

Inspection of Saint George Catholic Voluntary Aided College Southampton

Leaside Way, Swaythling, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 3DQ

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a truly inclusive and welcoming school. The school's ASPIRE values are understood and treasured by the whole community. One pupil said, 'I love the school values. I will carry them with me for ever.'

Leaders have established a highly aspirational culture in which pupils want to work hard and achieve well. Pupils are supported to do their best by teachers with whom they share warm and respectful relationships. Expectations for behaviour are extremely high, and pupils live up to these. Behaviour is exemplary in classrooms and during social times. Staff and pupils are rightly proud to be a part of this school.

Pupils embrace diversity and include anyone who might be different. This is because staff model these behaviours in all that they do. Pupils develop a strong moral purpose and sense of fairness. For example, they know the difference between equality and equity and explain how this might apply to those who have protected characteristics. Leaders have cultivated an open and safe environment, where pupils feel safe to share their views and feelings.

Pupils enjoy an excellent range of clubs and activities, such as robotics, dissection and philosophy. Leaders are committed to ensuring that those who would benefit the most take part. Pupils receive the important guidance they need to make informed decisions about their next steps in education, training or employment.

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

Leaders have implemented a highly ambitious and broad curriculum, which supports all pupils to learn knowledge beyond the aims of the national curriculum. Leaders' actions to increase the number of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate have had a positive impact.

Subject leaders use their expertise to set out the specific knowledge that pupils must know and remember. Plans are well sequenced so that pupils revisit and build securely on their prior learning. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to deepen their learning by applying what they have learned before and making connections between topics. For example, pupils use their knowledge of the role and position of women in the medieval period to understand the representation of the 'witches' in Macbeth.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they use skilfully to question pupils and check for gaps in learning. Teachers adapt their plans quickly and review topics if knowledge is not yet secure. Teachers are expert in supporting all pupils to make progress through the curriculum, and pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve very high outcomes as a result. Staff provide excellent feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils' book work is of a consistently high quality, reflecting the depth of their learning.

Leaders have implemented systems to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) swiftly. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. They achieve exceptionally well because staff know their individual needs and apply appropriate strategies to support them effectively.

Reading is a high priority in this school. Leaders use a range of strategies, including an online library, to promote a love of reading. Those who need more help to read are identified quickly and given the specific support they need to catch up. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Pupils value their learning and focus well in lessons. They ask interesting questions and are keen to take part in class discussions. Pupils are happy and look forward to being in school each day. Leaders have made significant progress in reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. They are continuing to use a range of strategies to work with a small cohort of pupils who attend less often.

Leaders value pupils' personal development highly. Pupils are ready for life in modern Britain because they learn about important issues such as consent, finance and the impact of alcohol abuse. They know how to look after their mental and physical health because leaders carefully plan opportunities for learning about this across the curriculum. Pupils have access to the services of mental health professionals and high-quality pastoral support to help them when they are worried. A great number of pupils learn to be active citizens by participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme or charity work.

Governors, the headteacher and the senior team provide exceptional leadership and are committed to continuous school improvement. They have a shared vision, clearly underpinned by the school's values. Leaders ensure that the best interests of pupils and staff are at the heart of all decision making. Staff feel valued and cared for because leaders take steps to reduce unnecessary workload and invest in their professional development. Pupils, staff and parents are fully supportive of senior leaders, saying that the school is 'one big family'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in which staff are well trained to identify and refer pupils who may be at risk of harm. Necessary checks are carried out on new staff to ensure that they are safe to work in the school. Leaders keep detailed records so that they can closely monitor and seek help for any pupils who they are concerned about. Leaders frequently visit pupils who are absent from school, to check on their safety.

Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. This includes when they are 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	116507
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10240102
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,000
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anna McCormack
Headteacher	James Habberley
Website	www.stgcc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided school within the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth. The school received its latest section 48 inspection in May 2023. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, art and design and physical education. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of 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.
- The lead inspector met with a selection of governors, including the chair.
- Inspectors spoke with the school's local authority improvement partner and a representative from the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- 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 parent survey.

Inspection team

Zoë Harris, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Maria Roberts	His Majesty's Inspector
Ed Mather	His Majesty's Inspector
James Stuart	His Majesty's Inspector

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