

# St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy

The Avenue, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 1AE

**Inspection dates** 15–16 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Good		2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The Principal and other leaders, including governors, are working effectively to improve teaching and learning. They have ensured that pupils achieve well across the academy.
- Attainment has risen considerably in all key stages this year. Most groups of pupils make good progress because leaders and staff work very effectively to identify and to reduce any gaps in their attainment.
- Children in the early years are taught well and make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good in Years 1 to 6. Teachers promote pupils' progress well by checking their learning regularly and removing any misunderstandings quickly.
- Teachers skilfully guide pupils through examples of new learning. This enables them to complete the tasks that they do on their own successfully.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations for their behaviour and progress. They behave equally well in lessons and throughout the academy. Relationships between staff and pupils are good.
- The academy's good procedures for ensuring pupils' safety result in all pupils being very well cared for. Parents are very appreciative of the support provided by staff for their children.
- The Principal leads her colleagues well in all aspects of the academy's work. Other senior and middle leaders have developed their skills and expertise considerably this year. This has enabled them to play a highly effective role in driving improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On occasion, Reception staff do not question children closely enough to really extend their learning.
- Weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting skills in Key Stage 1 hold back their progress.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most-able pupils sufficiently to deepen their learning.
- Teachers do not always set new targets for, or track the progress of, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs precisely. Consequently, these pupils do not all make consistently good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to all classrooms to check on pupils' learning. On three of these visits, they were accompanied by the Principal. Inspectors heard pupils in Year 2 read. Together with the Principal, inspectors reviewed and discussed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with academy staff, a group of pupils, members of the academy committee (governing body) and board members of the Newman Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to a questionnaire completed by staff and the 35 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed parents' responses to the academy's recent survey. An inspector spoke informally with some parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; a report written by consultants; the academy's improvement plan; the academy's own information on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Fox

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013 as part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company. When its predecessor school, St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- An academy committee, which takes the role of the local governing body, undertakes the governance of the academy at local level. The directors of the Multi-Academy Company hold overarching responsibilities for the academy's work.
- The academy operates on two sites, approximately one mile apart, with Reception and Key Stage 1 on one site and Key Stage 2 on the other site. A private, 24-place Nursery operates on the site with the younger children. This provision is not part of this inspection and is inspected separately.
- Reception children in the early years attend on a full-time basis.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement, by ensuring that:
  - Reception staff routinely question children closely to really extend their learning
  - Key Stage 1 teachers help pupils to develop more secure spelling and handwriting skills
  - teachers plan activities that consistently challenge the most-able pupils and deepen and extend their learning
  - teachers set precise targets for and track the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs more systematically.

## Inspection judgements

### Leadership and management are good

- The Principal, well supported by other leaders and governors, provides strong leadership of teaching. On the very few occasions when the quality of teaching dips, the Principal takes swift action to improve it. The academy's work in improving teaching has been increasingly successful over the last year. It is now being increasingly reflected in rising standards in all key stages. Leaders have developed a culture where teaching is consistently good and pupils are keen to learn and behave well.
- Other senior and middle leaders, including the leader of the early years, are increasingly being held accountable for the work which they do. They have benefited from good training that has developed their skills in leading teaching and monitoring pupils' achievement in the areas of the academy's work for which they are responsible. Their enhanced expertise has strengthened the academy's systems for checking pupils' performance and for driving improvement.
- The academy ensures that all pupils enjoy the same opportunities to succeed and that no pupils experience any form of discrimination. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and take action quickly to identify and support any pupil in danger of falling behind. They have allocated teaching assistants and other resources purposefully to provide effective support for individual pupils who might need it. This has accelerated the progress of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, for example, in developing their reading skills in Key Stage 1. Leaders hold staff fully accountable for ensuring that pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are supported effectively to reduce gaps in attainment with other pupils. As a result these pupils are making considerable gains in their academic and personal development.
- Leaders have recognised that not enough disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Leaders are revising the target setting and tracking procedures for these pupils with a view to accelerating their progress. These well-considered actions are at an early stage and have not yet had the impact on achievement that is intended.
- The academy is working with its partners in the multi-academy 'family', to develop its preferred methods of assessment. Staff have, independently, devised a progression ladder to monitor pupils' achievement. External moderation has confirmed that the academy's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are accurate. Leaders regularly review the curriculum) and adapt it to meet statutory requirements and to make important improvements in pupils' skills.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure pupils are both well informed and thoughtful. Teachers carefully plan the topics and activities they intend to teach so that pupils have to think about 'big questions' and develop a sense of responsibility both for themselves and for others. The emphasis the academy gives in assemblies to key qualities such as resilience and caring for others, successfully fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Activities such as the gardening club similarly help promote their understanding of the need to sustain the natural environment very well.
- The academy teaches British values effectively through its curriculum for pupils' personal and social education. Assemblies provide pupils with regular opportunities to consider aspects of democracy and individual liberty. The academy's programme for faith education enables pupils to explore and to celebrate the values of contrasting cultures, for example in the English-speaking world and in Pakistan. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in British society.
- Leaders have spent the additional primary sport funding effectively. They have employed a specialist sports coach who has worked with teachers to improve their skills in teaching aspects of physical education. They have increased the number of sports and physical activities, as well as after-school clubs that are available for pupils take part in. Their careful monitoring of the impact of these actions on pupils' physical well-being shows that almost all pupils have improved their health and performance in sport over the last year.

