

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic School

Reynolds Lane, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9XL

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Michael Wilson. 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?

The school, in its mission to ensure that 'every pupil is known and loved', has created a warm and welcoming environment for pupils. Teachers get to know pupils well, and they have high ambitions for their success. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who attend the St Francis de Sales Centre for the Deaf, are well supported. As a result, pupils are happy and achieve well.

The trust has a clear vision for school improvement and has taken decisive action to bring stability to the school, including significantly raising expectations for behaviour and attendance. This has had a transformational impact on the school. Pupils behave well in classrooms and corridors. Teachers use the school's behaviour systems effectively and have created a culture where positive relationships are important. As a result, pupils are courteous and respectful. They feel safe, and their learning is rarely interrupted.

The rich and broad curriculum effectively prepares pupils for life beyond school. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and online safety. They demonstrate inclusive attitudes towards each other, including those who are different from themselves. They have many opportunities to develop their character. Students in the sixth form embrace a well-considered programme of volunteering that enables them to contribute to the school community.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. The school has identified the key content and concepts that pupils should learn, and the curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure that knowledge builds in a logical order over time. As a result, most pupils, and students in the sixth form, achieve well and gain the skills, knowledge, and qualifications needed for their next steps. For some disadvantaged pupils, and sixth-form students studying vocational subjects, the school is working to further develop how it helps them to ensure that they receive the support they need to achieve as well as their peers.

The school knows that reading is a barrier to learning for many pupils. Assessments are used to identify pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read who need help. These pupils benefit from expert support to catch up. However, the school is still developing its wider approach, to ensure all pupils are supported to become confident, and fluent readers, and develop a love for reading.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They present new concepts and ideas clearly. Teachers often draw upon a range of well-selected resources. They revisit prior knowledge at the start of lessons to help pupils remember what they have learned over time. However, from time to time, in a small number of subjects, some teachers' choice of learning activities does not always enable pupils to grasp subject content securely. Additionally, while assessment is used well by most teachers, in some subjects, pupils are unsure how to act upon the feedback they are given, and staff do not always check to

ensure pupils apply the advice they receive. This prevents a small number of pupils from achieving as well as they could.

The school has responded well to the increased number of pupils that have joined the school with SEND. Effective systems ensure the additional needs of pupils are identified swiftly, and that they receive the support they need. Provision in the St Francis de Sales Centre for the Deaf is impressive. Additionally, a small number of pupils access alternative provisions. With continued support from the school, these pupils benefit from specialist support, which enables them to succeed.

Effective systems are in place to track and analyse attendance. A team of dedicated staff work positively with families to support pupils to attend regularly. Despite these efforts, too many disadvantaged pupils still do not attend regularly enough. The school is alert to this and is relentless in its work to ensure attendance is a priority. However, this same rigorous approach is yet to be replicated with equal vigour in the sixth form, where student attendance is too low.

The school has a strong personal development curriculum. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons ensure pupils learn about important topics, such as the responsible use of social media and online safety. The school ensures that pupils, and students in the sixth form, receive the impartial guidance they need to make informed choices about their future.

The trust, and those responsible for local governance, systematically scrutinise the school's work and provide effective support. They are mindful of the pressures on staff and have made considered changes to policies and practices. As a result, morale is high, staff feel well cared for and are highly supportive of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of curriculum implementation is variable. A small number of subjects are not being delivered as well as others. This includes inconsistencies in the use of assessment, the support offered to some disadvantaged pupils and the quality of provision for some students studying vocational courses in the school's sixth form. This means some pupils are not learning as well as they could. The trust is alert to this and must now pursue consistently high standards of teaching to ensure that all pupils benefit from the quality of education that is intended.
- The school does not always have clarity about the impact of its work. This means that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, at the earlier stages of learning to read, and some students in the sixth form, are not supported well enough in terms of

their attendance and education. The trust should ensure that it monitors and evaluates the impact of actions to ensure that it is clear about the school's strengths and what needs further strengthening.

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	140640
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341769
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	1184
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	236
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Micheal Powis
CEO of the trust	Annemarie Whittle
Headteacher	Michael Wilson
Website	www.sgschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 October 2013

Information about this school

- This school is a Catholic comprehensive school within the Archdiocese of Southwark. In June 2024, it underwent a Catholic Schools Inspection under section 48 of the Education Act.
- At the time of inspection, the school was using three registered alternative provisions.
- 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.
- The school is part of Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership academy trust.

- The school has a specially resourced provision: The St Francis de Sales Centre for the Deaf. This caters to hearing-impaired pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Places are commissioned by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 considered that in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met and spoke with leaders, staff, pupils, parents, governors, the chair of trustees, the chief executive officer from the trust and members of the trusts' executive leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, art and history. 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted staff survey and the views of pupils gathered throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; considered 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 information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and wider learning. They also met with the school special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.

Inspection team

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