

St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Uplands Avenue, Littleover, Derby, DE23 1GG

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups in the school. Standards in Year 6 for reading and mathematics are on track to be above last year's national levels.
- Teaching is good and there is some that is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure teaching builds on pupils' previous learning.
- Teachers check on pupils' understanding daily and plan work at exactly the right level. If pupils don't understand a topic they are given extra help so they catch up straight away.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well with each other.
- Pupils feel safe.
- Leaders and governors have made sure teaching and achievement have improved, and they continue to improve.
- They know the school well and plans for improvement successfully focus on key areas with clear actions that are carried out effectively.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced rigorous systems for checking and improving teaching so that it is at least good in all year groups.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Lessons do not always proceed at a brisk pace and pupils do not have enough opportunities to talk about their own and each other's work. Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve.
- Standards in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to write at length in all subjects and their handwriting and presentation are not of a consistently high standard.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 21 lessons or part-lessons, listened to pupils read, examined pupils' books and attended an assembly. Two observations of lessons were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, who is also a representative of the Trust Board, and another governor, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. There were not enough responses to the online Parent View survey for these to be seen.
- The inspection team scrutinised the returns from 29 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, studied records of pupils' progress, documents relating to the performance management of staff and those written by leaders to evaluate the school's work and plan for the future, as well as behaviour and safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Malcolm Johnstone	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lagden	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest group is White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and those with a parent in the armed services) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is also below average.
- Some pupils in Year 2 to 6 are taught in mixed-age classes.
- St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy in September 2012. When its predecessor school, St George's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- No comment can be made about floor standards, as the academy has not yet had a Year 6 group take national tests.
- The school is part of the Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust with another six Catholic schools in Derby.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so more is outstanding by ensuring:
 - lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are involved in active work more quickly
 - marking consistently shows pupils how to improve their work, in all subjects
 - pupils have more opportunities to talk about their own and each other's work.
- Raise standards in writing so they are similar to those in reading and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects across the curriculum
 - improving pupils' handwriting and their presentation of work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make consistently good progress in English and mathematics across all key stages. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge below those usually expected for their age. The school has successfully focused on developing children's skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Children currently in Reception have made good progress and most are on track to reach age-related expectations for the end of Reception in these main areas.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive additional help from teaching assistants which is focused on their specific needs. They skilfully lead pupils to answer questions rather than tell them and this helps these pupils make good progress through the school. There is no difference in the progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds; all make good progress in the school. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity for pupils' learning.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to provide a breakfast club so pupils have a healthy meal at the start of the day, a learning mentor to help pupils maintain good attitudes to learning and to develop self-esteem, and additional time from teachers to improve the quality of teaching in the school. The eligible pupils make good progress in all year groups in the school. The gap between them and others is starting to narrow. The current tracking data for Year 6 shows their attainment is approximately 5 months behind other pupils in English and in mathematics. It is above last year's national average for Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school's own tracking data for pupils in Year 6 shows that pupils are on track to reach similar standards to those nationally last year in English and to be above in mathematics. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are on track to reach similar standards to those nationally last year.
- The school has successfully focused on improving pupils' early reading skills with small group teaching for pupils in Key Stage 1 and has also had a drive to develop reading for all pupils across the school. Pupils value the wide range of books on offer and say they enjoy reading. The vast majority of pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach at least the expected level 4 in reading with many pupils reading books beyond those expected for their age very fluently.
- There has also been a whole school approach to the development of mathematics. Aimed at ensuring numeracy is systematically improved throughout the school, it takes a focus on pupils' understanding of basic skills and how to apply them. This has led to improved standards in mathematics.
- Though progress in writing is good, standards in writing remain below those in reading and mathematics. Pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work are weaker areas, and pupils do not have regular opportunities to practice by writing at length in all subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across all year groups and there is some that is outstanding. Reading, writing and mathematics are all taught well, so pupils make good progress. Strengths of teaching are the relationships between pupils and staff which inspire confidence from pupils, teachers' subject knowledge and the way they refer to prior learning which helps pupils build on this in lessons.

