

Inspection of St Catherine's Catholic School

Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7QJ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They work hard and achieve well. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other, and respectful to their teachers and other adults. Lessons are very rarely affected by poor behaviour. Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens, but when it does, staff deal with it effectively. Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being, including their mental health. Pupils are safe and know who to talk to if they have any concerns.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum. This includes a carefully considered range of qualifications offered in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and the very calm atmosphere in classrooms mean that pupils are able to learn well. This in turn leads to strong outcomes for pupils.

Leaders have established a range of opportunities to develop pupils beyond the academic. For example, residential retreats, visits to museums, and a popular pupil-run garden in the school grounds all help to broaden pupils' experiences. A typical comment from a parent was, 'The school has been brilliant in supporting and nurturing my daughter academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually'.

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

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. This includes ensuring that pupils achieve well, and that their wider personal development is supported. The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have carefully considered the sequence of topics and key knowledge that is taught. This helps pupils to build on what they already know. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and carefully chosen tasks support pupils to learn new skills and develop their understanding. Teachers use a variety of ways to check pupils' understanding and to help pupils improve their work.

Leaders have ensured that there is a clear process for the identification and assessment of the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders make sure that teachers know what strategies will best support these pupils. This means that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. Reading is encouraged and celebrated across the school. Leaders set aside time for pupils to develop their literacy skills. However, those pupils who need additional help with their reading do not currently benefit from a structured programme to help them become fluent readers.

Pupils display very positive attitudes to their peers and their teachers. They behave very well in lessons and are calm and orderly around the school, including at social times. Pupils attend regularly, and a focus on punctuality means that they are rarely late to school or to lessons.

Pupils from Years 7 to 11 are taught how to keep safe, including how to stay safe online. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme provides pupils with guidance on developing healthy relationships, as well as how to look after their physical and mental well-being. Some pupils do not think that PSHE is delivered consistently well. Some teachers say they would benefit from further training and support so that they are well prepared to deliver these important lessons.

Pupils are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities in the school. A senior leadership team in Year 11, form captains, team captains, peer mentors, well-being ambassadors, prayer leaders and a team of 'eco-warriors' all provide extra opportunities for pupils. Many pupils attend clubs and activities after school. They enjoy residential retreats as well as trips to places of cultural significance. Leaders have ensured that pupils are well informed about careers so that they can make informed choices about their next steps in education or employment. A range of different education providers, as well as apprenticeship providers and local employers, come into school to provide information to pupils.

Leaders have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They know what needs to be prioritised. Staff say that they are well supported by leaders, and their well-being is taken seriously. Governors support and challenge school leaders appropriately. Governors know the school well and share school leaders' high ambitions for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. An experienced and skilled team ensures that all members of the school community, including governors, are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Pupils know who they can talk to if they have a concern. Staff are appropriately trained and know to report concerns, no matter how small. This culture of vigilance helps to keep pupils safe.

Leaders are proactive in working with other agencies, including children's social care and the police. This means that help for vulnerable pupils can be accessed quickly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils who need the most help with reading do not currently receive an appropriate programme of support. This means that these pupils are not able to make the rapid improvements necessary to help them to read fluently. Leaders should put effective strategies in place to support weaker readers so that they can access the full scope of the curriculum.
- Some staff do not feel confident to deliver the planned PSHE sessions. This means that sometimes these sessions are not effective, and pupils do not fully

benefit from the intended PSHE programme. Leaders should ensure that staff who deliver these sessions are appropriately trained and supported so that pupils gain a secure grasp of these important topics.

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	137681
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10240864
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1014
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anthony Moffat
Headteacher	Nicola Thompson
Website	www.stccg.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2019 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian ethos of the Roman Catholic denomination. It is in the Diocese of Southwark. The school's last section 48 inspection was in October 2021.
- There are currently no pupils placed in alternative provision. On occasions, the school makes use of Horizons Academy for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 and above with information about approved education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils. Inspectors also met with subject leaders for science and geography and looked at pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and with members of staff, as well as a range of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for SEND, careers education, behaviour and attendance, assessment and pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Southwark. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Hook	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Guy Forbat	Her Majesty's Inspector

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