

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Edmund's Catholic School

Arundel Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 1RX

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 June 2022

Outcome

St Edmund's Catholic School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are thriving at this school. They enjoy an excellent all-round education. Pupils achieve highly in the subjects they study and grow into confident and responsible individuals. The Catholic ethos creates a strong sense of family and community. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. The Trinity Centre does much good work to promote pupils' well-being and mental health.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very proud of it. Their conduct is impeccable as they live up to leaders' high expectations of behaviour. Pupils show respect and courtesy to their peers and the adults that work with them. Bullying is extremely rare and not tolerated in any form.

Many pupils take advantage of the extensive range of clubs and activities provided outside of their regular lessons, such as debating and water polo. Pupils have many opportunities to develop leadership and have their say in how the school is run.

Parents feel fortunate that their children attend this school. As one parent put it when they wrote via the Ofsted Parent View survey: 'This school is honestly the most wonderful place for children to grow up and experience the joy of learning and being a part of a huge family.'

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

Leaders have created an aspirational culture. There is high ambition for all. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Academic success and personal growth are both valued and celebrated.

The curriculum is broad, ambitious and carefully planned. It enables pupils to build their knowledge over time and to link their knowledge from different subjects. Subject leaders are passionate and well informed about their subjects. Across all subjects, they have mapped out what pupils need to learn to be successful. They have made sure that the

things that pupils need to learn build upon what they already know. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils successfully learn new words and grammar rules. This enables them to easily translate texts and write short paragraphs in French and Spanish.

Staff are enthusiastic about their subjects. They present information in clear and interesting ways. Staff use questions highly effectively to probe how well pupils have understood and check their understanding before moving on. Their teaching helps pupils to remember important ideas and information. In English, for example, pupils develop detailed knowledge of the key themes that link conflict poems. The calm atmosphere in lessons helps pupils to concentrate on their work and do their best.

Pupils with SEND receive excellent support. Staff use information about these pupils very well to adapt teaching to ensure they can access the work given to them. Pupils, including those with visual impairment, learn the same curriculum as their peers and achieve very well.

Reading has a high profile throughout the school. Pupils read regularly and develop a love of reading. Many pupils frequently use the school's attractive and well-stocked library. Pupils enjoy reading from a diverse range of authors and literature. Books have been carefully chosen to reflect the multicultural background of the pupils. Pupils who struggle with reading improve rapidly because of the effective support they receive from trained staff.

The curriculum extends far beyond the academic. The wide range of after-school clubs and activities are well attended and enjoyed by pupils. There are an impressive number of trips that deepen subject learning. Leaders go to great lengths to ensure that the most disadvantaged pupils are able to enjoy these opportunities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is part of the fabric of the school. Many pupils are actively involved in the school's chaplaincy. The recent 'walk for hunger' is an example of one of the many activities where pupils support charities and the local community.

Pupils are very well prepared for their futures. They benefit from a comprehensive careers information and guidance programme. Staff show pupils how what they learn in lessons may help them in the future.

Leaders support staff well. They have taken practical steps to manage staff's workload. Staff form a highly motivated team and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established safeguarding culture within the school. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and key staff are knowledgeable and highly experienced. They work persistently with staff, parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. The DSL keeps meticulous records of all concerns.

Leaders meet regularly with members of the local authority's children's services team to check on the welfare of vulnerable pupils. This is one of the many examples of excellent practice in safeguarding.

Leaders regularly update staff on safeguarding issues. Staff at all levels know what to do if they have concerns about pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in February 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 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	116505
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10211911
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,060
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Knight
Headteacher	Simon Graham
Website	www.saintedmunds.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with visual impairment. Currently, six pupils access this provision.
- A small number of pupils attend a registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and senior leaders. They also met with subject leaders, pastoral leaders and a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, physical education and science. 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. In addition, the lead inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- Inspectors met and observed lessons with the special educational needs coordinator and specialist teacher for the specially resourced provision.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and discussed some case studies of safeguarding referrals.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, diocese and local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey, responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses. Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally and informally to discuss their views of the school. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mark Bagust, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Dave Euridge

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022