- Teachers check pupils' understanding daily and plan additional activities for pupils who do not understand aspects of the work. This means that if pupils do not understand any parts of lessons that this is picked up straight away and pupils receive additional help, so gaps in knowledge do not develop over time. This ensures pupils have a strong base on which to make good progress.
- Teachers regularly share learning objectives with pupils so they know what they are learning in lessons. These are matched to the different levels of ability of pupils in the class so work is not too hard or too easy. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have work specifically adapted to help them with their learning, and teaching assistants support these pupils well in lessons.
- In the best teaching, for example in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, excellent use was made of specific targets for pupils and different work was matched to pupils' levels of ability. The teachers' use of technical vocabulary was clear and accurate and the excellent relationships ensured all pupils were willing to 'have a go' without fear of failure. The pace of activities was fast and pupils made excellent progress.
- Sometimes lessons do not proceed at a quick pace and pupils spend too long on the carpet on more passive whole class tasks when they are ready to move on to their own individual activities. This means they do not all make the rapid progress they could. Teachers plan different activities for the main part of lessons but there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to talk about their own and each other's work so they learn from each other and take more responsibility for their learning.
- There are examples of marking which helps pupils to understand how to improve their work, particularly in literacy books, but this is not consistent across all subjects in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. They say behaviour is typically good and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils are confident they can go to an adult and they will help them. Behaviour records show it is improving and incidents of poor behaviour or any type of bullying are few.
- Parents that inspectors spoke to were also positive about behaviour in the school and did not think there was an issue with bullying. They said any problems were dealt with promptly by staff.
- Pupils are respectful and courteous to each other and to adults. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well with each other. The school has a learning mentor to help pupils develop positive relationships. Any pupils who have concerns can leave a note, which will be followed up. The school is successful in promoting positive relations and ensuring discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand about how to stay safe, for example when using the internet or when on the roads.
- There are a range of activities for pupils at lunchtimes, including sessions with a sports coach so pupils can take part in different sporting activities. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities including house captains, the chaplaincy team and dinner monitors. The school's focus has been on developing mathematics and each class has a 'maths champion' whose progress is high

profile and is celebrated in a display.

- Pupils are punctual to school and to their lessons and attendance is broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully focused on improving teaching so that it is consistently good and pupils make good progress. Self-evaluation is accurate and improvement plans focus on the right priorities, identifying clear success criteria and actions which are evaluated.
- Performance management systems are very thorough and the policy is linked to the 'teacher standards' (national expectations for teachers). Teachers evaluate their teaching against these standards. Teaching is monitored regularly and a range of evidence from different lesson observations, 'learning walks', pupils' views and scrutiny of books gives leaders an all-round view of its quality. This range of checks have supported improvement well.
- Middle leaders have successfully led improvements in reading and mathematics across the school. They regularly monitor how their subjects are taught and have been effective in supporting staff in the development of teaching in the school. They are aware there is more to do develop writing.
- The school gives priority in the curriculum to developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils study a wide range of subjects including art, which is displayed around the school and is a particular strength. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed in the curriculum with pupils learning about different religions, as well as learning about a Nigerian village and fund-raising for them.
- The schools in the Trust work together to provide training opportunities and to share good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They understand data and receive regular updates on pupils' progress; they challenge senior leaders about what is being done where performance is less strong and what difference actions are making. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the progress of these pupils. They ensure performance management is in place and sign off pay awards for staff, ensuring recommendations are justified. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and that this has improved. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and the policy is signed off by the Trust Board. Governors attend training provided by the local authority and the Diocese to keep themselves up to date.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138666
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	409373

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Burbidge
Headteacher	Patricia Hurd
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01332 766815
Fax number	01332 273395
Email address	head@stgeorges.derby.sch.uk

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