

# Saint Martin's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Stoke Golding, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV13 6HT

## Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The principal and his leadership team are dedicated to the school, its pupils and the community. They know exactly what the school's strengths are and are fully committed to its further improvement.
- All pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Most make outstanding progress in English and mathematics.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are securely good, with some outstanding practice. Leaders are keen to ensure that all teaching matches the very best found in the school.
- Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, in some subjects, including modern foreign languages and humanities, these have been too low for some pupils.
- Leaders have responded judiciously to some disappointing published outcomes for pupils last year in modern foreign languages, science and humanities. Actions to improve teaching and learning are making a positive impact on pupils' progress and their achievement.
- Leaders have ensured that staff benefit from high-quality training and guidance. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are improving rapidly.
- Pupils are safe and secure in the school. Arrangements to safeguard and protect them from harm are very effective.
- Governors provide strong challenge and oversight of the school. However, monitoring and evaluating improvement strategies lack sharpness at times.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils thrive within the school's excellent inclusive culture and ethos. Pupils are welcomed, supported and cared for irrespective of background, faith or ability.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils' conduct is superb and they show respect and care towards each other and adults.
- Pupils are proud to belong to this school. Their rate of attendance is consistently above average.
- The school has a strong reputation with parents and carers. Numbers on roll are increasing because of the high regard parents have for what the school offers.
- The school's excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leads to pupils becoming active and responsible young adults.
- The curriculum gives pupils a balanced experience across a range of academic and vocational subjects. Leaders have developed a knowledge-rich curriculum that enables pupils to think deeply.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching and learning so that more pupils achieve their potential by:
  - maintaining the highest expectations of all pupils in all subjects
  - increasing rates of pupils' progress especially in modern foreign languages and humanities.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - monitoring and evaluating more sharply and precisely improvement strategies
  - ensuring that all teaching matches the very best that already exists in the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have successfully created a strong vision and set of values for the school. Pupils and staff benefit from a highly inclusive atmosphere and a culture that supports all individual pupils irrespective of their background, faith, academic ability or need. As a result of this, pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their personal development is outstanding.
- The principal and his senior team are rightly focused on their carefully planned strategy to improve the school. They have reflected closely on the new GCSE examinations, the need to develop new and experienced staff and how to respond to the changing cohort of pupils. As a crucial top priority, leaders and staff have introduced a knowledge-rich curriculum. This has brought a stronger academic rigour to day-to-day teaching and learning that is leading to all pupils achieving that of which they are capable.
- Staff training and development are effective. All staff are involved in regular whole-school training activities and staff also have bespoke training pathways. These enable teachers to be supported to develop aspects of their practice that are specific to them. Staff whom inspectors spoke to said that they value the coaching approach that is used. This strategy is an important reason why teaching is typically good across the school. However, leaders are aware that there is still inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders know the school well. As a result, improvement planning is appropriately focused on key aspects of the school's work that need to improve. The accurate self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is underpinned by appropriately regular checks on pupils' progress. Leaders use all available information to identify where teaching needs to improve and, consequently, where pupils need to make better progress. However, monitoring sometimes lacks sharpness and rigour, and when this occurs, it leads to improvements being slower than anticipated.
- The special educational needs coordinator leads this provision well. There is an accurate identification of need so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and most are now making good progress from their starting points. Each pupil with SEND has a mentor who checks on their progress and well-being regularly.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well planned to meet learning about British values and the personal development needs of pupils. For example, assemblies are used to promote a wide range of personal qualities such as self-esteem, respect and responsibility. The range of educational visits and trips, as well as a popular and diverse programme of extra-curricular activities, makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and personal development. For example, a group of pupils had just returned from a trip to Krakow in Poland, visiting Auschwitz the evening before the inspection. Leaders ensure that the school prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects at key stage 3. They are able to choose some of their subjects from a suite of academic and vocational courses at key stage 4. Leaders

are clear about their ambition for the proportion of pupils studying subjects in the English Baccalaureate performance measure. This is broadly in line with the government's high ambition.

- Leaders use the additional funding they receive to good effect. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils in the school and, as a result, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are similar to those of their peers. Leaders are not complacent and have plans in place to ensure that these pupils continue to achieve well. Although the school receives no government catch-up funding, additional support is put in place to support lower-attaining pupils when they join the school. For example, the school makes very effective use of the 'Direct Instruction' method of teaching to ensure that pupils catch up with their peers in subjects including English and mathematics.
- Senior leaders are working closely with modern foreign languages and humanities teachers and leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. Plans are in place and action is being taken, leading to improved provision. However, this needs to be accelerated so that pupils achieve as well as they do in English and mathematics.

