

Inspection of St Michael's Catholic College

Llewellyn Street, London SE16 4UN

Inspection dates:	29 and 30 April 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Felicity Corcoran. This school is part of St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jonathan Ronan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Noel Campbell.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Michael's Catholic College under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Michael's Catholic College to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in July 2013, when it was a single academy trust and before it joined St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust as a founding school when it opened in April 2024. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's Salesian values of 'respect, understanding, affection and humour' are firmly embedded across the school. Pupils conduct themselves with great maturity and kindness. They are courteous and polite to one another and to staff. Many take active roles in the school community as school captains, diversity ambassadors or subject representatives. They are both happy at school and safe.

Pupils are strongly committed to their learning. The school provides them with an excellent education which prepares them exceptionally well for their next steps. There are high expectations for what pupils can achieve, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve high outcomes, including in the sixth form.

Difference is celebrated at the school. Pupils are empathetic and build a strong understanding about the world around them. They explore other faiths, cultures and historical events in a meaningful way. Enrichment is thoughtfully planned and delivered to build pupils' knowledge and provide valuable life experiences. These include visits abroad, workshops, talks and performances.

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

The school provides all pupils with a broad and highly ambitious curriculum. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which enables discussion of complex ideas. Pupils produce high-quality work and articulate difficult concepts well. For example, in English, pupils explore the fragility of human nature and apply this to their learning of 'Lord of the Flies'. In the sixth form, students confidently compare metaphysical poets in English literature and apply linguistic theories in English language.

Teachers regularly check pupils' learning. Pupils are resilient to setbacks. They are highly evaluative and see corrections as opportunities to develop their learning further. Teachers give pupils ample time to apply and hone their skills. For example, in mathematics, frequent practice encourages rigour and consistency.

Enrichment opportunities bring the curriculum to life for pupils and provide further depth. For example, pupils undertake numerous field trips in geography and visit museums and landmarks in history. This includes a visit to Berlin when studying the Cold War. Pupils take pride in their learning, and these thoughtfully planned opportunities help them commit their knowledge to memory.

Pupils, including those with SEND, develop a breadth of knowledge across different subjects. Pupils with SEND are quickly identified and are given effective support where required. This support is often subtly provided because teachers know their pupils well and have high aspirations for them.

Reading is a priority of the school. Ambitious texts are used throughout the curriculum. There is a sharp focus on literacy and ensuring pupils both understand and apply new

vocabulary and terminology. Pupils at the early stages of reading receive help that is well suited to them so that they quickly become fluent. A reading programme across form time and literary events encourage pupils to read for pleasure.

There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The school is purposeful and calm. Most pupils attend school very well. The school takes swift action where any concerns about attendance are identified.

Provision for pupils' personal development is excellent. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities are available, including charity work, which is firmly embedded. Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility and leadership skills. There are numerous opportunities to take part in competitions and clubs, especially in sports and the arts. Debating and a 'found in translation' book club are also popular. Students in the sixth form are provided with a 'Big Ideas' lecture series, and a thoughtfully designed extra-curricular programme. This enables students to build on their interests and develop their talents.

Personal, social, health and economic education is carefully considered. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They know how to stay healthy and safe, including online. The school invests significant time in exploring mental health and well-being so pupils have effective strategies they can use.

The school prepares pupils extremely well for the next stage of education, employment or training. Pupils are provided with a careers adviser, careers fairs, workshops and talks about a wide range of future pathways. Pupils in Years 10 and 12 also participate in work experience. Those who are disadvantaged are given a high degree of mentoring and guidance.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They are given strong professional development. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school's academic rigour and pastoral care. The school has recently joined a trust, which provides an additional layer of support and challenge. Governors and trustees work together for the school's continual improvement. Leaders are reflective and ambitious for the children in their care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	150937
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10379185
Type of school	Secondary
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	958
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Noel Campbell
CEO of the trust	Jonathan Ronan
Headteacher	Felicity Corcoran
Website	www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust, which it joined in April 2024.
- Prior to joining the St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust, St Michael's Catholic College was a single academy trust.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character and is in the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was carried out in March 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2028.
- The school uses two registered providers of alternative provision and three unregistered providers for a small number of pupils.

- 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 provides a breakfast club and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 senior leaders, trustees, governors, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, history, modern foreign languages (French and Spanish) and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for school improvement.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke to pupils, parents and carers and staff and took into consideration Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors checked the school's policies and records, including those related to behaviour and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including as they arrived at and left the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

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