

Inspection of Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School

Wood Green Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 9QS

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Richard May. He is the executive principal and is responsible for this school and one other. This school is part of the St John Bosco Catholic Academy (the trust), which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the accounting officer, Helen Parkes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phillip Hancox.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff talk about how much improvement there has been at Stuart Bathurst. The building refurbishment and higher expectations mean pupils have more pride in their school.

Because of the changes made to the curriculum, pupils are confident that they are learning what they will need for future success. The majority work hard in their lessons. Most take pride in the work they produce.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour; most pupils meet these standards. The new 'behaviour curriculum' is helping pupils develop a deeper understanding of the impact their choices have on others. Those who do not always make the right choices can explain how they will do better next time. Through assemblies, the wider curriculum and the SAINT programme, pupils know that everyone should be treated with respect. Most, but not all, pupils feel as valued by their peers as they should do.

Pupils and students value the high-quality careers guidance that they receive. Many take part in the range of clubs and trips on offer. These include chess, book club and several sports activities. Pupils value the ways they can contribute to the school and wider community through applying to become prefects or fundraising for charities.

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

Trust and school leaders have ensured that there has been significant improvement since the school became an academy. There is a shared determination that this work will continue as part of their ambition for the school and the community they serve.

The school had rightly identified that the curriculum needed changing to ensure it was broad and ambitious for all pupils. It is now. The curriculum has been carefully sequenced in all subjects to help pupils build their learning over time. There are some common learning approaches used across the school. These include teachers modelling answers using their visualisers, and pupils recalling previous learning at the start of lessons. However, the school's approach to supporting sixth-form students to develop the independent thinking and study required for higher education is less effective.

The school has produced assessments to check pupils' learning at the end of each unit. Teachers use the information from these to inform future learning. The checking of pupils' understanding 'in the moment' is not done as well. Sometimes teachers do not check that all pupils have secured the key steps in learning. Sometimes the questions they ask do not enable pupils to show how much they have understood.

In previous years, some pupils did not achieve well. However, the current curriculum is helping pupils to know and remember more. This is evident in the learning in their

work and the way they can explain the key knowledge they are acquiring in their lessons.

The school provides expert support for the weakest readers. Because of this, these pupils are making excellent progress in becoming stronger readers. There is also support in place for those who are not yet confident, fluent readers.

Improving support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been a priority for the school. The school now has a strong process in place to identify pupils' additional needs. Staff have received training in how to adapt learning for pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils are now achieving well. They are also being well prepared for their next steps in education and wider life. The Archangel Centre provides care and support for several pupils who might otherwise not be in school.

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons. At social times, a high level of staff presence ensures that pupils behave appropriately and any issues are promptly resolved. However, there are a few pupils who make inappropriate comments to other pupils. They know these attitudes are unacceptable but continue regardless. This means that some pupils do not feel fully respected for who they are. Pupils who have experienced consequences for their behaviour say that the systems were used fairly and have reflected on what they need to do better next time.

The school is working hard to improve pupils' attendance. This includes focused work with pupils and their families. However, absence and persistent absence levels remain too high. This impacts on how well these pupils are able to learn and achieve.

The support, and challenge when needed, of the trust has been instrumental to the improvements of the school. The majority of parents and carers believe that the school is now doing a good job. Staff feel valued and know their workload is considered in any changes made. This all helps the school continue to strengthen and pupils to flourish.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not ensure that all teachers check carefully enough that all pupils have understood their learning. This means that some misconceptions can go unnoticed and gaps in pupils' knowledge remain. The school should ensure that all staff are confident in identifying and addressing pupils' misconceptions at the point at which they occur.

- In some subjects, the school is not equipping sixth-form students as well as it could for independent thinking and study. This means that some students are not as well prepared for the academic rigour and autonomy they will need in the next stage of their education. The school should ensure that sixth-form provision builds on, rather than replicates, the learning skills being developed through key stages 3 and 4.
- A small group of pupils have not fully bought into the school's culture of respect. The comments they make mean that some pupils do not feel valued by everyone in school. The school should ensure that there are effective reporting processes in place for all groups of pupils to share these experiences so that the school can take appropriate action in response.
- Despite the school's current efforts, there are too many pupils who do not attend school often enough. These pupils miss out on key learning and wider development experiences. They do not achieve as well as other pupils. The school should extend its work to strengthen pupils' and parents' understanding of the importance of high attendance.

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	147881
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10322917
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	861
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phillip Hancox
CEO of the trust	Helen Parkes (Accounting Officer)
Headteacher	Richard May (Executive Principal)
Website	www.stuart-bathurst.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in April 2020 and joined the St John Bosco Catholic Academy at the same time. There are eight academies in the trust.
- When its predecessor school, Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School of Performing Arts, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The executive principal took on substantive responsibility for the school in March 2022.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The school's last section 48 diocesan inspection was in April 2022. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school uses three registered and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.

- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the executive principal, other school leaders, trust leaders, the chair of the trust board and a representative of the local governing body. Inspectors spoke with a representative from the diocese and an external school improvement partner.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, psychology, physical education and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also visited lessons in other subjects.
- 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 inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including comments submitted via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Cat Woodsmith	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Turner	Ofsted Inspector
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