

Inspection of a good school: St Wilfrid's Catholic Comprehensive School, Crawley

St Wilfrid's Way, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 8PG

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

St Wilfrid's Catholic Comprehensive School, Crawley continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Wilfrid's are proud to be part of a big community that shares strong values. Pupils and parents say that this is 'their' school. Diverse backgrounds are celebrated in a safe environment. For example, in 'cultural week', pupils talk confidently about their own religions or beliefs. They come to school wearing traditional costumes. As one pupil explained, 'Cultural week includes everyone.'

School leaders have high expectations, based on their clear moral principles. They expect everyone to follow them. Teachers and sixth-form students set an excellent example for younger pupils. Leaders prioritise academic and personal development equally. They check that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), take part in clubs and visits. Pupils value the choice in key stage 4 options and in the sixth form. Most pupils do well in their studies, especially those who start secondary school a little behind their peers. Strong careers advice helps pupils with their next steps. Many sixth-form students go on to university.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are polite and courteous. They know that the staff look after them well. There is very little bullying, but if it happens, pupils trust staff to deal with it.

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

School leaders have designed a curriculum to cover all aspects of pupils' lives. Leaders and governors aim to educate 'the whole person'. This is reflected in the faith foundation of the school where all pupils study religious education as a GCSE. There is a broad choice of vocational or academic courses in key stage 4 and in the sixth form. However, the proportion of pupils taking a modern foreign language, as well as history or geography, is particularly low. School leaders' actions are beginning to improve this proportion in order to meet the government's national ambition for pupils studying the English Baccalaureate.

Subject leaders think carefully about what pupils learn and in what order. Staff ensure that lessons build up knowledge over time, so that pupils have the information they need to explore new topics. Schemes of work include interesting, motivational content. For instance, pupils in Spanish learn about different festivals, and in science, they learn to think like scientists in practical experiments.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They give pupils useful feedback on the quality of their work. Leaders ensure that pupils regularly reflect on what they are learning. Pupils routinely use their corrections to learn and remember more, helping them achieve well over time. This is particularly strong in sixth-form lessons, where students use their assessments to redraft work and identify what they need to practise more. Lessons are rarely interrupted as pupils behave so well.

Some staff do not consistently have high enough expectations, and teaching activities sometimes do not help all pupils, especially the most able, to learn the ambitious curriculum. This means that some pupils do not always learn as much as they should. As a result, they make inconsistent progress compared with their peers.

Leaders have strong systems to identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff go to great lengths to see what extra help is needed for each pupil. Teachers think hard about how to remove any barriers to learning. In the sixth form, staff carefully adapt learning for pupils with physical disabilities, which enables them to participate fully. Teachers build in extra help so that pupils with lower starting points learn what they need to effectively. This works especially well for pupils with SEND, who get specialised help from a very strong support team.

Reading is a priority and is a regular part of the school week. Leaders make sure that those needing to catch up with their reading get effective extra help. Some pupils join the school with a limited knowledge of speaking English. Specially trained staff help them to gain reading skills quickly.

Leaders have a very ambitious programme to enrich pupils' learning and experiences outside of the classroom. As well as numerous school clubs, pupils get many other opportunities. For example, there are overseas visits and trips to the Royal Opera House. Every day begins with calm reflection. Pupils join groups to encourage better mental health or boost their self-esteem. Staff use assemblies and tutor times to set uplifting moral examples. Sixth-form students often take the lead in whole-school events and younger pupils find this inspirational.

Leaders are ambitious and model the high standards that they expect everyone to follow. They are considerate of workload and plan thoughtfully. Staff feel very well supported in their different roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are experienced and well trained. They look after their pupils very well. They ensure all staff are well trained and remain vigilant to pupils at risk of any potential harm. Staff follow procedures well and report concerns promptly. The school's central record of employment checks is scrupulously maintained.

Staff keep pupils well informed of risks, including online safety. Pupils learn the essentials of healthy relationships, such as a good understanding of consent. They learn to respect themselves and others. There are many ways for pupils to get support if they need it. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies when required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers are not ambitious enough. They do not always ensure that the work for some pupils, including some of the most-able pupils, is sufficiently challenging. As a result, these pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure staff have the training and knowledge they need to adapt their teaching better to meet the needs of all their pupils, including the most able.
- The proportion of pupils who take a modern foreign language, as well as either history or geography, is very small. For some pupils, this may have a limiting impact on their next steps or their choice of careers. Leaders should continue to increase the number of pupils choosing these subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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	126095
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10256516
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	1062
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Mike Newman
Headteacher	Mr Michael Ferry
Website	www.stwilfrids.com
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses four registered alternative providers to support a small number of pupils and students.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider, on a part-time basis, to give its exceptional athletes access to specialist sports provision.
- The school has a Roman Catholic denomination. Its latest section 48 inspection was in October 2017, when it secured an outstanding judgement. Its next section 48 inspection is due by October 2025.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, and some other subject and pastoral leaders. The lead inspector met some of the school's governors and also spoke by telephone to representatives of the local authority, the Roman Catholic diocese and each of the alternative providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors observed how pupils behaved before and after school, as well as in their breaktimes. The lead inspector visited classrooms with the SEND coordinator and met those staff responsible for extra-curricular clubs.
- The lead inspector met sixth-form students who had organised the school's cultural week. They toured tutor times with him to show how the activities were being carried out.
- Inspectors explored how well school staff at all levels carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding. This included scrutinising the school's central record of employment checks.
- The lead inspector reviewed all the comments made by parents, pupils and staff in Ofsted's surveys. He also studied the school's website and other available information online.

Inspection team

Keith Pailthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julia Mortimore

Ofsted Inspector

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