

Inspection of Saint Gregory's Catholic College

Combe Hay Lane, Odd Down, Bath, Somerset BA2 8PA

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected nine years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Student Creed', written by former pupils, states that 'At St Greg's, we are a family'. Many current pupils and staff confirmed that this is, indeed, their experience of their school. Pupils are proud of their school. They say that teachers are passionate about their subjects and care about their pupils.

Inspiration from the Gospel values are the 'hallmarks' of the education that pupils receive. Pupils reflect positively on their own beliefs and opinions, as well as those of others. Interactions between staff and pupils and between pupils are warm and respectful. Communal spaces are busy and vibrant. Pupils use these spaces sensibly and with due consideration for others.

Pupils treat each other with respect. They say that they feel confident to challenge each other if they hear derogatory language being used. Teachers deal swiftly with any bullying issues if these occur. However, many pupils say that this is not a regular feature of their experience at the school.

Leaders ensure that economic circumstances are never a barrier to pupils benefiting from the range of visits and clubs on offer. These opportunities are purposefully planned and the views of pupils are taken into consideration. Consequently, participation in the wider life of the school is strong, as seen in, for example, the retreat programme and a recent 'boys singing out loud' event for key stage 3 pupils. Pupils are encouraged to put 'faith into action' to raise money for charities.

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

Pupils follow a broad and ambitious curriculum. Subject leaders have worked diligently to develop curriculum planning, so that the accumulation of pupils' knowledge and skills is built in a logical order. Where this is done most effectively, it supports pupils to recall what they already know and be well prepared for what comes next. There are areas of strength, such as in geography, where leaders have considered carefully the crucial knowledge that pupils need to remember. Therefore, pupils, regardless of whether they go on to study the subject at key stage 4, have a comprehensive geographical knowledge.

However, subjects are at varying stages in this process. Where curriculum planning is less assured, pupils are not as able to make connections with what they have done before or apply what they have learned to bigger ideas or different contexts.

Teachers use a range of ways to check what pupils know and remember. Where this is done well, misconceptions are spotted and remedied. However, in some subjects, teachers' use of assessment is inconsistent. It does not focus closely enough on what it is most important for pupils to know and remember in the longer term. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND), where the curriculum in some subjects has not been adapted well enough. This results in gaps in pupils' subject knowledge.

Pupils with SEND are well cared for. Leaders have made great strides to identify the needs of pupils and share this information with teachers. The 'Core Plus' curriculum focuses on key stage 2 knowledge in core subjects. However, this curriculum is not connected well enough to the wider subject curriculum. Therefore, it does not support pupils as well as it could to remember key facts over time.

A reading programme has been put in place to support pupils in the early stages of learning to read. As this is in its infancy, the full impact of this curriculum has not yet been realised. Some pupils readily respond to incentives to read more widely, but there is not a well-established culture of reading for enjoyment.

Interventions, such as the 'Reset Room' and 'Damascus Room', support pupils to regulate their behaviour and emotions before incidents escalate. This leads to calm and focused classrooms. Pupils speak positively about how the school has supported them to improve their attendance.

There is a rich programme to support pupils' personal development and understanding of the world. The curriculum tackles important issues, such as how to build healthy relationships. Leaders respond to contemporary issues, pupils' views, or emerging patterns of particular need. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of equality and diversity. They recognise the school as a place where individuality is celebrated.

Pupils are well informed about the opportunities that are available to them after they leave school. Sixth-form students speak eloquently of their positive experiences. The sixth-form environment is a place where students can focus and reflect. They receive a wealth of careers guidance, which includes financial advice, careers fairs and trips to university open days. Students make well-informed choices about which pathway to choose.

Governors are experienced, supportive and dedicated to the school's continual improvement. Governors ask pertinent questions and are reflective on how they can do this even more effectively.

Leaders have taken steps to reduce staff workload. Teachers, who are early in their careers, are well supported and quickly feel part of the school community. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the many opportunities to come together as a staff body to take care of their personal well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance around safeguarding at the school. Leaders keep detailed records and forge effective links with external agencies. This ensures

that pupils and their families receive the help and support they need. All staff and governors receive regular updates and have completed the necessary training.

Pupils feel that the school is a safe place for them to be. They are knowledgeable about how they can keep themselves safe, including when in the community and online. The curriculum develops pupils' awareness of important concepts, such as consent, and how to recognise signs of abuse. Many pupils say they feel confident to share any concerns they have with a trusted adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not adapted well enough to meet the needs and starting points of all pupils, particularly those with SEND. This prevents some pupils from building up their understanding successfully over time. In these subjects, leaders need to ensure that there is more explicit consideration of the essential knowledge that all pupils need to know. Leaders should also consider how well teachers' use of assessment consistently checks that this has been remembered.
- Some pupils arrive at the school without being able to read accurately and fluently. This hinders their ability to follow the full curriculum. Leaders must ensure that the planned early reading programme is implemented as intended so that pupils have the necessary foundations for their future learning.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	109329
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10212534
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
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	1023
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Eddison
Headteacher	Ann Cusack
Website	www.st-gregorys.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 July 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Gregory's is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Clifton. As such, it is subject to an inspection of denominational education under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Catholic school were judged to be outstanding at its most recent inspection in February 2019.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on the school's roll has increased. A sixth-form provision has also been added.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses five registered and two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the head of sixth form, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector spoke to the director of education for the Catholic Diocese of Clifton and a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with teachers early in their careers and both the leader and a mentor overseeing their professional development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John White	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Thomas	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Bywater	His Majesty's Inspector

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