

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Augustine's Catholic High School

Stonepits Lane, Hunt End, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 5LX

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils excel in all parts of school life. Leaders have ensured that everyone achieves the best possible outcomes. This means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are incredibly well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. The vast majority of pupils live up to these expectations. Teachers have created a calm and focused environment in lessons. As a result, pupils' engagement and attitudes in lessons are exemplary. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they would report it if it happened, because they know that staff will deal with it.

Leaders have worked diligently to ensure that all pupils receive an excellent education and become caring active citizens. As a result, pupils prosper academically and are keen to help in the community. For example, pupils often visit local care homes. Here, the pupils read to the residents and give them cakes they have baked specially.

Pupils are proud to be a part of the school. This is because pupils feel supported by the staff, who they know they have their best interests at heart.

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

Pupils study a well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum which builds on knowledge over time. Subject leaders work collaboratively with leaders from the middle schools from which pupils join, to build a curriculum that builds logically on pupils' prior learning. This means when pupils start in Year 9, they transition smoothly into school life. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders have ensured that all SEND pupils have personalised strategies to meet their individual needs.

Staff use these well to break down knowledge into smaller and easier chunks to help pupils learn. All of this means that pupils, including those with SEND, make exceptional progress.

Teachers regularly check that pupils understand the work. When pupils do not understand, teachers stop and reteach. When this happens, teachers use their subject expertise to adapt the learning so that pupils know more and remember more. As a result, any gaps in knowledge are closed before pupils move on to new learning. Leaders have ensured that there is an increasing number of pupils studying the suite of subjects which makes up the English Baccalaureate.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with low reading ages are well supported. These pupils get extra help to develop their confidence when reading, writing and speaking. All pupils take part in 'drop everything and read' during English lessons. In addition, some pupils read for pleasure during social times. Leaders are working towards developing a love of reading across the school.

Leaders have embedded a clear set of routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour across all aspects of school life. Although some pupils do not appreciate these, they respond well and behave well. Staff apply behaviour systems consistently when pupils fall short of these expectations. Pupils learn quickly and rarely make the same mistake twice. This is because there are effective systems in place to restore positive relationships and attitudes.

Pupils benefit from a well-developed and unbiased careers programme. This includes work experience for pupils in Years 10 and 12. The careers fairs and trips to universities help pupils to make appropriate choices for their next stages in education, training or employment with confidence. Leaders have also organised for a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to take advantage of. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the school production, choir and cricket club. Many pupils attend these extra-curricular activities, including pupils with SEND.

Pupils receive a comprehensive personal development curriculum through their religious education lessons, assemblies and the 'RISE' programme. The 'RISE' programme is based on the school's values of respect, integrity, service and excellence. Here, pupils are taught about topics such as healthy relationships, staying safe, and mental health and well-being. Leaders have ensured that staff are equipped with the necessary training and resources to deliver these sessions with confidence. All of this means that pupils are supported to flourish in many diverse aspects of life.

Leaders have created many opportunities for pupils to adopt leadership roles and responsibilities. These include the student council, prefects, eco-ambassadors and the 'sixth-form board of officers'. These pupils gather the views of their peers and share this with the senior leadership team. For example, 'sixth-form board of officers' and their younger peers organised a fundraiser to raise money for a youth charity. These opportunities develop pupils' skills, including negotiating and public speaking, which prepares them well for life outside of school.

The principal, leaders, governors, and trustees have a clear vision, and their vision is shared by all staff. As a result, staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to be part of this family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff receive regular safeguarding training. As a result, there is a culture of vigilance across the school and staff report concerns quickly. However, the members of the safeguarding team do not monitor and follow-up some of these concerns efficiently. This means that some incidents are not always dealt with promptly.

Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe. If pupils have worries, they will report this to a trusted member of staff. Leaders have carried out appropriate recruitment checks on all staff to ensure that they are suitable to work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that some safeguarding concerns are consistently dealt with as efficiently and effectively as they should be. As a result, there is a risk that some pupils do not get the support or intervention they need quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that all safeguarding concerns are dealt with as a priority so that pupils get the right help at the right time.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in May 2017.

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	141063
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10268000
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	967
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	267
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Brennan
Principal	Gerald O'Connor
Website	www.sta.magnificat.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 9 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 further education, training or employment.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils in Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- 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 principal, other senior and middle leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding lead and the careers lead.
- Inspectors held discussions with those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, French and mathematics. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work, and spoke to subject teachers.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's tutor programme. Inspectors also visited tutor time at the start of the day.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to the staff survey, pupil survey, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment.

Inspection team

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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