### **Governance of the school**

- The chair of the local governing body has been in post for just over a year but is bringing a fresh, meticulous approach to the role.
- Governors have overseen the school joining the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in September 2018. The school makes effective use of the support the MAT provides, including working with the school improvement adviser.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the key strengths and areas requiring improvement at the school. They now hold senior leaders to account and are beginning to ask more challenging questions. As a result, for example, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are close to those of their peers in the school.
- Monitoring and evaluating of some areas for improvement have not been sharp enough to ensure the rapid improvement needed. For example, governors do not robustly monitor the improvements needed in subjects such as modern foreign languages and humanities.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained. They know their roles in keeping pupils safe and know what actions to take if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. The culture to keep pupils safe is strong, and school leaders and staff know pupils well. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe, and almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that their children feel safe at school.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and reflect the latest national guidance. Appropriate checks are made on all staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. Senior leaders keep detailed records of any concerns that are raised by staff and any subsequent action that is taken.

- Pupils are taught about issues relating to safer internet use well. They are knowledgeable about the risks to their own personal safety because of the information they receive during assemblies and across the curriculum. Staff help pupils to understand the dangers of extremist behaviour and radicalisation.
- The school works closely with parents as well as with external agencies to ensure that procedures and practice keep pupils safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers possess strong subject knowledge. Most teachers introduce new ideas to pupils at the right time and at the right level of difficulty to help them learn well. Consequently, pupils gain new knowledge effectively. Pupils have faith in their teachers and respect their expertise.
- Teachers are skilful at helping pupils to consolidate their knowledge. They give pupils time to recap on the concepts they have studied. In the best lessons, teachers identify pupils' misconceptions quickly so that gaps in pupils' knowledge can be filled. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve have been too low in some lessons, including in Spanish and geography. Consequently, pupils have made slower progress in these subjects than is common in others, such as English and mathematics.
- Pupils work with very positive attitudes and they want to learn and find out more. Where teaching is most effective, teachers capitalise extremely well on this, ensuring that all pupils make very strong progress. For example, in a history lesson, some lower-ability pupils were keen to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In a mathematics lesson, Year 7 pupils were learning how to find the equation of a straight line very successfully.
- Teaching is particularly strong in English and mathematics, leading to pupils making very good progress in these subjects. Teachers plan meticulously to ensure that all pupils can access and engage in their learning, particularly in English. These teachers have very high expectations and set challenging learning activities.
- Teachers use the knowledge-rich curriculum they have developed to set challenging work for pupils, including for lower-ability pupils. Booklets used as learning aids have been developed in many subjects, including in English, science and geography. Some pupils find this approach fails to spark their interest at times, especially in science, but all recognise the value of these booklets when revising their learning.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the progress they are making because teachers assess their work accurately. Teachers' feedback to pupils helps them to understand how to improve their work. Almost all pupils take this advice and use it wisely, ensuring that they make strong progress in most subjects.
- In most lessons, teachers use effective questioning to probe, develop and assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, providing appropriate challenge and support. For example, the challenge for individual pupils in a Year 8 English lesson was increased by the teacher asking more probing questions systematically that developed pupils' understanding.
- Where teaching is less effective, approaches are either not fully embedded or not clearly understood by teachers. At times, misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge

are not rectified. Some teachers spend too long giving explanations before pupils are able to practise or consolidate this new learning. Consequently, time is not used well and pupils find it more difficult to memorise this new learning or to build on their prior knowledge.