- Leaders, including governors with relevant professional expertise in safeguarding, check that current government requirements are fully met and that safeguarding arrangements are effectively applied, across the academy. They keep relevant policies, staff employment checks and training up to date. Governors have very recently revised the safeguarding policy to include the requirement to keep pupils safe from radicalisation.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective. The academy committee contains a broad range of expertise and its members (governors) know the academy well. They receive detailed information from the Principal on all aspects of the academy’s work. Their careful analysis of this information has enabled them to gain a clear understanding of how well pupils are achieving compared to other pupils nationally. They know exactly where more work is required to further accelerate the progress of different groups of pupils. They consider carefully the uses the academy makes of the pupil premium funding and are able to identify the positive impact the academy has already gained from this expenditure.
  - Governors check pupils’ books and hold discussions with key subject leaders and pupils to assure themselves that the progress pupils make is sufficient.
  - Governors ensure efficient management of financial resources. They are well informed about procedures for managing the performance of staff. They consider carefully the reports of external consultants and the principal on teaching in order to satisfy themselves of its good quality. They use this information appropriately to exercise their responsibilities for making pay awards for staff who meet targets set.
  - Governors are aware that the academy’s website is not fully functional yet and does not contain all the information which would be useful for parents.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave equally well in lessons in all other areas of the academy. They are extremely proud of their academy. They show in assemblies and in their relationships with staff and with each other that they uphold the academy’s values of care, mutual consideration and respect.
- Play and lunchtimes are enjoyable occasions, because pupils like each other’s company and are keen to challenge and to amuse themselves in a range of activities. Pupils take full advantage of their play equipment and the playground area to exercise healthily. They are unfailingly polite and well mannered, naturally take turns and treat each other in a kindly way. Pupils need no reminders to keep their picnic areas tidy.
- Pupils display very positive attitudes to their learning. They are keen to please, as shown by their enthusiastic responses in class. Pupils’ hard-working attitudes help maintain the brisk pace of lessons and support their good achievement. They take pride in their work and present it neatly. They respond well to incentives, such as house-points, which they rightly see as a reward for good work and their timely completion of homework.
- Incidents of serious misbehaviour are very infrequent. Academy routines, such as the ‘traffic-light’ system for managing behaviour, are well established, understood and followed. Pupils and parents report that staff deal with the rare occurrences of bullying or other forms of misbehaviour, swiftly and effectively. Parents are very satisfied with the actions leaders take to ensure all pupils learn harmoniously together.

### Safety

- The academy’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and parents are unanimous in their view that staff make great efforts to cater for pupils’ needs. Pupils say that ‘staff will always put our safety first’.
- Staff monitor the attendance, behaviour and physical well-being of individual pupils who join the academy part-way through the year very effectively to ensure that these pupils settle quickly. Leaders record all communications with pupils causing concern and work closely with local safeguarding teams and other

agencies to support individual pupils. The academy's safeguarding log shows that this collaboration has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of cases referred to social services.

