

# Inspection of St Mary's College, Voluntary Catholic Academy

Cranbrook Avenue, Hull HU6 7TN

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Maria Stead. This school is part of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Karen Siedle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Laws.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Mary's College, Voluntary Catholic Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Mary's College to be outstanding, before it opened as St Mary's College, Voluntary Catholic Academy as a result of conversion to academy status.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

St Mary's College is a highly ambitious school. This ambition can be seen in all areas of the curriculum. Leaders have identified specific 'golden threads' around which they have designed the curriculum. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure that pupils flourish. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make exceptional academic progress.

Pupils are extremely well behaved. They feel happy and are safe in school. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Disruption to learning is rare. Pupils have respect for each other and celebrate their differences. They have a deep understanding of fundamental British values and protected characteristics. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for life in modern Britain.

Personal development runs through all aspects of school life. Pupils have meaningful opportunities to be active citizens through roles such as personal, social and health education ambassadors, Agape ambassadors, and Shakespeare representatives. Pupils have access to a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. These include an extensive sporting offer, an international film club and a geo-marine club. These activities support pupils to develop their talents and interests.

A broad curriculum is offered in the sixth form. This includes academic, vocational and technical qualifications. Students develop rich knowledge, which gives them a deep understanding of their course of study. Students are ambitious and positive about their futures.

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

St Mary's College is an inclusive community with high aspirations for all. Leaders have created a school where 'everybody belongs' regardless of background, race or disability. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. An exceptionally high number of pupils study the English Baccalaureate.

The curriculum moves beyond the national curriculum. The 'golden threads' of knowledge have been carefully woven into every subject. Leaders make sure that the curriculum is well sequenced. This ensures that pupils know more and remember more over time. Leaders describe the curriculum as a 'never ending story'. They are constantly improving the curriculum. For example, oracy is currently a priority to further enhance pupils' literacy and communication skills.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Leaders quickly identify pupils who cannot read well. These pupils receive effective support from well-trained staff. Pupils at the early stages of reading catch up quickly. This helps them to access the full curriculum. The school promotes a love of reading across all subjects. Teachers choose challenging texts from their subject for pupils to read. For example, in an A-level physical education lesson, pupils engaged with a text about the effects of vaping on the cardiovascular system.

Pupils with SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language are expertly supported. Leaders identify additional needs early. Teachers adapt their lessons to meet the needs of pupils. A small number of pupils are taught a modified curriculum. These pupils benefit from specialist support from skilled staff.

The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exceptional. A clear behaviour system is in place. Teachers and pupils understand the expectations. Staff implement the behaviour policy consistently across the school. A minority of pupils require, and receive, extra support to meet the high expectations of the school. A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. These pupils access a curriculum appropriate to their needs. Leaders regularly check that the support pupils receive at alternative provision continues to meet their needs.

Attendance is significantly above the national average. Leaders are tenacious in making sure that pupils come to school regularly. The school's use of innovative strategies to improve attendance is noteworthy. For example, leaders use data to identify geographical trends in attendance. Leaders put interventions in place in response to these trends. As a result, attendance is excellent.

The Catholic ethos is evident across all aspects of school life. Pupils learn about life in modern Britain through a carefully sequenced personal development and religious education curriculum. Pupils put this learning into practice through schemes such as the leadership mentor programme. High-quality pastoral support is available for all pupils. Pupils have access to on-site mental health support and support from outside agencies. The school provides excellent careers support at all key stages. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for their next steps.

The sixth-form provision at St Mary's College is outstanding. Students, including those with SEND, achieve exceptionally high outcomes. The sixth form responds to the local context and employment needs by, for example, offering programmes such as the NHS pathway through the Medical, Health and Social Care Academy. All aspects of life in the sixth form support students to access future learning and positive destinations.

School leaders have created an environment where systems are consistently implemented across all areas of the school. This allows staff and pupils to flourish. Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders provide a comprehensive package of professional development. Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable. The school is well supported by the diocese. Trustees and the local governing body are highly knowledgeable and effective. They challenge and support school leaders to provide the best education possible for the pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144104
<b>Local authority</b>	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290326
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2,467
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	712
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Laws
<b>Head of School</b>	Maria Stead
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.smchull.org">www.smchull.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 July 2010

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust.
- The trust is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- The school received a section 48 Diocesan Inspection in May 2022.
- The school uses five registered and four unregistered providers of education.
- 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 head of school and many other senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, geography, modern foreign languages, social sciences and physical education. As part of the deep dives, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and reviewed education, health and care plans, as well as other support plans for pupils with SEND. They visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss the support for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for professional development to discuss staff training.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's records of bullying, reviewed the actions leaders take when bullying occurs and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on suspensions and internal suspensions.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer and representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for alternative provision to discuss the rationale for its use and to review the checks that leaders carry out to ensure pupils are safe. Alternative provision settings were contacted and visited as part of this inspection.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff through Ofsted surveys, as well as additional communication from parents during the inspection. The views of pupils were considered through a range of inspection activities.

## Inspection team

Chris Sergeant, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jayne Gaunt	Ofsted Inspector
Erica Hiorns	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Voyce	His Majesty's Inspector

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