

Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy

Abbot Road, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 4HX

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress made by the pupils is not good enough. In particular, boys and disadvantaged pupils make noticeably less progress than other groups of pupils.
- The pupils' progress is hampered by variations in the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment, including for the most able pupils. The successful practice which is apparent in some subjects and by some teachers is not evident throughout the school.
- The governing body, leaders and managers have not secured sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching needed to promote better progress by the pupils, until recently.
- Marked differences between the levels of absence and of exclusions among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and other groups of pupils show few signs of reducing since the last inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- Some notable strengths reported at the previous inspection have been sustained. The sense of warm relationships and of community, so valued by the pupils and parents, remain very evident.
- Those strengths are apparent in the effective work by the school to promote the pupils' personal development and welfare and in the pupils' typically polite, courteous and respectful behaviour.
- The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The work reflects the school's ethos and values and has an important positive impact on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The governing body, senior leaders and the staff are now focused well on making the necessary improvements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the differences between the levels of absence and exclusions among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities compared with other groups of pupils.
- Improve the rates of progress made by the pupils and, in particular, by boys and disadvantaged pupils, so that the differences evident in the outcomes for the different groups are reduced more quickly than in the past.
- Reduce the differences apparent between subject areas in terms of the progress made by the pupils, particularly in science and mathematics.
- Ensure that effective approaches apparent at the school that lead to good progress by the pupils are identified, adapted, and used more widely by the staff and in each subject area, with regard particularly to:
 - boys
 - disadvantaged pupils
 - the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school's leaders have not brought about sufficient improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the time since the last inspection. As a result, the progress made by the pupils has not been good enough during that time, particularly for boys and for disadvantaged pupils but also for the most able.
- The extent to which the quality of teaching promotes good progress varies between subject areas.
- The school has not used the pupil premium effectively enough to reduce the differences between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and of other pupils. The school's strategy has been revised and focuses more now on dealing with the barriers to learning faced by these pupils, but only recently.
- Recent improvements in the pupils' progress, though important, are tentative and not currently secure. The rate of improvement at the school is still not rapid enough.
- Long-term efforts to refocus the work of the school so that it deals more effectively with the progress of the pupils are coming to fruition, but only recently.
- The headteacher has worked patiently to change the culture of the school to being one that recognises the need for and now focuses on improving the pupils' progress. This has not been the work of a moment and has required determination and persistence.
- The wider leadership of the school reflects the headteacher's candid, honest and accurate appraisal of things that the school needs to improve, and her deeply held sense of values. The messages about what needs to improve at the school have been conveyed unequivocally and are understood widely among the staff.
- The senior leaders have now established a well-constructed approach, connecting the management of the staff's performance with opportunities for professional development which are linked with the school's current priorities for improvement. Those priorities are fully in line with the aspects requiring improvement as reported by this inspection.
- The approach to managing performance is working well. The staff feel well supported and can point to practical ways in which the professional development opportunities that they have received are improving their skills. They refer, for example, to meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (through judicious use of additional funding for this group of pupils) and managing the behaviour of boys more effectively.
- The school has introduced some important changes recently that offer the potential to deal with the areas that require improvement.
- The 'student hub' has proved to be an effective way of bringing together information about and records on the pupils, so that the staff can access the things that they need more easily and support individual pupils more readily. The staff now have access to wide-ranging assessment information and to appropriate expertise in dealing with it, so that they are increasingly able to take the information into account, for example when planning teaching for disadvantaged pupils. The 'Emmaus' centre provides an

alternative way of dealing with the particular needs of individual pupils who are experiencing problems with academic progress, with behaviour, or who have other needs. These important developments have yet to be sustained.

- The school's values are made manifest day to day in the calm, orderly and respectful atmosphere. They underpin the strong relationships between the staff and the pupils.
- The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced and supplemented by a range of additional activities, including opportunities to attend a retreat.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils has a notable effect in promoting the pupils' good behaviour and increasingly mature attitudes and approach to life. The school has paid careful attention to making sure that fundamental British values are promoted in a range of ways and throughout the curriculum.
- The school's broadly based approach to careers education, information and guidance, which covers all year groups and includes sources independent of the school, has resulted in a significant reduction in the proportion of pupils who do not go on to further education, employment or training to a low level.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is now providing effective support and challenge to the school. It is fully appraised of the aspects of the school's performance that require improvement and is working effectively alongside the senior and other leaders to bring about the necessary changes.
- Members of the governing body acknowledge that, previously, the governing body's approach to its work was 'scattergun' and not focused sufficiently on key groups of pupils.
- The governing body has used training opportunities and other support effectively to build relevant skills and knowledge to assist with its work. As a result, it is more focused now in its efforts.
- The governing body uses a range of appropriate means to monitor what is happening at the school and is well informed. Its influence is being felt increasingly throughout the school. This contributes to an appropriate sense of accountability among leaders and managers and is helping to ensure a consistent focus now on improving the progress of the pupils.
- For example, a member of the governing body has taken responsibility for monitoring the school's use of the pupil premium. This has prompted recent improvements in the school's published strategy and a greater sense of urgency in the work to support disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's work contributes significantly to the pupils feeling safe and valued at the school. The strong relationships forged by the staff are fundamental to the school's work in safeguarding the pupils. The staff know the pupils well as individuals.