- Leaders are skilled in working with pupils who have had difficulty managing their behaviour in their previous schools. This ensures that these pupils feel welcome in the academy and display, over time, improved attitudes to learning and their peers. Rates of attendance have risen slightly in the past year and are in line with the national average.
- Staff pay particular attention to keeping pupils safe online. This 'message' is repeatedly emphasised in weekly newsletters and by visitors who have spoken to pupils about cyber-bullying and internet safety. Laptop computers have safety statements attached to keep pupils alert and the academy makes sure that websites are filtered for inappropriate content. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe, by not disclosing information unwisely.
- Although there are no recorded incidents of bullying or racism, neither staff nor pupils are complacent. The pupil council has supported leaders by carrying out its own anti-bullying survey. It is currently making an anti-bullying video and is designing an anti-bullying pledge to enhance pupils' awareness and commitment to combating this potential risk.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Despite some minor inconsistency, teaching is good overall in the early years and in both key stages. Across the academy, staff monitor and assess pupils' progress carefully and use this information well to plan lessons that enable pupils to build steadily on their prior learning. Staff tackle and resolve pupils' misunderstandings quickly, which helps pupils to develop their learning well.
- Teachers manage pupils well. They are very skilful at refocusing the attention of individual pupils who find it difficult to sustain their concentration. This good practice ensures that pupils remain on task and work hard. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour ensures they are able to work productively on their own, in pairs and in small groups, while staff support other pupils.
- Teacher's expert teaching of early reading skills and their consistent use of the academy's phonics programme are enabling more pupils to exceed nationally expected levels in reading. The well-chosen texts which teachers give to pupils in Years 1 and 2 enable them to practise and to memorise the sounds which they meet in their phonics lessons and this helps them to read accurately. The skilful questioning of teachers in Years 3 to 6 enables pupils to extract relevant information from texts, to interpret it correctly and to relate it to their wider knowledge.
- Teachers develop pupils' basic mathematical skills well. This enables lower and middle-attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 to use and to apply their calculation skills confidently, for example, in rounding up numbers to the nearest 100. Teachers explain new ideas to older pupils, such as the use of positive and negative numbers, clearly and concisely. They guide pupils carefully through activities to check how well they can apply their new knowledge of mathematics.
- Teachers generally develop pupils' writing skills well. High quality reading texts support the development of pupils' vocabulary in Years 1 and 2. Year 2 pupils can identify misspellings and recognise mistakes in the use of punctuation, for example, the omission of question marks. However, teachers have not placed enough emphasis on ensuring that pupils apply this knowledge securely in their writing, and weaknesses persist in the way they form letters.
- Teachers use technical language in English and mathematics accurately themselves and encourage pupils to do the same. Discussion is used well to clarify pupils' understanding of precisely how they need to express their ideas when writing 'persuasively'. The good guidance the teacher provided to Year 5 pupils, for example, enabled them to consider carefully the plans for the proposed new academy building and to contribute their own ideas. Pupils' oral and written responses to this task demonstrated their sensitive understanding of the issues involved and their capacity to organise their ideas effectively.

