

# Inspection of St Clement Danes School

Chenies Road, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 6EW

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
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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	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Toby Sutherland. This school is part of Danes Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Josephine Valentine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Day.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2011.

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

Pupils are tremendously proud to attend St Clement Danes. They value and strive to maintain the traditions and history of their school. Pupils know that teachers have the highest aspirations for them. They understand that the school expects all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve success. Pupils match this ambition with their own thirst for knowledge. They work hard and produce work of exceptional quality. Pupils achieve extremely well in public examinations.

Pupils are highly respectful of one another. All pupils are treated with the same level of kindness and dignity. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exceptionally good. Pupils know how their behaviour can influence others. As a result, they choose to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct. Older pupils are respected role models. Pupils thrive in a school where they feel valued, safe and happy.

Pupils take advantage of an almost limitless wealth of extra-curricular opportunities. They enjoy a comprehensive offer of cultural, intellectual and sporting endeavours. Pupils take on responsibility with fervour. They organise events that raise large sums of money for local and national charities. The role of school prefect is highly respected and sought after.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Careful thought has been put into determining what knowledge pupils need to be successful leaders of the future. The school has placed equal value on developing pupils' character alongside subject expertise. Not constrained by the limits of exam requirements, the result is a highly ambitious curriculum. Pupils can develop a rich and deep understanding of the world around them.

Teachers are specialists. They design learning experiences that consistently deliver the planned curriculum. Explanations of complex and abstract concepts in the sixth form are as clear and precise as those of basic concepts in Year 7. Teachers help pupils draw together new knowledge with what they already know.

Teachers use well-constructed examples to show pupils how they should structure their written responses. Supported by detailed information, teachers ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met. Teachers check carefully to see if pupils have understood. This helps identify any misconceptions, which teachers remedy immediately. As a result, the quality of pupils' work is exemplary. Oral responses are highly articulate, and pupils use subject-specific language proficiently. Written work is detailed and illustrative of the depth of pupils' learning.

The school places great importance on reading. For pupils who struggle to read, there is a highly effective support programme. The programme tackles specific

barriers to confident and fluent reading. It is aligned with the English curriculum, so pupils keep up with their peers. Pupils whose first language is not English are equally well supported by this programme.

Sixth-form students develop high levels of independence. They take ownership of their learning. Supported by first-rate teaching, they develop an excellent understanding of their chosen subjects. With the extensive support they receive around future steps, they are extremely well prepared as they move on beyond school.

The personal development programme is extensive. Pupils learn about key issues as they move through the school in age-appropriate ways. They speak knowledgeably about important values such as democracy, having studied the way it works within different countries and systems. Pupils understand and value difference. They understand that others may have differing opinions to their own.

Pupils have access to a wealth of information about all possible future routes through an impressive careers programme. An extensive alumni base gives pupils first-hand advice, guidance and work-related experiences. Consequently, the decisions that pupils make are well-informed. This leads to high levels of success in their chosen steps, either in education or employment.

Pupils benefit from excellent leadership in the school. Several leaders support other schools in the trust. The school is a regional hub of excellence for science and computer science. There is a relentless drive to improve what is already exceptional provision. Staff are proud to work in the school. They appreciate how leaders consider their well-being and help manage their workload.

The local school board, trust executive and trustees work well together. They use their expertise to support the school. They challenge leaders' thinking effectively and hold them to account. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A comment from a parent, which is reflective of many, read, 'The school is very inclusive and supportive. The teaching staff are committed, and standards are high. My child is thriving not just academically but also in terms of his character development.'

## **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>	136901
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288494
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<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>	1,596
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	397
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Martin Day
<b>Headteacher</b>	Toby Sutherland
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stclementdanes.org.uk">www.stclementdanes.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 October 2011

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in January 2018.
- The school is part of Danes Education Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- 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 held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, and other members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector also had a discussion with the chair of the board of trustees and met with members of the local governing committee and the associate chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, design technology, drama and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, 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.
- Inspectors considered the 564 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 357 free-text comments submitted. They considered the 108 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and the 447 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school.

### **Inspection team**

Dave Gibson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jason Howard	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Skelly	Ofsted Inspector
Likhon Muhammad	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Warburton	Ofsted Inspector

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