

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Edmund's Catholic Academy

Compton Park, Compton Road West, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV3 9DU

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 March 2025

Outcome

St Edmund's Catholic Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Maggie Hazeldine. The school is part of the St Francis and St Clare Multi-Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Toni Ellis, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Walker.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say St Edmund's Academy is a happy and friendly place. They appreciate learning new things and having fun. Staff encourage and support pupils to enjoy each school day. This makes them feel welcome.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those with education, health and care plans, appreciate the effective assistance that well-trained staff offer. Pupils feel valued and included.

Pupils know the school will help them if they have a problem. Staff look after pupils' mental health well. When bullying happens, staff deal with it straightaway. Subsequently, pupils feel safe because staff listen well and understand their needs.

The school sets high expectations, which pupils meet. They work hard and behave well because they want to be successful. Pupils value their teachers' guidance to improve their work. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

Pupils can take part in a variety of after-school clubs. Some go to football or gymnastics. Others join the 'eco club' to plant trees and care for nature. Pupils enjoy trips to places including Hampton Court and local universities. These plentiful opportunities enrich pupils' appreciation beyond the classroom, preparing them well for the future.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has taken decisive steps forward, refining its curriculum, improving pupils' attendance and broadening pupils' opportunities. The impact is clear. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well. However, some pupils do not secure the exceptional outcomes that they are capable of.

The school curriculum is well structured and ambitious. It maps out what pupils should learn and when. Its practical design links learning with careers-focused activities. For instance, in geography, pupils apply for mock internships to deepen their understanding of environmental issues. This meaningful task connects job skills with key knowledge. These real-life scenarios help pupils remember more of their learning.

The school responded effectively to low uptake of English Baccalaureate subjects. The school has strengthened its provision in languages. Pupils enjoy their learning and are now keen to study languages for longer. The school's high expectations ensure that teachers use their strong subject expertise well. They design tasks for pupils to recall prior learning, building on what they know. Most staff check pupils' understanding to correct any misconceptions. This prepares pupils well for more complex tasks. Sometimes, a minority of pupils are not ready for these challenges. This is because staff have not checked pupils' understanding well enough. This restricts what pupils can do next, when their learning is not consolidated.

The school acted quickly after some A-level students did not perform as well as expected in 2024. Teachers now give these students clear help to think carefully and explain their ideas better. This has helped them feel more confident when studying on their own. As a result, they remember more and are now achieving well in their studies.

The school provides staff with clear information about the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt tasks well for these pupils. Where needed, staff make further adjustments to help pupils access their learning. As a result, most pupils with SEND remember their learning.

An enthusiastic love of reading permeates the school. A recently introduced reading programme to support struggling readers has boosted these pupils' confidence. Pupils confidently decode unfamiliar words. Staff help those who still struggle with reading comprehension. As a result, most of these pupils are now confident and fluent readers.

The school makes its rules clear and easy to follow. Pupils behave well. They treat others with care. Pupils attend very well because they are happy to be part of St Edmund's.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's personal development programme. They take on roles that shape their character. These roles include fundraising for charities, driving 'green' initiatives and mentoring younger pupils. Older pupils use these rich experiences to strengthen their college and university applications. Pupils benefit from the school's strong careers programme. They value meeting local employers and visiting workplaces. These ample opportunities prepare pupils well for their next steps.

Staff enjoy working here. They value the consideration leaders give to their workload and well-being. Trustees celebrate the school's strengths and improvements. They hold the school to account well against its priorities. They share the school's ambition and vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers do not check sufficiently what a minority of pupils know and understand. As a result, their prior learning is not consolidated, and they struggle to build new knowledge. The school should support teachers to ensure that all pupils' understanding is securely embedded before introducing new material.

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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Edmunds Catholic School, A Specialist Mathematics & Computing College to be good for overall effectiveness 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' 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	139891
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10377049
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	1,143
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	176
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Walker
CEO of the trust	Toni Ellis
Principal	Maggie Hazeldine
Website	www.stedmundscloud.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the St Francis and St Clare Multi-Academy Company.
- The school uses one registered 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of 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 held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, other staff and pupils. Inspectors also met with the CEO and the chief operating officer of the trust and a representative of the archdiocese of Birmingham.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys, as well as speaking to staff and pupils throughout this inspection.

Inspection team

Antony Edkins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Amieli	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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