

Inspection of a good school: Saint George Catholic Voluntary Aided College Southampton

Leaside Way, Swaythling, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 3DQ

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

Outcome

Saint George Catholic Voluntary Aided College Southampton continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very friendly school, and pupils enjoy coming in each day. Pupils' kindness towards each other is underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos and their 'ASPIRE' values of respect and positive relationships. Pupils and teachers often talk about the school as being 'like one big family'. They celebrate the range of different cultures and backgrounds that make up their school community. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens but they trust their teachers to resolve any issues quickly.

Pupils know that staff have high expectations of what they can achieve and this motivates them to work hard. Pupils take responsibility for their learning. They understand their next steps for improvement and know how to work independently when required. Pupils achieve extremely well and take pride in producing work of a consistently high standard.

Pupils and parents value greatly the way the school provides personal support and development opportunities as well as promoting academic success. Explaining why she chose to send her children to the school, one parent commented, 'I wanted them to have a fantastic education, and to know they are somewhere they are nurtured and really cared for as individuals.'

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

Leaders have achieved their aim that pupils' learning is 'enhanced' beyond what they need to know for examinations. Pupils enjoy their learning because leaders have planned a curriculum that is highly ambitious and engaging. Teachers plan lessons which build step by step from what pupils already know. This approach is informed by their precise and well-considered checks on pupils' learning. As a result, pupils typically comment on how lessons focus on exactly what they need to know. This approach is particularly

beneficial in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Relationships between pupils and teachers are characterised by mutual respect and high expectations. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are highly positive as they recognise the value of every lesson. Low-level disruption is extremely rare. Teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently, although they rarely have cause to use sanctions. Leaders quickly identify any pupils who are struggling to manage their behaviour and put in place effective support.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development through making sure there is a wide range of clubs and trips that pupils can attend. Many of these focus on sports and the performing arts. Others include outdoor skills, chess and philosophy. Participation is high because there is something for everyone. The newly established Afro-Caribbean society proudly celebrates diversity in the community. Pupils with SEND particularly appreciate the bespoke clubs designed to meet their needs.

Leaders have ensured that pupils are well prepared to make decisions about their futures through a comprehensive programme of careers education. Pupils feel inspired by opportunities to meet employers as well as take part in work experience. A key strength of the programme is the individual support and guidance pupils receive about their future career and education. All pupils benefit from this work and those who are disadvantaged or those with SEND are prioritised.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and those areas which are still developing. They are very knowledgeable about their responsibilities.

The school's caring culture extends to staff as well as pupils. Leaders are mindful of staff workload when making decisions. Staff appreciate that leaders are approachable and always take time to listen. Like pupils, staff enjoy coming to school and feel part of a strong team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are very well trained in safeguarding. As a result, they are knowledgeable about the potential risks pupils face in their lives, including when using social media. This helps staff to identify any concerns and provide extra support for pupils who need it. Pupils have no hesitation in identifying who they would go to if they felt worried about anything. They are rightly confident that they would be listened to and helped.

Leaders' records show that they follow up on concerns quickly and effectively to make sure children are safe. Governors understand their role in keeping children safe and perform this well, including through oversight of safer recruitment practices.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2011.

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	116507
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10203115
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	991
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anna McCormack
Headteacher	James Habberley
Website	www.stgcc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided school belonging to the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 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 held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. They also met with subject leaders, teachers and a range of non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice chair of governors. He also met with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils from each key stage.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including a range of written comments and direct communication from parents.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by talking to leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also scrutinised the single central record and sampled case files. Inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and those responsible for governance about this aspect of the school's work.
- Inspectors carried out four deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, languages and history. This involved meetings with leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers, and looking at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mary Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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