

# Inspection of a good school: St Oscar Romero Catholic School

Goring Street, Goring-By-Sea, Worthing, West Sussex BN12 5AF

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2023

## Outcome

St Oscar Romero Catholic School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this highly aspirational school. It is both welcoming and ambitious. Pupils, staff and parents describe the school as a 'family'. Leaders value community and encourage high-quality learning. Parents particularly appreciate how well staff support their children, promoting personal development as well as academic success. As one parent said, 'The school goes above and beyond.' As a result, pupils work extremely well together and achieve highly.

Pupils work hard to live up to the school motto: 'Aspire not to have more, but to be more'. This is underpinned by the school's 'CARPE' values: community, aspiration, resilience, prayer and excellence. Consequently, this is a kind and caring school, characterised by strong relationships. Shared values of respect and responsibility are tangible. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils speak very highly of the support they receive from adults and feel safe. Any form of bullying is rare.

Pupils benefit from an amazing array of interesting and exciting experiences offered through extra-curricular clubs and house competitions. These include sports, music, drama, chess, knitting and many, many more. Pupils are rightly proud of their various community activities, charitable fundraising and achievements as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

The headteacher, supported by a strong team of governors and talented senior leaders, has a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Staff give their time tirelessly to support pupils. All staff, including recently qualified teachers, speak highly of the support and professional development they receive. Leaders are aware that the workload of their staff needs to be kept under constant review.

Pupils follow an ambitious curriculum. Leaders are very clear about what they want pupils to know and be able to do by the time they leave school. Topics are studied in a logical order so that pupils gain increasingly complex knowledge and skills as they get older. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. For example, in key stage 3, all pupils benefit from choir and orchestra lessons. At key stage 4, increasing numbers of pupils select subjects that are part of the English Baccalaureate. Furthermore, many pupils study extra subjects after school, such as further mathematics.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. In lessons, teachers make clear links to prior learning. This helps pupils to reinforce and develop their knowledge. Teachers plan thought-provoking activities. They use questioning and discussion well to make sure that pupils have understood new content. Pupils remember facts and ideas, often from some time ago. They are confident and articulate learners. Classrooms are businesslike and pupils are motivated to learn. Consequently, over time, pupils develop a rich knowledge of their subjects alongside a range of essential skills. This prepares them well for life beyond school.

Reading has a high profile and the library is a busy place. All key stage 3 pupils follow a bespoke reading programme, which helps to enhance their reading skills. Pupils at an early stage of reading benefit from skilled, specialist support. Consequently, these pupils improve their reading and comprehension swiftly.

Leaders identify where extra help is needed for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. These pupils' academic and emotional needs are very well supported through a range of interventions and carefully adapted classroom teaching. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Personal development provision is superb. Leaders have designed a carefully considered programme that teaches pupils how to stay safe and look after their health and well-being. Pupils have extensive opportunities beyond the classroom. Examples of these include visiting speakers, such as a survivor of the Holocaust and eminent scientists. Recently, pupils built their own rocket, which they launched into space. Pupils develop leadership skills through the school's ambassador system. High-quality careers advice and guidance prepare pupils well for their next steps. As one parent said: 'This is an amazing school. The academic expectations are high, but the welfare of the pupils is viewed with equal importance.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding processes are very well led and monitored. The safeguarding team is knowledgeable and very effective. Leaders are proactive in identifying pupils and families in need of support. Outside agencies provide additional help where needed. Staff training is thorough and ongoing. Governors keep a close eye on all safeguarding issues.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, such as when online. They appreciate their lessons in this regard. Pupils and parents also value the support and kindness provided by the pastoral team.

## **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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2015.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126096
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269162
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	928
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Chris Silk
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Byrne
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stromeros.co.uk">www.stromeros.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- This is a Catholic school within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The school's last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in July 2019.
- Leaders make use of four registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- 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.

## 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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, the chair of the governing body and two other governors. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese, and another with a representative of the local authority.

- An inspector held a telephone discussion with a member of staff at an alternative provider.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. They also viewed the school website and policies. Inspectors looked at records related to safeguarding, including checks on adults working at the school.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including free-text comments and four letters handed to the lead inspector during the inspection. Inspectors considered the views of pupils shared in the confidential pupil survey and through discussions held with pupils throughout the school.

## **Inspection team**

Paula Sargent, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Marian Feeley

His Majesty's Inspector

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