

Inspection of St Mary's Primary School Knaresborough, A Voluntary Catholic Academy

Tentergate Road, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire HG5 9BG

Inspection dates: 12–13 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's Academy is a nurturing and welcoming school. Pupils value the high levels of support and care they receive. Staff want the very best for the children. Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers make it interesting.

The school's values of 'unity, respect, joy, love and courage' are a key part of daily life. Pupils' behaviour is good. They listen carefully to each other. They play well together, with older pupils caring for younger pupils at breaktimes. Pupils say that the traffic light system helps them to behave well and 'be green'. They say that bullying is very rare.

Pupils feel a strong sense of community. The 'Minnie Vinnies' are excellent ambassadors for the school. They collect donations for a local food bank, visit care homes and make presents to sell for Crisis at Christmas.

Pupils feel safe in school. They understand how to stay safe when using the internet. Staff, pupils, parents and carers agree that the school is a safe place where children learn and achieve well. Pupils, parents and staff are proud of the school and its place within the community. As one parent said, 'The school encourages children to do well and grow to be valuable, kind and considerate members of society.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, governors and the trust put the needs of pupils at the heart of all decisions they make. Leaders know exactly what they need to do to further improve the good quality of education.

Leaders have carefully thought about what they want pupils to learn in each subject. They know the order in which they want pupils to learn new knowledge and skills. In English, mathematics and science, teachers build on what pupils already know and can do. In other subjects, teachers do not always build on pupils' understanding as they go along. This means that sometimes pupils are not able to fully develop their knowledge and apply this to more demanding parts of the curriculum.

The leadership and teaching of mathematics are strong. Teachers check pupils' learning carefully and pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy solving tricky problems and they are able to explain their answers.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. The curriculum is ambitious and delivered effectively by staff. Activities are well organised to excite children. Staff praise children often. They use songs and rhymes to help children to remember what they have learned, such as the 'alphabet song'. Staff ensure that children use their play to develop their understanding of early reading and mathematics, and to nurture their physical development. Children enjoy making marks as a way of developing their early writing skills. Children enjoy explaining the words and sounds

that they can write.

Phonics is taught well in Reception and key stage 1. Pupils become confident readers. Those who find reading difficult do not give up. They use their phonic skills well to read new words. Extra support helps them to keep up with their classmates. Yet sometimes these pupils do not catch up in time to meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 and Year 2. Older pupils enjoy reading books and they like talking about them. Pupils enjoy taking part in the reading competition which encourages them to read at home.

All teachers and leaders are ambitious for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Dedicated staff use their high-quality training to support pupils with SEND. These pupils improve their knowledge and understanding as well as their classmates do.

The school has an inclusive and respectful ethos. Adults listen carefully to pupils and manage their behaviour well. There is very little disruption in classes and around the school, including in the early years.

Many pupils join or leave the school during term time. This affects the rate of attendance, which is lower than it needs to be. Leaders work tirelessly with families to ensure that attendance remains a priority and is showing signs of improvement.

Pupils are responsible and know how to keep themselves healthy. They enjoy attending clubs, including tag rugby and football. Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles, such as play leaders and house captains. Leaders pay great attention to pupils' well-being and mental health. For example, pupils know how to stay calm by using yoga techniques they have learned.

Leaders have built a strong team culture. Leaders are considerate of staff workload. Governors work closely with leaders to strengthen the quality of education. Governors and leaders communicate well with parents and carers. They are always keen to welcome parents into the life of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a caring and nurturing ethos in the school. Leaders ensure that staff are vigilant and look after pupils, especially those that are vulnerable and may be at extra risk.

Leaders make sure that the right checks on staff are made before they start work at the school. Leaders have clear systems in school for staff to report and record any concerns. Pupils are confident to talk to staff if they have a problem. Staff know what to do when this happens. They report concerns quickly.

Leaders work well with the school community and external agencies. Leaders ensure

that pupils and families get help when they need it. Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, pupils are given timely support to help them to develop their fluency and skills and to build their knowledge into larger ideas. However, in some cases, teachers do not check pupils' understanding as they go along. Subject leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding systematically to enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills and apply this to more demanding aspects of the curriculum.
- Extra support is helping pupils who are not yet fluent in learning and applying their phonics skills. However, leaders should ensure that a higher proportion of pupils achieve at least the national standard in the phonics screening check.
- Leaders face particular challenges in improving attendance because of a high rate of pupil mobility. Leaders should continue to strengthen links with parents so that rates of attendance improve for persistent absentees.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	142176
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10110637
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Caroline Hyde
Headteacher	Alison Ashworth (Executive Headteacher)
Head of school	Helen Tomlinson
Website	http://www.stmaryscps.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average Catholic primary academy.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is low.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- In the early years, children attend the Reception class full-time.
- The section 48 inspection took place on 27 May 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- A monitoring visit was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors on 3 May 2018.
- We held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, and senior and middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.

- We met with members of the governing board, the diocese, the academy trust and the local authority.
- We did deep dives in: early reading, writing, science and history. In the deep dives, we held discussions with senior leaders and subject leaders with responsibility for those subjects, undertook lesson visits, looked at pupils' work and held discussions with pupils and teachers.
- We also looked at a range of policies and documentation related to school improvement planning, at the quality of provision in early years and planning in the wider curriculum across the whole school.
- We looked at safeguarding procedures and records of safeguarding and behaviour. We spoke to staff and pupils to evaluate their understanding of safeguarding procedures and checked pupils' attendance.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school.
- We also spoke to pupils about their school life and their views on personal development and behaviour.
- We spoke to parents and took account of 47 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- We met with teachers and took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Cathy Morgan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Hussey	Ofsted Inspector

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