

Inspection of Notre Dame High School, Norwich

Surrey Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 3PB

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Thomas Pinnington. This school is part of St John the Baptist Catholic 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), Kim Payne, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth Hollis.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since September 2011.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils genuinely enjoy attending Notre Dame High School (NDHS). Older and younger pupils alike speak positively about their experience of school. Pupils benefit significantly from the care and kindness shown by adults, and other pupils, in the school community. Pupils celebrate their cultural diversity and their individuality.

Attending NDHS means pupils are expected and encouraged to work hard in all aspects of their school life. As a result, they achieve well both academically and more widely. This ensures that they are prepared to take the next steps in their education. Pupils grow into being independent, considerate and confident individuals.

Pupils behave well. They are typically polite and respectful towards one another. Social times are happy. Pupils who participate in lunchtime activities do so competitively and with great sportsmanship. Equally, lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils understand that to achieve well they must focus on their studies.

There is a culture of pupil engagement in the school. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in the significant variety of clubs and activities. This range of opportunities further enables pupils to develop their character. For example, large numbers of pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

The school's curriculum is designed and assessed in such a way that it enables pupils to retain knowledge in the long term. Staff have access to high-quality professional development opportunities that enable them to deliver the curriculum effectively. They present information clearly and challenge pupils to respond to questions in real depth. Any gaps in pupils' understanding are identified and closed quickly. As a result, pupils achieve highly in national tests.

Teachers are ambitious for pupils. The curriculum is broad. Substantial numbers of pupils follow a modern foreign language through to the end of key stage 4. Older pupils benefit from a wide range of subject choices. Students in the sixth form also support younger pupils, for example with additional reading.

Pupils' reading ability is identified when they join the school. Where they require additional support with reading, this is tailored to pupils' individual needs. The books being read match the ability of the pupils. More widely, pupils can access books through their regular library lessons.

The support required for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is identified quickly and accurately. In the majority of cases, pupils receive the identified support and they benefit from this. However, in a small number of cases, the needs of these pupils are not consistently met through the curriculum.

The school has high expectations which relate directly to its behaviour policy. Almost all pupils follow this closely. During lesson changeover, pupils act sensibly in the corridors. There is very little evidence of low-level disruption. Sixth-form students are clear that positive behaviour contributes to their experience in the school. Pupils attend school regularly and the overwhelming majority are punctual both to school and lessons.

The ethos of wider personal development of pupils is exceptional. The school's provision to develop pupils' character goes well beyond what might be expected, and beyond the large number of clubs and activities available. Alongside the taught personal, social, health and economic education curriculum, it contributes significantly to the values of the school. For example, the school's Culture Club provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to engage with and celebrate the school's diversity. The impact of this group is tangible in terms of the strength of pupil relationships.

Pupils are proud to describe the contributions they make to charitable causes. Older pupils also contribute significantly to this whole-school priority. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive careers programme. This is a fundamental part of the curriculum. Pupils can participate in work experience and describe this as being valuable. Sixth-form students use, and value, the Renaissance programme to support higher education applications to areas such as medicine.

Leaders at all levels have a strong vision of what they want pupils at NDHS to achieve as individuals and as part of a wider community. Leaders have worked hard to engage the local community successfully and positively. Parents, carers, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The trust plays a key role in ensuring that the school can access opportunities for staff development. Staff speak highly of these.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school needs to ensure that the administrative processes adopted to safeguard children during periods of persistent absence are applied under all circumstances.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the needs of pupils with SEND are identified clearly, the precision with which these are met in class is not always consistent. As a result, a small number of pupils with SEND do not always have the same educational experience as other pupils. Leaders should ensure that all pupils can access effectively the high-quality education provided by the school.

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	137913
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10288511
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	1,602
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	502
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth Hollis
Headteacher	Thomas Pinnington
Website	www.ndhs.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 September 2011

Information about this school

- The school joined St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust in December 2015.
- The school has a religious character and was last inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2018.
- The school does not make use of any 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

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- The inspectors met with the school's senior leaders and trust leaders, including the chair of governors, the chair of trustees and the CEO.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, music and modern foreign languages. 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.
- 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.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lynn Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Dabin	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Gammons	Ofsted Inspector
James Chester	His Majesty's Inspector

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