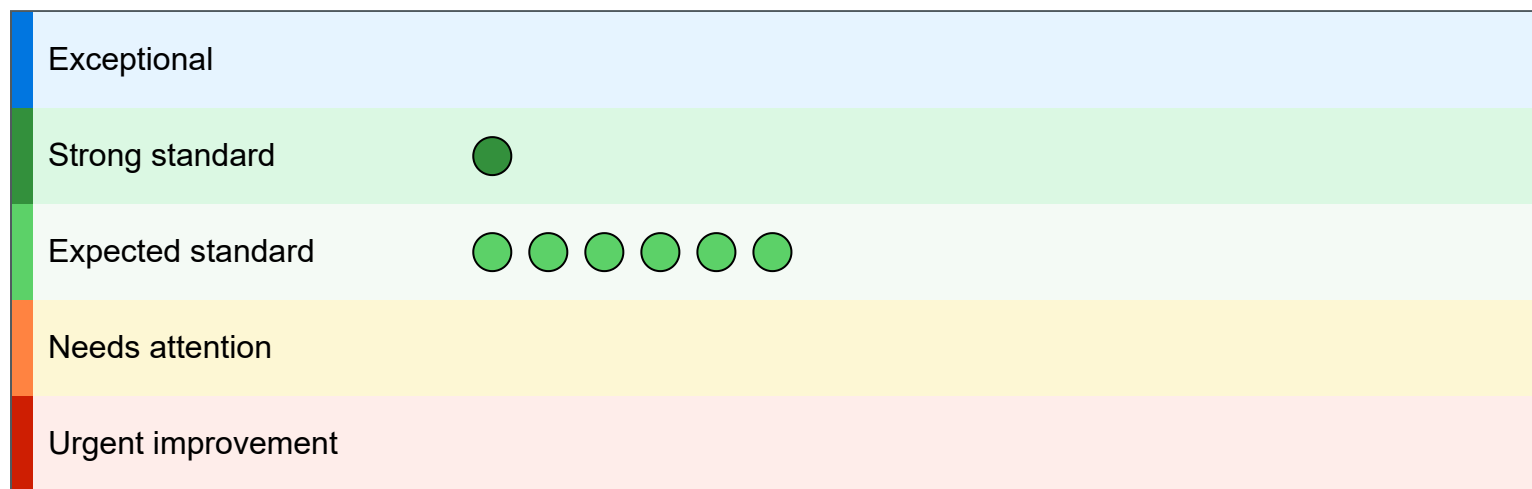


St Simon Stock Catholic School

Address: Oakwood Park, Maidstone, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 0JP

Unique reference number (URN): 140537

Inspection report: 13 January 2026



✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion is a thread that runs through every aspect of school life. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to identify which pupils need additional support and how best to adapt the curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders engage well with external agencies, ensuring that the support pupils receive is appropriate so that they can flourish personally and academically. Leaders use additional funding well to ensure barriers to learning are removed, such as providing specialised technology to support pupils with visual impairment.

Leaders are rigorous in how they monitor the impact of the adaptations they make to the curriculum. Learning plans are regularly reviewed with parents so interventions can be adjusted as needed.

Interventions that are funded by the school's pupil premium funding support disadvantaged pupils to learn well and thrive. Alternative provision is used appropriately, and leaders ensure pupils return to mainstream learning smoothly and with effective pastoral care. Many pupils are well supported to overcome their previously negative experiences of education.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Overall, pupils learn the curriculum well. They are able to recall important concepts confidently and use technical vocabulary with accuracy. Key stage 4 examination results have generally been in line with national averages. Pupils with low prior attainment perform very well. However, pupils with high prior attainment do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders have taken steps that have begun to address this. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Their progress and attainment as reflected in external examination results have been above national averages for disadvantaged pupils.

In the sixth form, students' attainment in national examinations has been below national averages over time. However, the progress students make from their individual starting points has continued to improve and is now in line with national averages. Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve this further.

Pupils are well prepared for their next steps, including sustained education. Students at post-16 progress to appropriate destinations.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

The school has effective systems in place to monitor the attendance of pupils. This includes working closely with families and challenging parents and carers sensitively if their children are absent. Leaders rigorously review absence data so that appropriate support is provided

to pupils for whom attendance is a barrier to their learning. Leaders' work has improved the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's strategies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils have had a positive impact. However, they have not been in place for sufficient time to be as successful as the strategies for pupils with SEND.

The values of 'ready, responsible and respectful' drive leaders' approach to ensuring a calm and purposeful learning environment for pupils. Leaders model these values in setting the high expectations that they have for pupils' behaviour. In lessons, pupils are focused and ready to learn. During social times, well-established systems ensure that pupils interact positively with each other. Leaders closely track the rare incidents of bullying and have measures in place to ensure these are not repeated. The school's inclusive nature helps to ensure that pupils are in the best position to behave well. Leaders ensure that pupils are in school so they benefit from the strong pastoral support provided.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school's curriculum is well planned and pupils study a broad range of subjects. Leaders regularly review their curriculum. They are reflective about how they adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils, including different curriculum pathways for pupils at GCSE and students at post-16. Leaders have also adapted the year 7 curriculum for a small cohort of pupils to support with the transition from primary school, while ensuring that pupils still study the full breadth of subjects.

Overall, the curriculum is taught well. Teachers have detailed knowledge about the subjects they teach. They explain new concepts clearly and support pupils to understand complex technical vocabulary. Leaders support teachers to make thoughtful adaptations to the curriculum to remove barriers that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities may face to their learning. However, there is some variability in how well teachers check pupils' understanding to address gaps in knowledge and move learning on at the most appropriate point, including at post-16.

