

Inspection of St Anselm's Catholic School, Canterbury

Old Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3EN

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The headteacher of this school is Jez Rowarth. This school is part of Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Annemarie Whittle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Powis.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils blossom at this happy and caring school, where difference is prized and nurtured. The school's values, 'the three R's', underpin all aspects of daily life. Pupils do the right thing because they are taught the importance of having 'respect for self, for others and for the environment'. Effective partnerships with parents and carers are at the heart of ensuring that pupils thrive, both socially and academically. As one parent shared, 'This is a fantastic school, where the staff work tirelessly for the pupils.' There is a strong sense of belonging here.

The school has high aspirations for all pupils. Classrooms are calm and orderly places conducive to successful learning. Pupils listen carefully to staff and approach their work diligently. Consequently, they learn well. Many pupils feel proud to go on to study courses in the school's growing sixth form.

The pastoral support that staff give to pupils is a particular strength. Pupils feel safe. They know that there is always someone to talk to who will listen to them and take them seriously.

Pupils play an active role in their school and the wider community, such as by raising funds for local charities. Many sixth-form students enjoy being a peer mentor for younger pupils.

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

Pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything that the school does. There is a strong, shared vision at the school: to ensure that all pupils access a high-quality education. Consequently, most pupils learn well and achieve useful qualifications that equip them well for their next steps. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified accurately. This includes those in the two specially resourced provisions for pupils with SEND that form part of the school. Information about pupils' needs is shared well with staff, enabling them to make appropriate adaptations to how the curriculum is taught. This means that pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

The curriculum is well structured. Careful thought has been given to how learning builds over time from Year 7 to Year 13. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. At key stage 4, while the proportion of pupils attaining the English Baccalaureate is still lower than the government's national ambition, it is rising steadily. This is because more pupils are now taking a language GCSE than was previously the case. The sixth form offers a suitable range of subjects and qualifications, providing students with choices to match their interests and future aspirations.

Staff receive high-quality training. They use their detailed subject knowledge to teach new concepts clearly, particularly in the sixth form. Most teachers efficiently help pupils to recall and deepen their knowledge. They use questions skilfully to spot

and address any gaps in pupils' learning. However, there are some instances where this is not the case. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school is alert to and addressing these variations in how the curriculum is delivered.

Overall, pupils behave very well and enjoy their lessons. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' literacy skills and subject-specific vocabulary. Across the different subjects, pupils use this vocabulary with precision to explain and discuss their ideas. Those who need extra help to become fluent readers are identified quickly. Well-trained staff provide timely support, which helps these pupils to read with increasing accuracy and confidence.

The school takes every opportunity to promote good attendance. Despite efforts made by the school, there remains a small number of pupils who do not attend as often as they should. These pupils do not benefit fully from all that the school has to offer.

Opportunities to foster pupils' wider development are abundant. The 'skills for life' curriculum gives pupils vital knowledge, which prepares them well for modern life. Pupils learn about the importance of kindness and acceptance. They do not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination and rightly trust staff to tackle any such issues robustly. Sixth-form students play an important role in school life by leading assemblies and hosting events for the local community. Pupils benefit from excellent careers advice and guidance, which helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Trustees and local governors are knowledgeable and experienced. They provide effective levels of challenge and support for the school. The well-being of staff is paramount. Staff workload is considered carefully when making decisions about the school's work. Staff appreciate this and feel valued. They are exceptionally positive about working at this school and about the support that they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is a small number of inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is taught. This sometimes limits how well pupils consolidate and deepen their knowledge and understanding. The trust should continue to develop staff's pedagogy so that all pupils learn well across the different subjects in the curriculum.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. This means that they miss out on essential learning. The trust should ensure that its ongoing work leads to

improvements in pupils' attendance where they are needed.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140874
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10240725
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	1,107
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Powis
CEO of the trust	Annemarie Whittle
Headteacher	Jez Rowarth
Website	www.stanselmscantebury.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Southwark. As a school with a religious character, it was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in February 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due before July 2024.
- Since the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher was appointed as the academy principal. In September 2023, he became the headteacher. The chair of the local governing body took up their role in September 2020.
- The school is currently using one unregistered alternative provider.
- St Anselm's has two specially resourced provisions. Currently, 15 pupils from Years 7 to 11 attend the provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder, and

six pupils access the provision for pupils with a physical disability.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and the trust's director of education. They also spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Southwark. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local board of governors, including the chair of governors. She also held discussions with the chief executive officer and chair of the board of trustees for the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, science, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the additional free-text responses.
- The inspection team met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons. They also considered the responses to the confidential pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan and pupil premium funding plan.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Potten

Ofsted Inspector

Giles Osborne

Ofsted Inspector

Scott Norman

Ofsted Inspector

Siobhan Lowe

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