- The staff receive regular and frequent training that keeps them abreast of potential areas of concern, such as radicalisation. They understand the school's systems for reporting any concerns that they may have and are fully prepared to raise any issue, no matter how trivial it may seem. They receive good feedback about any action that has been taken, or otherwise.
- The school works well with appropriate external agencies, when necessary.
- The curriculum provides suitable opportunities for the pupils to learn about different aspects of how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The extent to which the pupils make enough progress varies between subjects. In particular, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science and mathematics is not good enough to promote sufficient progress by the pupils.
- The teachers' expectations of the pupils are not high enough consistently. For example, the inspectors found marked differences between the quality of the presentation of work by boys compared with girls, particularly in mathematics. Too often, boys have not been challenged over incomplete and poorly presented work.
- Often, the pupils lack a clear understanding about what some of the information about their current and intended levels of attainment given to them by the teachers means. This reduces the pupils' ability to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The inspectors found wide variations in the extent to which the work set for the most able pupils provided them with an appropriate challenge. This problem was not confined to particular subjects or parts of the school. Indeed, even in some of the subjects in which the pupils make less progress than they should, the inspectors found evidence of good levels of challenge for the most able, for example in science.
- The progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils is restricted at times when the work that they are given is not based on recent assessments of how well they are doing currently. It relies too much on past assessments, which do not always provide an accurate picture of the pupils' capabilities.
- Similarly, the progress of the most able pupils generally is inhibited at times by having to complete mundane tasks, which they often do dutifully.
- The strong relationships forged by the staff with the pupils lead to positive responses by the pupils in lessons, even in lessons that are not captivating. This is no accident.
- The teachers create a safe environment for learning. As a result, the pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, which helps with their learning.
- Increasingly, the teachers are focusing on improving the progress made by boys and by disadvantaged pupils. This work is supported well by the improved information about the pupils' progress now available to the teachers and the increased emphasis given to it by subject leaders.
- Improvements are becoming apparent, though only recently, including in mathematics.
- Where the teaching is most effective, boys, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most able make good progress

and do as well as other pupils. When that happens, the pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing, of what they need to improve, and of how to do so.

- On the whole, the teachers demonstrate secure knowledge of their subjects. As a result, they are able to bring the subjects to life and to gain the interest of the pupils.
- The teachers are able to ask sophisticated questions that make the pupils think and increase their interest in the work. They support the development of the pupils' literacy skills well, making good use of opportunities to develop the pupils' reading, getting the pupils to write at length, and by using key words and terminology relevant to their subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school lives up to its ethos, practising its core values in the everyday life of the school.
- The pupils feel safe and valued at the school. They enjoy the sense of community cultivated by the staff.
- The pupils take pride in their appearance and are helped by the school to develop good levels of self-respect.
- The pupils develop mature attitudes, a sense of social responsibility, respectfulness and tolerance. Many told the inspectors that it is 'OK' to be different at Saint John Houghton.
- The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with whom the inspectors spoke felt well supported and confident about their safety, including being able to look after themselves, being aware, for example, of current issues such as radicalisation.
- The work of the chaplain makes a significant contribution to the pupils' welfare and sense of well-being.
- The pupils who take part in off-site provision for a small part of the week are helped to improve their attendance and attitudes to learning as a result.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The pupils are typically polite and courteous and have a good sense of curiosity about life and the world in general. This was particularly apparent when the Year 10 and Year 11 pupils queued quietly in the school's narrow and cramped corridors, waiting patiently to go into a special Mass for Ash Wednesday.
- Typically, the pupils are prompt to lessons and ready to learn.
- The teachers need to use the school's behaviour sanctions rarely.
- Sometimes, the pupils' progress is restricted by low-level misbehaviour; this was an issue particularly for the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities reported, however, that behaviour was getting better.

- Recent changes in the way that the school deals with misbehaviour are beginning to improve attitudes among boys who might otherwise misbehave.
- The staff challenge any derogatory language subtly and effectively. Instances of racist or homophobic bullying are few in number.
- Generally, the pupils' attendance is average. The levels of absence among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are, however, consistently markedly higher than for other groups.
- Similarly, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are much more likely than other pupils to be excluded from the school for short periods.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress made by the pupils in science has not been consistently good enough. It is not good enough currently in mathematics.
- Boys and disadvantaged pupils have consistently made noticeably less progress than other groups of pupils. The ways in which the school has used the pupil premium have not had sufficient impact to date. Recent improvements are tentative.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils make less progress than similarly capable pupils at the school.
- Other most-able pupils do not make fully the progress of which they are capable, given their starting points. This is because the extent to which the teaching provides them with opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding varies.
- The pupils make good progress in modern foreign languages, the humanities, and English. The inspectors found strengths also in technology, art, and physical education.
- Generally, the pupils reach broadly average standards by the time that they leave the school. This, combined with their good attitudes to learning and personal skills and attitudes, means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.
- The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make reasonable progress, given their starting points.
- The proportion of pupils leaving the school who do not go on to further education, employment or training is low.

School details

Unique reference number	137908
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10023248

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	647
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Gabriel
Headteacher	Joan McCarthy
Telephone number	0115 932 2896
Website	www.st-johnhoughton.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@st-johnhoughton.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum for mathematics on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum for mathematics.
- The school is a part of the Saint Robert Lawrence Catholic Academy Trust.
- A very small number of pupils receive part of their education off site for one morning per week with an organisation called Real Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons in all phases of the school and in all classes. They carried out other visits to classrooms to look at particular aspects of the school's work and scrutinised examples of the pupils' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders, managers and other staff at the school, and with representatives of the governing body.
- They spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons, and around the school.
- The inspectors checked the 200 responses on Parent View, and looked at the text comments submitted by those parents and an email received from a parent.
- The inspectors looked at inspection questionnaires returned by the staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records relating to safeguarding, records relating to the pupils' behaviour, the school's information about the pupils' progress, and other information about the work of the school.

Inspection team

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Tim Croft	Ofsted Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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