

Saint Martin's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Stoke Golding, Nuneaton, CV13 6HT

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Staff know their students well and relationships between students and adults are good.
- The Principal and the senior team have placed a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and there is good preparation for the rigours of teaching GCSE classes.
- The monitoring of students' achievement has been improved by the introduction of a more effective system that checks students' progress towards challenging targets.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are given effective support so that they make good progress.
- Pupils follow teachers' instructions quickly and without fuss. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare.
- Students are exceptionally polite and helpful. They are confident in talking to adults.
- Parents have confidence in the academy and feel it is a caring place where their children are well looked after. Parents and students say bullying is rare and students feel safe in school.
- The curriculum provides appropriate option choices and is enhanced by a variety of trips and activities.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have many opportunities to reflect on moral and spiritual questions and to become active citizens in the school and wider community.
- Governors show strong levels of commitment to the academy and monitor many aspects, such as finances, very well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking does not always provide effective feedback for students.
- Standards of presentation in some books are poor.
- Subject leaders do not have enough involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching in their departments.
- Governors do not have a clear view of achievement within the academy because they have not been given information about standards and progress regularly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 20 lessons and a small group of students being supported by teaching assistants. Two observations were carried out jointly with the senior members of staff.
- The inspectors considered assessment data on students' progress and attainment, listened to students in Year 7 read, and looked at work in students' books. They examined documents, including academy plans and the academy's self-evaluation of its own performance, academy policies, documents linked to safeguarding and child protection, and the minutes of meetings.
- The 67 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The 22 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- Meetings were held with students, key members of staff and governors.

Inspection team

Mary Le Breuilly, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional Inspector

Peter McKenzie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The previous school converted to an academy in July 2012. It subsequently converted from a middle school to a secondary school in September 2014. There are currently students on roll from Years 7 to 10.
- Although the academy trust the school belongs to is designated St. Dominic's Multi-academy Trust, this is currently the only academy within the trust.
- The Principal and the Deputy Principal took up their posts in September 2014, following the retirement of the long standing headteacher.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is 12%, which is lower than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students identified as disabled or with special educational needs is below average.
- A very small number of students attend off-site provision part time at the Independent Learning Centre in Hinckley.
- Extensive building work is being carried out in the academy as part of the change from a middle school to a secondary school.
- The government floor standards, which set the minimum requirement for students' attainment and progress, are not currently applicable because the academy does not have any students in Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that students get regular constructive written feedback on their work so that:
 - they know how to improve and make better progress
 - standards of presentation of work are improved.
- Strengthen the role of key subject leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching in their departments so that they can lead improvements more effectively.
- Provide governors with the information and training they need to monitor achievement fully.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and senior leaders in the academy have high aspirations for their students and staff and are already developing into an effective senior leadership team. The Principal has got to know the academy quickly and is aware of the strengths and the areas for development. Teachers in the academy have great confidence in him and have welcomed the new measures he has put in place.
- There is a comprehensive timetable of monitoring that is helping to identify the positive aspects of teaching and the areas for development.
- The Principal has placed a strong emphasis on professional development in preparation for teaching GCSE examination courses. There are weekly sessions where teachers meet to develop their skills and knowledge, and good use is made of expertise from other schools and examination boards. All teachers engage in a range of training and support so they can continually improve their practice.
- Subject leaders manage their departments well and have a clear sense of purpose and direction. However, they do not play a strong enough role in monitoring their areas of responsibility and, consequently, do not have a full picture of those aspects of teaching that need improvement.
- The academy did not respond quickly to the areas identified for improvement identified during the previous inspection and this led to a decline from the outstanding picture of two years ago and marking continues to need improvement. Although the current Principal has introduced a draft policy for marking which is being trialled at the present time, students in some classes are still not getting good written feedback.
- The academy has introduced a traditional academic curriculum intended to ensure that as many students as possible achieve the English Baccalaureate together with a good range of other subjects. The use of a qualified careers adviser means that students have good access to impartial, professional advice and support as they work towards the next stage in their training and education. A wide range of additional activities, trips and visits are used to bring added meaning and relevance to students' learning.
- Leaders make appropriate use of pupil premium funding and Year 7 'catch-up' funding. A range of support, including smaller classes and individual and small-group sessions in English and mathematics, helps disadvantaged students to make good progress compared to all students nationally.
- The progress of individual students is now monitored carefully following the introduction by the Principal of a new assessment tracking system. This is ensuring that students who are at risk of falling behind are given support and guidance to help them catch up.
- A few students attend alternative educational provision, and staff know that these students remain the academy's responsibility when they are educated off-site. The academy has good links with the Independent Learning Centre in Hinckley and monitor the effectiveness of the education their students receive and their safety and well-being.
- Until recently, the academy had not used external support and challenge for school leaders but the Principal has now identified a headteacher in another school to carry out this role. External training and support has been bought in from time to time for specific purposes; for example, to run courses for teachers.
- Most parents are highly positive about the academy. One parent typified the views of many in commenting, 'The school knows our son and the way he works. He is not just a number. The school has a very caring attitude.'
- The academy has a clear commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Students are encouraged to develop tolerance and understanding. Assemblies, lessons and religious services reinforce

this message.

