

Inspection of St Dominic's Sixth Form College

Inspection dates:

14 to 17 January 2025

Overall effectiveness**Outstanding**

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Information about this provider

St Dominic's Sixth Form College is located in the London Borough of Harrow and is a Roman Catholic designated college. The college operates from a single campus in Harrow, and many students attend from neighbouring boroughs. At the time of inspection, the college had 1,475 students enrolled on a wide range of courses. Most students study three A-level courses, and a small number of students study vocational courses in business studies. A-level mathematics and science are among the popular subjects with more than 1,000 students enrolled. Other large subject areas are A-level economics and A-level psychology with 350 and 427 students studying these courses respectively. The college receives additional funding to support fewer than 10 students with high needs.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students flourish in a community where differences are celebrated and the Christian ethos of care, kindness and integrity are consistently practised. Students from a wide range of backgrounds, including those from LGBTQ+ communities, feel welcomed and accepted for who they are from their first day in the college. Students feel confident and clear that the message of zero tolerance against any type of discrimination is communicated clearly and applied by leaders.

Students across all courses achieve outstanding results in their examinations. Many achieve grade B or better in their A-level examinations and progress to the university or job of their choice. Those on vocational courses such as business studies perform equally well. Level 3 business studies students develop an excellent understanding of key concepts from relevant case studies in the business world. For example, they learn how adaptations to the menu allow international food chains to enter markets in new countries. These students make outstanding progress, and most continue their education in universities.

Students with high needs develop excellent independence and personal skills. They are highly involved in the community of the college. For example, students with high needs manage the college's very popular law society. This helps them to develop friendships with others who have similar interests. Students with high needs feel confident and prepared for their next steps in education or employment.

Students are exceptionally polite and respectful towards each other and staff. In lessons, they consistently demonstrate high levels of self-control, maturity and positive attitudes to their education. They fully participate and contribute to the discussions and activities and follow their teachers' instructions closely.

Students feel safe and do not experience bullying, harassment or discrimination while they are in the college. They fully trust that staff will take swift action if they report bullying. Students know how to spot signs of extremism and how to keep themselves safe from risks associated with radicalisation.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders have an excellent understanding of emerging and future skills needs because of the wide-ranging network of partnerships they have developed. Leaders, managers and governors establish meaningful and highly effective relationships with stakeholders, including West London Business, North West London Chamber of Commerce and neighbouring education organisations. They carefully use information from these partnerships and plan the curriculum to be aligned fully with the industry's needs.

Curriculum leaders and teachers work very effectively with stakeholders to shape the content of the curriculum so it provides students with the skills they need to succeed

in their chosen sector. They involve employers and stakeholders in teaching the curriculum through high-quality workshops and workplace projects. Across various subjects, employers and stakeholders set excellent tasks and assignments for students to help them develop important skills and knowledge needed by employers. For example, in A-level chemistry, students complete a project on industrial sustainability devised by a national food manufacturer. In A-level physical education, students visit a university to complete workshops on physiology testing, learn how to run professional tests and use a grail treadmill to rehabilitate patients with complex injuries such as ex-military personnel.

Teachers use their excellent knowledge of employers' needs expertly to plan the topics they teach. Based on the views of employers, teachers include extensive opportunities for students to work on group activities, to plan and coordinate projects and to practise presenting their ideas professionally. For example, in A-level law, teachers organise mock trials and a law competition where students write an essay and present to a group of law firm partners. This enables students to develop important skills they need for future employment such as oracy, critical thinking, confidence and working collaboratively.

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

Leaders, managers and teachers have developed a highly ambitious curriculum that demonstrates their high expectations and vision for all students to achieve their highest potential. Staff provide students with exceptional support and care to help them achieve these high aspirations and ambitions. They ensure students take advantage of outstanding opportunities to expand their knowledge far beyond the basics of their qualifications. They provide students with free useful textbooks, encourage students to participate in external academic competitions such as the Olympiad, provide high-quality mentoring for disadvantaged students and set them challenging work in lessons and beyond. Students are fully prepared for the university courses and apprenticeships they intend to progress to.

Curriculum leaders and teachers plan and sequence their courses very effectively. This means that students build their knowledge and skills over time with many opportunities to revisit and recap foundation knowledge as they progress on to more complex content. For example, in A-level physical education, the course begins with anatomy and physiology and then moves on to the respiratory, skeletal and muscle systems. Students learn new subject knowledge securely and effectively, which helps them perform exceptionally well in their examinations across all courses.

Highly skilled and expert teachers convey their passion for their subjects to students. They plan lessons carefully and effectively to maximise opportunities for students to recap on and apply prior learning. Teachers explain concepts very clearly and are highly effective in identifying and correcting any misconceptions. For example, in A-level mathematics, teachers identify common mistakes and teach students to reorganise an equation with fractions before differentiation. Students

develop outstanding knowledge of key concepts and skills quickly, which prepares them for the more challenging application of their knowledge later in their course.

Teachers use assessment very effectively to identify students' starting points and monitor their progress over time. They use a range of highly effective assessments, such as written tasks and questions and answers, to identify gaps in students' knowledge. Where a student may be falling behind, staff intervene quickly and successfully to help them catch up. For example, teachers use well-planned workshops based on the students' needs to support these students.

Teachers give students highly developmental and timely feedback on their written and practical work. For example, teachers of A-level physical education provide excellent feedback on students' written work that helps them achieve high marks in their examinations. Teachers skilfully link their clear feedback to the knowledge that students need to achieve specific exam objectives. This helps students know exactly what they have done well and how their work can be further improved.

Curriculum leaders and teachers provide outstanding support to students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know students who need help and how best to support them. For example, students with visual impairment benefit from seating plans, and specialist electronic devices enable them to access the lesson content fully. Students with additional needs feel the care and kindness in line with the Christian ethos of staff, fully participate in all learning activities, achieve and make exceptional progress.

Teachers and tutors provide excellent information, support and guidance for students, informing them about their career choices and preparing them for their next steps. They give students useful and specific information about their options and choices, invite employers and universities to talk to the students, arrange meaningful and highly relevant work experience for students and provide them with opportunities to visit employers or attend webinars about their specific career options.

Leaders provide students with an extensive range of high-quality enrichment opportunities. A very high number of students participate in activities such as sports, mindfulness and mental health sessions, street dance and producing the college magazine. Students have fun during these sessions, make friends and develop new skills and interests beyond their subject areas.

Leaders and managers monitor the quality of their provision exceptionally well. Through the effective use of data, they clearly and accurately identify any areas that perform below their high expectations. Leaders are aware of strengths and areas for development across all curriculum areas and take highly effective actions to improve the quality of their provision when needed. They provide very useful training and professional development opportunities for staff in topics such as the use of technology in classrooms to further enhance students' experience.

Highly experienced and expert governors provide leaders with excellent support and challenge. They use a variety of activities, including visiting lessons, discussions with staff and students and reports from senior leaders, to ensure that they are highly informed about the college and the students' progress. Governors make sure that the college meets its legal and statutory duties fully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130443
Address	Mount Park Avenue Harrow-on-the-Hill Middlesex HA1 3HX
Contact number	02084228084
Website	www.stdoms.ac.uk/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Andrew Parkin
Provider type	Sixth-form college
Date of previous inspection	17 to 19 May 2022
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students' work, seeking the views of students, staff, and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Ramin Narimani, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Paul Breheny	Ofsted Inspector
Nazia Shah	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Lonsdale	His Majesty's Inspector

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