

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Anselm's College

Manor Hill, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 1UQ

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 March 2025

Outcome

St Anselm's College has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Serena Cubbin. Saint Anselm's College is the sole academy in the Saint Anselm's College Edmund Rice Academy Trust which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Pam Green.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this welcoming and inclusive school. They enjoy coming to school because they appreciate being part of a close-knit, friendly community. Pupils benefit from strong relationships with their teachers. They feel safe when they are in school and know who to speak to if they are worried or upset.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Staff are determined that all pupils gain the knowledge and skills that they need to thrive in their future lives. Overall, pupils achieve well.

Pupils understand their responsibility to behave with respect and consideration for others as part of the St Anselm 'family'. They behave very well in classrooms, as they move around the school, in the playground and in the spacious garden areas.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of enrichment opportunities that develop their skills and self-confidence. The school has a reputation for sporting excellence. However, opportunities extend far beyond sport into music, language trips abroad, art clubs, debating and much more. Students in the sixth form are given extensive leadership opportunities.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. The school has reviewed the key stage 3 curriculum to enable pupils to study each subject in greater depth. At key stage 4, all pupils are required to study at least one of the three modern foreign languages offered by the school. In all subjects, including those taught in the sixth form, the curriculum sets out clearly the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and when they should learn it.

Teachers are experts in their subjects, and they present information clearly. This is especially the case in the sixth form. At key stages 3 and 4, in most subjects, teachers ask probing questions that encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. They ensure that, over time, pupils build the detailed knowledge they need to complete written work to a high standard. However, in a minority of subjects, the delivery of the curriculum is less effective. This is because some teachers do not choose the most suitable methods to help pupils understand key knowledge. As a result, some pupils are not able to learn these subjects with the depth and precision that they should.

In most subjects, teachers make useful checks on pupils' learning. They identify and remedy any misconceptions swiftly. However, in a minority of subjects in key stages 3 and 4, there is variability in the accuracy of these checks. Gaps in pupils' learning are not consistently identified and addressed. Consequently, some pupils miss out on important aspects of the key knowledge they need to master. They do not learn the curriculum in the depth that they could. In the sixth form, teachers make skilful use of assessment strategies during lessons. They provide students with detailed feedback that enables them to improve their work further.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Staff's depth of knowledge means that they are able to support pupils with SEND in their learning. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school accurately identifies the small number of pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge. Recently, it has strengthened its systems to support these pupils so they quickly reach the same high reading standards of their peers. Most pupils are keen readers. The school library is well stocked with inviting fiction and non-fiction books. Younger pupils read regularly.

Pupils' rates of attendance are high. Pastoral leaders work closely with the small number of pupils and their families who struggle to attend school regularly. Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. The school is swift to alert parents and carers when a pupil's behaviour falls below expectations. Typically, parents are highly supportive of any action that the school takes to resolve such incidents. More generally, parents are most appreciative of the extensive and open communication between home and school.

The provision for pupils' personal development is the jewel in the school's crown. A multitude of opportunities are woven through the curriculum and the school's exceptional enrichment programme. These help pupils to blossom into well-rounded, confident and

articulate individuals. Students in the sixth form are excellent role models for younger pupils. Pupils in key stage 4 and students in the sixth form value the high-quality careers advice that they receive. This helps them make well-informed choices about their futures.

Alongside senior leaders, trustees have played a significant role in ensuring the school has sustained its performance since the last inspection. Trustees and leaders at all levels are considerate of staff's workload and well-being when making policy decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects at key stages 3 and 4, the school has not ensured that some staff have the key knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum as intended. This means that some pupils do not learn these subjects in the depth they could. The school should ensure that staff have the pedagogical expertise and knowledge to deliver the curriculum in these subjects as expected.
- In a minority of subjects, the checks on pupils' understanding are not refined enough. This means that gaps in pupils' learning are not consistently identified and addressed. As a result, some pupils miss out on important aspects of the key knowledge they need. They do not learn the curriculum content securely enough. The school should ensure that teachers have the knowledge and expertise to accurately identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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	136780
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10348265
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	988
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pam Green
Headteacher	Serena Cubbin
Website	www.st-anselms.com
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Saint Anselm's College is the sole academy in the Saint Anselm's College Edmund Rice Academy Trust.
- Saint Anselm's College is a voluntary-aided faith school. It is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the next academic year.
- The school uses two unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.
- An inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees. He also spoke with representatives of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account 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 the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alexia Gargrave

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025