

Inspection of St Paul's Catholic College

Jane Murray Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 8GA

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Paul's Catholic College under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Paul's Catholic College to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from attending this inclusive and exceptional school. They recognise the high expectations leaders have for them and constantly strive to meet them. Pupils are highly motivated and ambitious to achieve as much as possible. The support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is excellent and closely targeted to the individual needs of each pupil. Pupils at St Paul's Catholic College are truly 'known and loved'.

Pupils celebrate all forms of difference and show respect and genuine kindness to each other. They feel extremely safe expressing their views and individuality and do so with total confidence. Bullying in all its forms is not tolerated in the school and is extremely rare. Pupils are completely reassured that adults in the school take swift and effective action, as needed, to keep them safe.

Interactions between pupils and staff are positive and remarkably warm. The school environment is calm and purposeful, and pupils behave exceptionally well. Pupils promote positive behaviour by modelling the high expectations that leaders have for them. Through roles such as mental health ambassadors and 'guardian angels', pupils make a positive and tangible contribution to supporting the well-being of others.

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

Leaders are highly committed to providing an education that helps all pupils to realise their full potential. They have expertly crafted a very well-sequenced and coherent curriculum which is securely in place across the school. The ambitious education that pupils receive in key stages 3 and 4 lays the foundations for future learning. Students in the sixth form successfully complete very well-designed programmes of study. They value the rich set of subjects on offer to them, as well as the one-to-one mentoring they receive from staff. Students are well prepared with the knowledge and skills they need for their studies in higher education or employment.

Teachers have expert subject knowledge and know their pupils really well. They carefully work out how to adapt lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. This is highly effective. Teachers' routine and precise use of assessment within these lessons mean they quickly spot when pupils need help. They are highly adept in supporting pupils to close any gaps in knowledge. Pupils welcome the feedback they receive from their teachers which helps them to build on their knowledge. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEND, progress exceptionally well through the curriculum.

Pupils attain highly in public examinations at the end of Years 11 and 13. Recently, leaders have refined the languages curriculum. This has successfully provided pupils with the knowledge to continue studying a language into GCSE. As such, the school

is on track to raise the proportion of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate above national averages.

Leaders are dedicated to ensuring inclusion for all pupils. The inclusion team provides expert and bespoke packages of support to pupils with a wide range of additional needs. They are decisive and tenacious in working with a range of professionals to make sure the whole school provision ensures equity for all. Adaptations that teachers make to lessons are seamless and effective. As such, pupils with SEND progress very well and have the knowledge and qualifications needed to succeed in their further or higher education choices.

The school's well-planned 'LovEd' programme helps pupils to become positive members of society. The curriculum provides pupils with unbiased careers advice so they can explore the different pathways open to them. Beyond this, pupils learn about crucial concepts such as diversity and equality. In the sixth form, students have 'soul days' where they reflect upon and discuss moral concepts to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils at this school are highly inclusive and reflective.

Pupils are dedicated to their learning. They are effective problem solvers and show resilience when faced with new challenges. Pupils expect the best of themselves and each other. They show determination in the way they support each other to be the best they can be. They set the tone for behaviour in the school by consistently following the clear rules and routines leaders set for them.

Staff are proud and inspired to work at this school. Leaders and governors prioritise staff's well-being, and staff recognise and value this. Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory duties well and are ambitious about what pupils will achieve. All leaders have an absolute moral imperative and drive to improve the lives of all pupils. The vast majority of parents are positive about the care and education the school provides for their children. As one parent said, 'St Paul's is the most wonderful, welcoming and inclusive school community.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority in the school. Staff have the knowledge needed to spot when pupils and their families may need help and take swift action to report any concerns. Leaders work well with external agencies and demonstrate tenacity to ensure that pupils and their families get the right support at the right time. Record-keeping is robust and shows the timely and effective actions leaders take to keep pupils safe.

Leaders have secure knowledge of the wider risks pupils face within society. Through the 'LovEd' programme, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the community and online.

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	148753
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10267839
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,131
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	214
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Timothy Feast
Headteacher	Rob Carter
Website	www.stpaulscatholiccollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Both the headteacher and chair of governors are new in post since the predecessor school was last inspected in November 2007.
- St Paul's Catholic College converted to become an academy school in January 2022. When its predecessor school, St Paul's Catholic College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- St Paul's Catholic College is part of the Bosco Catholic Education Trust.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative provisions. They also make use of three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships

- The school is a Catholic school, within the diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in May 2019.

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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also met with representatives from the trust and a school improvement representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, music, geography, language and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during play- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents and carers through their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff and pupils through conversations and the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the arrangements for safeguarding. During these meetings, the lead inspector scrutinised records and sampled case files to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. A team inspector examined the school's work to recruit and check on the suitability of staff. Inspectors also checked staff's knowledge about their responsibilities.

Inspection team

Nina Marabese, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector
Adrian Percival	Ofsted Inspector

Neil Strowger

Ofsted Inspector

Keith Pailthorpe

Ofsted Inspector

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