Leaders regularly assess the needs of disadvantaged pupils, enabling them to achieve well in the curriculum. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language. Thoughtful, personalised strategies help pupils, including those who have fallen behind, to secure the important knowledge that they need to read and write well.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's context and are committed to providing a high-quality, inclusive education for its pupils. Improvement priorities are driven from leaders' close analysis of the school's work and ongoing monitoring of its provision. Leaders are clear where further improvement is needed, for example in securing high attendance for some groups of pupils. Staff training is well designed to further develop staff expertise. This includes for early career teachers, who benefit fully from the school's evidence-informed professional learning.

The school's motto of 'work with love' permeates all levels of school leadership. Governors and trustees undertake ongoing training to support them in their role. They are

knowledgeable about the school and provide effective support and challenge. They set high expectations for school leaders. This ensures that leaders are driven to act in the best interests of pupils. They are determined to ensure that all pupils thrive, no matter what their barriers to learning are.

The strength of the school's pastoral care extends to staff. They value the support provided by leaders. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about belonging to a close-knit community and doing things 'the Stocky way'. Staff feel that leaders listen to their views and act on feedback regarding workload.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's ethos is at the core of the school's personal development and wellbeing programme. Through the well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum and wider opportunities, pupils learn to become respectful, thoughtful individuals who make a positive contribution to their school community. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and how to act with integrity. They develop a deep sense of spirituality through daily tutor time activities and assemblies. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a breadth of religious experiences and different cultures. As part of 'culture week', student leaders plan activities that enable pupils to share their different cultural experiences through food and fashion. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils display respectful and accepting attitudes to diversity and people with different backgrounds and experiences. They learn about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. This includes how to keep themselves safe online.

Pupils have access to independent careers education and wide opportunities to learn about their next steps. Pupils are provided with one-to-one independent careers advice, and leaders put adaptations in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Destination information is well documented, and pupils are supported with next steps that are appropriate for them. Trips to prestigious universities support disadvantaged pupils with their future aspirations.

Leaders continue to grow the opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests through extra-curricular activities. They have started to track more closely how well pupils participate so that as many pupils as possible benefit from this offer.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed the curriculum at post-16 so that it generally meets the needs of students well. They identify improvements and act to develop the curriculum when necessary. There is a wide range of academic and vocational courses available to students. Students are well supported by the school to select the most appropriate courses so that they are well prepared for their next steps. Students are well informed about further education and training through the school's effective careers provision.

Generally, students develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum. Typically, teachers provide detailed and effective feedback to address gaps in students' knowledge and understanding. However, teachers' strategies to check for understanding or to embed important knowledge are not used consistently well across the curriculum.

Typically, students achieve well, with above national outcomes for students studying vocational qualifications. The progress of students studying academic qualifications has improved over time and is now broadly in line with national outcomes. Disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress from their starting points.

Students value the strength of the sixth form community and the care they receive from staff, including those who join from other schools. Students act as role models for younger pupils, working closely with them as 'stewards of the Earth' in the eco garden and leading activities to raise money for charity.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to belong to their inclusive and welcoming school. They feel highly supported by caring staff. Staff take the time to know their pupils as individuals. This includes identifying the help they need to be successful.

The pastoral support pupils receive is highly effective. As a result, pupils feel safe. Should any bullying occur, pupils trust that staff will listen to them and deal with it swiftly. Mutual respect between staff and pupils is a cornerstone of the school's behaviour approach. Staff lead by example in modelling how they expect pupils to behave and, consequently, pupils interact with each other positively and with kindness.

Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the curriculum on offer. They focus well in lessons and participate fully. As a result, pupils generally achieve well across the curriculum. Leaders have thoughtfully considered how to adapt the curriculum to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Due to the school's highly inclusive nature, pupils with SEND attend well. However, some pupils do not attend as often as they could.

Pupils are rightly proud of the opportunities to make a positive contribution to their close-knit community that 'feels like a family'. The 'stewards of the Earth' have developed a quiet reflection garden for pupils to enjoy, and the school's 'raise and give' week enables pupils to lead activities that support various charities. The leadership roles available to pupils teach them the importance of responsibility and working to help others.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve checks on learning in lessons so teachers know what pupils have learned and address gaps in their knowledge before moving on, including in the sixth form.

- Leaders should maintain their focus on improving attendance and embed the strategies focused particularly on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils attend more regularly.
-

About this inspection

The school is part of the 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 (CEO), Annemarie Whittle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Caroline Stockmann.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and a range of teaching and non-teaching staff. Inspectors also met with members of the local governance committee and trustees. They met the CEO and members of the trust's central team. Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons, at social times and in more formal meetings.

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in November 2021.

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 makes use of two alternative provisions that are registered.

Headteacher: Andrea Denny

Lead inspector:

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Neil Strowger, Ofsted Inspector

Nicholas Simmonds, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Grundy, His Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Cave, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,151

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,018

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

16.48%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.52%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

12.34%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	45.1%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.4%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.1%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	46.4	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47.9	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.9	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.21	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.16	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	20.7%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	18.2%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	3.2%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	40.6	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	39.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35.8	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.16	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.69	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference

between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	20.7%	52.8%	-32.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	18.2%	53.1%	-34.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	3.2%	52.4%	-49.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	40.6	50.3	-9.7
2023/24 (final)	39.0	50.0	-11.0
2022/23 (final)	35.8	50.3	-14.5

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.16	0.16	-0.32
2022/23 (final)	-0.69	0.17	-0.86

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	95%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	R	R	R
2023/24 (final)	26.34	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.60	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	R	R	R
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

The Key Stage 5 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. 'R' in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.3%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.2%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.3%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	21.5%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	20.6%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	24.1%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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