- There is strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies, religious festivals, trips and activities present a broad picture of life in modern Britain and provide opportunities for students to consider their place within society. There are good opportunities for students to take responsibility and to develop life skills and confidence.
- Leaders have made sure that arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Staff receive suitable safeguarding training.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors monitor some aspects of the academy's work very effectively; for example, financial monitoring and the well-being and safety of students. However, their monitoring of standards and progress has not been sufficiently rigorous because, until this year, they only received information about achievement annually and did not always get all the information they needed. Governors knew, for example, how the pupil premium funding had been spent but not what impact it had on the progress of eligible students.
- About a quarter of the places on the governing body have not been filled, particularly those relating to the academy trust. This has put great pressure on the remaining governors who struggle to find the time to carry out all the necessary tasks.
- Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and carry out some first-hand monitoring, such as looking at students' work and observing lessons to get an impression of teaching. They have now put in place effective processes for performance management. They are fully aware of the links between performance and pay and they ensure teachers' targets are used as a tool to motivate and reward teachers who attain outstanding results or to provide support for those needing to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are quick to follow instructions in lessons. They listen attentively and complete work obediently.
- Students' positive attitude to school is demonstrated by their above-average attendance. The academy has effective processes to improve the attendance of the small minority of students who do not come to school regularly.
- In some lessons, there is great enthusiasm for learning; for example, in a music lesson where the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher and the opportunity to use the keyboards to try out different musical elements generated high levels of engagement.
- Students are exceptionally warm and welcoming to visitors, greeting them cheerfully with friendly smiles, asking if they need help and politely opening doors. They are confident, articulate speakers and at ease with adult visitors. They show high levels of respect to adults in the academy and to each other, and relationships within the academy are very positive.
- Students have a strong sense of right and wrong and a good understanding of the democratic process. They learn about and practise the values of tolerance and respect in their daily lives and can relate them to life in modern Britain. They are encouraged to take responsibility through such activities as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- The building work has meant that students have limited space at break and lunchtimes and lack outside spaces where they can run around and exercise. The academy has managed this well, and has opened areas within the academy where students can relax and socialise. It has provided opportunities for sport, such as basketball, in the hall. Students have responded positively to the trust this implies and there is minimal graffiti and litter around the academy.

- The improved tracking system that was introduced this year highlights those students whose behaviour and attitudes to learning are not up to the high standards demanded by the academy. Although this system has only been in place for a short time, it has already had a positive impact on the behaviour of the small number of students identified.
- Students are well prepared for lessons and wear their uniform with pride. Although most students take a pride in their work, when teachers do not check their books frequently, some students do not take the trouble to present work effectively; for example, not using rulers for science diagrams or setting out mathematics problems carelessly.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Leaders have made sure that arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Staff receive suitable safeguarding training.
- The identity of visitors to the academy is appropriately checked, and staff undergo strict vetting procedures.
- Students, parents and staff all agree that students are kept safe at school.
- Students say that they feel safe and that there is always an adult to turn to when they have problems. They confirm that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it does occur.
- Students are well aware of the different kinds of danger they face; for example, when conducting experiments in science or when using the internet or social media.
- Students and staff are aware of risks, and appropriate risk assessments are in place for trips and visits, such as the recent skiing trip.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students make at least good progress across the academy in a range of subjects because of teaching that helps them to build on what they have learnt before.
- Teachers typically have high expectations. Students are set challenging targets in all subjects and teachers are rigorous in recording their progress towards these targets. Students know how well they are doing and most feel that they are making good progress. They say that their teachers are keen to see them succeed.
- Teachers have been quick to rise to the challenge of teaching to GCSE level and have attended courses and consulted other schools to ensure that they are fully aware of the standards expected. Their good subject knowledge has helped them to prepare to teach GCSE effectively.
- There is a strong emphasis on literacy skills, particularly spelling and grammar, in many subjects, and students develop good use of specialist vocabulary for each subject. Many students enjoy reading and the academy encourages them to read widely.
- Teachers give good verbal feedback to students in class and are always ready to help them in lunchtimes or after school when there is something they do not understand. Questioning is used well to check students' knowledge and understanding of key facts.
- Marking was a key focus for improvement at the last inspection and it is still in need of improvement. While some teachers provide high-quality feedback that helps students to understand exactly what they need to do to improve, others check students' exercise books too infrequently and rely too heavily on students marking their own work. When this happens, students take less pride in their work and presentation deteriorates.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Students join the academy with prior attainment that is high compared to national averages. Over their time in the academy, they make good progress in mathematics and outstanding progress in English. By the end of Year 9, the majority of students are working at levels that are higher than those expected for their age.
- Academy assessments indicate that progress in most other subjects is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Students in the current Year 10 have only just started on their GCSE courses. The academy's data for their first term in Key Stage 4 indicates that they are currently making good progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics. The academy is therefore predicting that they will leave at the end of Year 11 with GCSE results that are above the national average and that their progress across Key Stage 4 will be at least good.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective additional support they receive. Students in alternative provision are also making good progress.
- Because the numbers of students eligible for the pupil premium are small, the standards they reach vary considerably from year to year. The progress these students make compares favourably with that of similar students nationally, although it is not quite as rapid as the progress made by their classmates. Because the academy does not currently have students in Year 11, no national data is available on the relative attainment of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics.
- The most-able students often make better progress than is expected of them and many reach levels that are well above those expected for their age.
- Good-quality support is provided to those who arrive in Year 7 with below expected levels in English and mathematics. This enables most of them to catch up by the end of the year.

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	138290
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	450001

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	384
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John McGlynn
Principal	Clive Wright
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 July 2012
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