

Inspection of a good school: St Cuthbert's Catholic High School

Berrys Lane, Sutton, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 3HE

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 July 2022

Outcome

St Cuthbert's Catholic High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for at St Cuthbert's. They are polite and friendly. Pupils from different backgrounds told inspectors that they feel accepted and respected. Staff get to know pupils and their families well. This helps to make everyone feel welcome.

Pupils appreciate the calm spaces, dedicated mentors and specialist counsellors available to them. Pupils are confident that staff will sort out their problems. Bullying is treated very seriously in school. Incidents are resolved quickly and effectively.

Pupils told inspectors that the best thing about the school is the education that they receive. They value the purposeful learning environment. Pupils focus on their work in class and cooperate well with one another. Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and academic success. Pupils have pride in their work.

Pupils access a wide range of activities and sporting opportunities. Many pupils enjoy the basketball, football, film and art clubs. The sustainability group is popular. It has worked closely with local organisations to tackle homelessness and reduce waste. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) participate in the full life of the school. They, and other pupils, represent the school in leadership positions.

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

Leaders have put together a coherent and well-ordered curriculum across all subjects. The curriculum identifies what pupils will learn and when this content will be taught. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced from Year 7 to Year 11. The curriculum is ambitious. Leaders have successfully increased the proportion of key stage 4 pupils who study subjects included in the English Baccalaureate.

In most subjects, teachers use a range of methods to improve pupils' recall of key knowledge. Teachers make sure that learning is relevant and engaging. However, in a few

subjects, pupils struggle to recall the knowledge that they have learned in the past. In these subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to make sure that pupils have understood their learning. At times, this limits teachers' ability to resolve pupils' misconceptions as well as they should.

Leaders ensure that pupils' reading skills are given a high priority. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers. Those pupils who need extra support with their reading are identified quickly and receive effective support to catch up quickly.

Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are identified quickly and effectively and that they receive effective help in lessons from well-trained staff. Teachers and staff understand how to meet these pupils' needs. They adapt activities accordingly so that pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as other pupils.

Leaders ensure that behaviour is well managed around the school. Teachers use sanctions and rewards appropriately. The school's inclusion base, The Melrose Centre, is used effectively to help pupils to manage their own behaviour. Leaders have high expectations for attendance. They continue to work effectively with pupils and their families if attendance needs to improve.

Leaders mostly prepare pupils well for life beyond school. Pupils receive strong support for their mental health in the school's own pastoral base, The Farne Centre. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and the dangers of risky behaviours in the school's personal development lessons, the 'PD Bitesize' programme' and dedicated whole-school days. Careers education is strong and effective. Pupils complete meaningful work experience. Leaders engage well with local charities to tackle racism and prejudice. Pupils respect difference. However, some pupils have a limited understanding of cultures, communities and beliefs that are different to their own.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that staff feel supported and that their workload is manageable. Staff appreciate leaders' approach to assessment and feedback. They value the staff yoga sessions on Fridays.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders identify and support pupils who need help effectively. They review the arrangements for these pupils regularly and thoroughly. Where necessary, leaders work productively with other agencies to make sure that pupils receive the support and protection that they need.

Leaders and staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They are well informed about the risks that pupils may face, including those in the local area. Staff are vigilant and identify and report concerns without delay.

Pupils know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. They receive age-appropriate lessons on issues such as consent and sexual harassment. Pupils know how

to get help if they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers' assessment strategies do not identify misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge. This leads to some pupils not achieving as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers' assessment strategies help them to identify the gaps in knowledge or misconceptions so that they can address these more quickly.
- Some pupils do not know enough about different communities, religions and cultures and the contributions that people from these different groups make to British society. This means that some pupils are not as prepared for life in Britain's multicultural society as they should be. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum contains effective opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of Britain's multicultural society so that they are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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	104835
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10226066
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	904
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Swanson
Headteacher	Catherine Twist
Website	www.stcuthberts.com
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders use two registered alternative provisions.

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 met with the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and other senior leaders throughout the inspection. Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. They also spoke to representatives from the Archdiocese and local authority, as well as the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject teachers.

- Through discussion with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors also looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks carried out before appointing staff.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils in lessons and at social times to consider their views on the school. Inspectors considered the well-being and behaviour of pupils during lesson visits and around the school. Inspectors spoke to the community police officer.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, including support staff, about behaviour, workload and well-being in the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also took account of the responses from the staff and pupil surveys and leaders' own surveys of pupils.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Anne Murphy

Ofsted Inspector

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