses about the different apprenticeships that are on offer.

The behaviour of pupils reflects a determination to help everyone achieve their best. Lessons are engaging and purposeful. Pupils follow the school's clear rules and routines because they know what is expected of them. Sixth-form students show real determination in their learning through focused study in the school's library or designated study space. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and on time. When needed, the school's home tutor provides effective support for any pupils who are struggling to attend school.

Leaders and trustees are very mindful of the well-being of their staff as well as their pupils. This has been particularly valued by staff over the past year. Leaders are very proud of their whole school community and consistently share pupils' and staff's achievements with parents through the weekly 'Bartholonews'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are very aware of any potential risks facing their pupils. They address these head on by providing guidance through lessons and assemblies as well as sending useful information to parents. All staff are vigilant. Records of any concerns are detailed. These include follow up action that is swift and robust.

Pupils are confident that there is a member of staff who they can talk to about any concerns they have. The school's implementation of the 'Tell Someone' button, available on any computer in the school, has offered a further opportunity for pupils to ask for support.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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	137465
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10200881
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1909
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	554
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catie Colston
Headteacher	Julia Mortimore
Website	www.stbarts.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of board of trustees, including the chair.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, history, science, modern foreign languages and art. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the 308 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 205 free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential survey for staff as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding leaders, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with governors.

Inspection team

Aimee Floyd, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Neil Strowger	Ofsted Inspector
Beverley Murtagh	Ofsted Inspector
James Rouse	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bullen	Ofsted Inspector

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