- Teachers do not consistently ensure that the most-able pupils are sufficiently challenged. They do not always insist that these pupils express their ideas as fully as they should so that their learning moves on quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not always supported as well as they could be. Teachers support them well on a one-to-one basis and teaching assistants are well briefed by teaching staff to provide careful explanations and guidance to enable these pupils to develop their own ideas and to work through tasks steadily. However, teachers do not always set precise new targets for, or track the progress of, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs closely enough. Consequently, these pupils do not all make consistently good progress.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was broadly in line with the national average. A smaller proportion of pupils than was nationally the case achieved the higher levels. Provisional results for 2015 show an improved picture, especially in reading and mathematics, with more pupils achieving the higher levels. Current pupils have made good progress from their below average starting points in Year 1.
- Attainment in Year 6 in 2014 was in line with the national average. Pupils made good progress from their starting points in reading and writing, but achieved less well in mathematics. Provisional results for current Year 6 pupils show much improved standards and progress in all subjects, especially in mathematics.
- Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds represented by letters) matched the national average in 2014. Provisional results for 2015 show further gains in reading standards have been made this year. Most of the pupils in Year 2 now read accurately. Older pupils continue to achieve well in reading in Years 3 to 6.
- Writing standards improve as pupils move through the academy but pupils' handwriting and spelling are not always as good as they could be in Key Stage 1. However, both handwriting and spelling improve in Years 3 and 4 as pupils increasingly edit their work to tidy up their handwriting and to remove spelling errors. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 articulate their feelings and thoughts effectively in coherent, grammatically correct sentences, using features such as synonyms and metaphors. The punctuation of older pupils is typically accurate, for example, the use of commas to clarify meaning. Pupils demonstrate a range of methods for capturing and collating their ideas in writing, such as the use of bullet points and mind maps.
- Lower and middle-attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 show fluency in their recall and use of basic number facts to enable them to add and subtract accurately four digit numbers and to work out the areas of shapes using multiplication and division. In Years 5 and 6, these groups of pupils demonstrate increasing confidence and accuracy in applying basic skills, such as long and short division.
- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to compare their attainment with others in the school or nationally without risk of identifying individual pupils. Across the academy, most disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Not all disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Some pupils have multiple additional needs. Skilled support from teaching assistants helps them to do well in lessons. However, targets and tracking systems are not always sharply focused to determine the next steps they need to take to ensure that they make better than expected progress.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils has improved in all key stages over the last year but leaders recognise that there is more work to be done to further increase the attainment of these pupils. The most-able pupils in Years 3 to 6 demonstrate an increasing command of complex sentences in their writing for a range of purposes. However, on a few occasions, these pupils do not progress as quickly as they could in parts of lessons, when they have completed a task quickly and have to wait for their

classmates to catch up. Teachers' questioning does not always present these pupils with sufficient challenge to extend their learning.

### **The early years provision** is good

- The knowledge and skills of children who join Reception are below those typical for their age, particularly in reading, writing and speaking. The proportion of children who leave Reception having achieved a good level of development was below the national average in 2014. Provisional results for 2015 show a considerable improvement. Children in this year group have made good progress this year in nearly all areas of learning and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into life in the Reception class. They are assisted by the fact that most have become acquainted with the academy's environment, routines and expectations during their time in the Nursery. Reception children act responsibly. They enjoy positive relationships with adults and behave well, including outdoors, where they happily initiate play activities for themselves and their classmates. They show that they can make their own decisions, for example, when choosing what items they need to build ships or shelters.
- Reception children identify initial sounds from picture clues quickly and they mostly use letters accurately to make words. However, some Reception children are still learning to use number lines confidently when they are adding on beyond 20.
- All adults take good care of the children in their charge and ensure all their welfare requirements are met. Children are kept completely safe; the indoor and outdoor areas are secure and staff check the cleanliness of the outdoor area every morning. All staff are suitably trained in first aid. Children are taught about suitable ways to keep themselves safe when handling the equipment. They show that they can manage risk when they test out their balancing skills when 'walking the plank'.
- Teaching is good. Staff plan an interesting range of themes, such as pirates, as focal points for children's learning. They plan activities carefully, such as role-play and 'learning challenges', to develop children's speaking and social skills.
- Staff use a variety of resources and methods well to sustain children's concentration and to encourage purposeful play but not all staff use questioning consistently well to extend children's learning.
- Good leadership of the early years is shown in the detailed and effective procedures which have been established to track children's progress. The leader adjusts teaching to close gaps in children's performance as necessary. Children's learning journeys are comprehensive and clearly organised. They provide parents with termly summaries on how well their children are doing and encourage parents to reflect on how they can support their children in taking the next steps in their learning.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140146
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	450336

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	165
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angela Jones
<b>Principal</b>	Helen Butters
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 296736
<b>Email address</b>	office@stjohnskidsgrove.org.uk

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