

Inspection of Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Voluntary Academy

Bluestone Lane, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 9SD

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are extremely proud to be part of this highly ambitious school. The 'Sutton Way', which focuses on academic excellence, spiritual development and social excellence, permeates throughout.

Leaders have the highest expectations for their pupils. They ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Staff meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), exceptionally well.

Staff welcome pupils warmly into school each morning. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and respectful. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. They exhibit the school's values of kindness, love and respect consistently. Pupils feel safe here. They know who to talk to if they have a concern. Poor behaviour and bullying are never tolerated.

Pupils are highly focused in lessons and are keen to participate. They learn well because teaching is very effective. Teachers are highly knowledgeable. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are successful in many subjects.

Pupils welcome opportunities to extend their experiences beyond the academic curriculum. The vast majority participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school provides.

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

The headteacher has brought about phenomenal change across the whole school since her appointment. She and her senior team provide exceptional leadership. They lead by example, with sensitive and calm authority. They know what is best for their pupils.

The curriculum is very broad and ambitious. The vast majority of pupils now study the suite of subjects that make up the English baccalaureate in key stage 4. Subject leaders have carefully planned the curriculum so that pupils can learn new knowledge in a highly structured way. Lessons are extremely well sequenced to ensure that pupils build on what they have learned before.

Teachers plan lessons exceptionally well. They are aware that some pupils may not have had many opportunities to develop their wider knowledge of the world. They therefore provide pupils with additional information to supplement their learning. For example, in English, when pupils study *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, they also learn about life in Victorian England in order to understand the time period in which the text was written.

In lessons, teachers use a range of effective strategies and high-quality resources. They check pupils' understanding frequently so no one is left behind. This ensures

that pupils learn and remember what they have been taught. As a result, almost all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve exceptionally well.

Leaders recognise that reading and literacy are key to high achievement. Pupils read in every lesson and four times a week in form time. For pupils who are struggling with reading, staff provide them with extra support. This support is proving to be successful. In many subjects, pupils have regular opportunities to develop their extended writing skills.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning. They fully concentrate in lessons and low-level disruptive behaviour is rare. Pupils say that, on the odd occasion bullying happens, it is dealt with and resolved quickly. Pupils attend school regularly and punctuality levels are very high for all pupils. They love coming to school.

Leaders provide a highly effective personal, social, and health education programme. Pupils understand the importance of healthy relationships and good physical and mental health. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Where pupils may experience emotional and mental health problems, leaders provide bespoke support. For example, pupils can spend time with the school's well-being dogs. Pupils also have a strong understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. They accept that individuals can be themselves.

Leaders provide pupils with effective careers advice and guidance. Year 9 pupils were highly positive about the recent careers fair they attended. By the end of Year 11, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders have taken practical steps to manage staff workload and to look after their well-being. They prioritise high-quality professional development for all staff. Teachers are experts in their practice and other staff are highly competent in their roles. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school.

Governance is a real strength of the school. Governors know the school very well and visit regularly. They hold leaders strongly to account and ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant in maintaining a constant focus on the safety and well-being of pupils. They ensure that all staff receive regular training to ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible. They know the signs that could indicate a pupil is at risk of harm.

Pupils feel confident in reporting a concern to a member of staff. Staff are clear about the school's processes for reporting a concern. Leaders always act quickly to

put support in place for pupils. They work well with external agencies when necessary.

Leaders carry out thoroughly the required checks on the suitability of all staff to work at the school.

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.

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	146235
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256819
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	564
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Laura O'Leary
Website	www.robertsutton.srscmat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in September 2018.
- The new headteacher started in September 2019.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers.
- 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 and education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders, including leaders from the trust, curriculum and pastoral leaders, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspectors talked to pupils to find out their views on behaviour, safety and relationships.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and art. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders and teachers, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors also attended an assembly and visited tutor periods.
- Inspectors met with teachers and spoke to pupils formally and informally throughout the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed records of behaviour and bullying incidents, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors checked the school's approach to safeguarding, including recruitment and policy documents, and held a meeting with the designated safeguarding leader.

Inspection team

Nicola Walters, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Wakefield	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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