

Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic School

Old Charlton Road, Dover, Kent CT16 2QB

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Edmund's is an inclusive school. Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils to achieve their best. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond to requests from staff positively. In keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school, pupils are polite and show mutual respect towards others.

Pupils enjoy school and feel like they are part of a community. For instance, they rehearse happily together in preparation for the school production of 'Annie'. Pupils look out for each other and know that staff will help them if they are worried. Bullying is uncommon and leaders deal with it quickly if it occurs.

Pupils have opportunities to develop leadership skills as inclusion ambassadors, or through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, for example. Pupils raise awareness of online safety in the school community by delivering assemblies for their peers. There are some extra-curricular clubs, such as gardening and netball, on offer. Leaders organise exciting visits for activities week. For example, Year 7 pupils take a trip to a retreat.

Parents are very positive about the school, and what is on offer for pupils who go there. One parent stated: 'The school is really committed to the mental health and well-being of the pupils. Staff are extremely supportive.'

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

All leaders are ambitious for pupils at the school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work together with staff to ensure that pupils know their potential and have the confidence to achieve. Since the last inspection, leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of education for pupils. They have developed a broad and balanced curriculum that is well sequenced, so that pupils build on important knowledge over time. For example, in mathematics, pupils can explain how knowledge of algebra and trigonometry is built up over time to help them understand new learning. The number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate has increased but is lower than leaders want it to be. They have plans in place to improve this by increasing the number of pupils who study languages.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which they use to deepen pupils' understanding. Sometimes teachers do not select tasks that build well on pupils' existing knowledge. Therefore, pupils are not as challenged as they could be. Most teachers check what pupils know and remember effectively. Teachers adapt the curriculum to ensure that any gaps in learning are addressed. Leaders provide staff with clear information about how best to support pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils access the same curriculum as their peers, and achieve well.

Most pupils come to school ready to learn and show an interest in their learning. In art, for example, portfolios are well crafted, and pupils show a great deal of pride in their work. Pupils are mostly polite and well-behaved. However, when poor behaviour does occur, leaders do not accurately record what actions have been taken to manage this effectively. Leaders use many strategies to improve the persistent absence of pupils who do not attend regularly.

Leaders promote a love of reading across the school through daily literacy and reading in form time. Pupils who need more help to read well receive personalised and effective support, so that they become more fluent readers.

The personal development programme is well sequenced so that pupils learn about topics such as drugs and consent in an age-appropriate way. Pupils demonstrate that they enjoy giving back to the local community by taking part in a local 'clean-up'. In keeping with the school's Catholic ethos, pupils develop spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness by organising donations for those in need in Ukraine. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures in religious education and personal, social and health education.

Leaders take the time to listen to the views of staff and look after their well-being. Staff are proud to work at the school and are a united team. Leaders invest in their professional development so that they can do their jobs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Staff know how to identify and report concerns. Leaders act quickly, and work with outside agencies, so that pupils and their families get the support that they might need. Leaders know the risks that children in the local community might face. They educate pupils through the curriculum about issues such as county lines.

Leaders ensure that appropriate safety checks on new staff take place. Governors ensure that there is a culture of vigilance, and that leaders carry out their duties to keep children safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Learning activities do not always provide sufficient challenge in some subjects. This means that some pupils are not as engaged in their work as they should be. Leaders need to ensure that staff have access to subject-specific training so that lesson resources interest and develop all pupils, so that they know and remember more.

- Behaviour management records that outline leaders' actions to address poor behaviour are not well kept. This means that leaders cannot be sure that sanctions are applied consistently and fairly for all pupils. Leaders need to ensure that records clearly show, in chronological order, the events and interventions that take place before sanctions are applied.

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	141217
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10241518
Type of school	Secondary modern
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	546
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Powis
Principal	Grainne Parsons
Website	www.st-edmunds.com
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership and is within the Archdiocese of Southwark. The previous section 48 inspection took place on 11 and 12 December 2019.
- The school runs a breakfast club on site.
- The school uses two alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 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 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.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, Spanish, art and history. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Southwark. The lead inspector met with three representatives from the academy committee, the chair of trustees and the chief executive of the trust.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Zoë Harris, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anne Cullum

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Hemmings

Ofsted Inspector

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