- Teachers set homework regularly and pupils have an opportunity to work on this during the afternoon 'prep' time on most days of the week. Pupils say that they like having this opportunity to begin their homework that they later complete at home.
- Pupils read widely and confidently because the school makes this a key focus for all of them. Initiatives to develop reading include a 'thinking and reading' project, along with all pupils being given the opportunity to read in a range of lessons and in prep time.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- School leaders' and staff's commitment to inclusive values, tolerance and mutual support is reflected in pupils' attitudes and thoughtfulness throughout the school. Every pupil is valued and cared for. Leaders take decisive action to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Personal development activities in assembly, tutor time and divinity lessons provide pupils with good knowledge and understanding to support their emotional, mental and physical well-being. In response to an increase in the number of pupils needing support with their mental health, a new post of 'well-being adviser' has been created to better support these pupils.
- Pupils are friendly, articulate and self-confident. They have a welcoming outlook to all in their community, including visitors. They were keen to talk to inspectors about their school with the greatest of pride. They show respect for the school environment and help to keep it tidy. As a result, pupils feel that they belong to the school and have a stake in its character and reputation. They said, 'We are oversubscribed', and consequently value being a pupil at this school.
- The pastoral support provided by the school is a strength. Pupils, parents and staff overwhelmingly praise the help, support and guidance pupils receive when they need this.
- Pupils and parents agree that bullying incidents are rare in the school, but when they do occur, they are dealt with quickly by staff.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of fundamental British values. The pupil/student council meets regularly throughout the year to help to plan for improvements in the school. This group invites external visitors to share their knowledge with them, for example a local council democracy project worker recently attended a meeting to talk about how the council works.
- Pupils from Year 7 onwards benefit from a well-structured and comprehensive careers guidance programme. There are specific activities for each year group. For example, pupils in Year 7 work on 'Who am I?' to identify their personal strengths and subject preferences. Year 10 pupils have a 'world of work' week, when they take part in a speed-dating activity with employers and receive other subject-based careers

experiences. These opportunities enable pupils to make well-informed choices in terms of their GCSE and post-16 options.

- Pupils are safe, secure and learning well at school, as well as at alternative provision. Staff ensure that all checks on staff working at alternative providers have been carried out and they also visit regularly to check on pupils' progress.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour in and around the school, including at social times when less supervised by adults. Inspectors observed no incidents of poor behaviour during the inspection.
- All teachers have very high expectations of pupils' conduct. Consequently, almost no time is lost in lessons due to low-level disruption. Some parents told inspectors that discipline is too strict in the school. However, pupils value this and many thrive in their learning as a result of it.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They attend school regularly and on time. Attendance rates are above national averages, and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced and is now low.
- Rates of exclusions have remained low since the previous inspection. No pupil has been permanently excluded from this school for at least three years.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes for pupils are good. Current pupils' work shows that they are making strong progress across a range of subjects and year groups.
- In 2018, examination results for Year 11 dipped to being broadly average overall from having been well above average for the previous two years. Although outcomes in English and mathematics remained well above national averages, those in science had dipped. This can largely be attributable to the school entering some pupils for the incorrect level of the new science GCSE examinations.
- Current pupils' work in key stage 4 shows that they are making better progress than for Year 11 in 2018 in a range of subjects, including science.
- Outcomes in modern foreign languages, especially Spanish, have remained too low for too long. Leaders have taken steps to improve this, and current pupils across the school are now making stronger progress in this curriculum area. Results in geography also dipped in 2018, but inspection evidence shows that this is being corrected by leaders for current pupils, who are now making stronger progress from their starting points.
- The knowledge-rich curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' progress at key stage 3. Across a wide range of subjects, pupils are making strong gains in knowledge that they are able to apply in new contexts.
- From their starting points, disadvantaged pupils make average progress, as they have done for the past few years. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school continue to

make broadly average progress, including in English and mathematics. Leaders have used part of the additional funding to ensure that class sizes are kept smaller in many subject areas. This has led to disadvantaged pupils receiving more individual attention from their teachers in lessons.

- The progress made by pupils with SEND is improving because of the impact of leaders on developing tailored provision to meet their needs. Staff are now more aware of these pupils' individual requirements, and this is having a positive impact on their progress.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision are attending regularly and are making progress because of the good support they receive.
- As a result of recent strong advice and guidance, pupils' curriculum choices as they start key stage 4 are appropriate. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their education or training, with all of them transferring to learning when they left the school in 2018.



## School details

Unique reference number	138290
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10087395

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	665
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of governors	Jim Connolly
Principal	Clive Wright
Telephone number	01455 212386
Website	<a href="http://www.saint-martins.net/">www.saint-martins.net/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:cwright@saint-martins.net">cwright@saint-martins.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2018

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The school joined the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in September 2018.
- The overall responsibility for the school lies with the board of trustees, but a local governing body is in place and operates within a scheme of delegation.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider: The Hinckley and Bosworth Behaviour Partnership.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 29 parts of lessons, 17 of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to tutor time and an assembly.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break and lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a number of pupils' books in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors and other governors, and the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the 74 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, the 74 free-text comments from parents and the 55 responses to the online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Beale	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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