

# Inspection of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Voluntary Academy

Mere Lane, Armthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN3 2DB

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Inspection dates: 7–8 January 2020

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have created a caring and supportive ethos where every pupil and member of staff is valued. Being kind and encouraging others are a way of life in this school. As one pupil said: 'We don't judge people. Being kind is the most important thing of all.' Pupils behave incredibly well and show positive attitudes to their learning and each other. Pupils are confident that adults will resolve any rare cases of bullying. Pupils choose a trusted adult who they can turn to with any difficulties or worries. They say that all adults in school help them to feel safe and well cared for.

Leaders have a strong desire for all pupils to achieve well. Pupils participate in a range of experiences. These include a school choir, residentials, fundraising and visits to care homes for the elderly. Pupils enjoy the well-being afternoons each Friday where they take part in activities such as board games, yoga and meditation. Pupils also relish responsibilities, such as being a special friend for the new Reception children.

Leaders have worked hard to involve parents and carers in their children's learning. Staff make a home visit to all pupils before they join the school. Regular workshops and stay and play events help parents to know what their children are learning so they can support this at home.

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

Leaders have brought about considerable improvements to pupils' achievement and behaviour. They are determined that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should be successful. Leaders are part-way through designing a new curriculum. In subjects such as English, mathematics and science, the curriculum is carefully sequenced. This helps pupils to build their knowledge over time. Whole-school systems give teachers clarity about what to teach and the most appropriate methods to use. New teachers receive training and support. This gives them the expertise needed to use these approaches consistently.

Some subjects are at an earlier stage of development. They have not been as coherently planned and sequenced. For example, in art, some isolated activities do not build on pupils' prior learning well enough. In contrast, some art units of work gradually build pupils' skills. This allows them to produce a high-quality final piece of work, making choices about which materials and techniques to use. Leaders have identified that the curriculum in some subjects needs further development. It is clear from their actions that this is being effectively addressed.

Leaders have prioritised reading since the inspection of the predecessor school. Reading is central to the school's curriculum. The timetable ensures that pupils have lots of opportunities to read and be read to. Most pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Almost every pupil reaches the standard by the end of Year 2. Leaders are determined that even more pupils should read with

accuracy, fluency and understanding by the time they begin Year 2. With this in mind, an early reading leadership role was created. This has given greater capacity to provide training and support for staff so that they can become experts in the teaching of phonics. The whole-school approach begins at the start of Reception. It continues until pupils are secure with their phonics knowledge. Pupils who fall behind with reading, including those with SEND, are spotted straight away. They are receiving additional support which is helping them catch up as quickly as possible.

Pupils spend lots of time practising reading in school. Leaders have made sure that in the early stages of learning to read, pupils read books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge. This helps them read with accuracy and growing fluency. Teachers' love of reading is evident. For example, in Reception, children were eager to show me the treasure chest full of books which they have enjoyed being read to them. Pupils are engrossed in story time each day and enjoy hearing teachers use different voices which bring the characters to life. Pupils say they enjoy reading. The range of texts they encounter through the English curriculum helps them to broaden their reading choices.

Pupils' personal development is fostered very effectively. It makes a strong contribution to the warm and caring relationships which are evident throughout the school. Pupils and their parents are unfailingly positive about the school. Pupils love learning and are keen to do well. They behave exceptionally well and support and encourage each other to be successful. They particularly value the well-being afternoons which support their physical and mental health.

Leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance are resulting in some success overall. However, too many pupils with SEND or who are disadvantaged are regularly absent.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They have developed systems which support them in responding to concerns appropriately and in a timely manner. External agencies provide effective specialist support so that pupils and families get the help they need.

Leaders' training and updates make sure that staff feel well informed and are confident to raise any concerns.

The curriculum incorporates plentiful opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes being safe when pupils are online, crossing the road or riding a bicycle.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not developed well enough in some subjects. In these subjects, leaders have not mapped out the curriculum coverage with enough detail to help teachers know how to build pupils' knowledge more effectively over time. Leaders need to continue their work to devise effective plans for every subject and make sure that these are implemented throughout the school.
- The teaching of early reading has been improved since the last inspection. Leaders should continue to make sure that the approach is embedded well so that even more pupils are reading with accuracy and fluency at an earlier stage.
- A high proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are persistently absent. Leaders should make sure that attendance for these groups of pupils continues to improve further so they are not disadvantaged by poor attendance.

## 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 are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144469
<b>Local authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	10124221
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rebecca Brookes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lucy Saxton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ourlady sorrows.doncaster.sch.uk">www.ourlady sorrows.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is the first inspection since the school became a sponsored academy with the Hallam Schools Partnership Academy Trust in May 2017. When the predecessor school was last inspected, in October 2016, it was judged to be inadequate.
- The current headteacher has been promoted from within the school. She was appointed in September 2018 after a period of being supported by an executive headteacher as head of school. There have been few changes to staffing since the predecessor school was inspected. There have been considerable changes in the school's governing body, with most members being new to post within the past year or two.
- The school is of Roman Catholic denomination. The school received its last section 48 inspection in June 2017. The next section 48 inspection will be due in 2022.

## Information about this inspection

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

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. Meetings also took place with three

governors, including the chair and vice-chair, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Hallam, who is also a director of the trust.

- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and art. These subjects were considered closely to evaluate the quality of education. In each of these subjects, inspection activities included: lesson visits; discussions with staff and pupils; meetings with subject leaders; and work scrutiny. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- An inspector spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Many of the inspection activities gave us the opportunity to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school. Additionally, we asked staff about the impact of the safeguarding training they have received. Child protection records and the single central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children were also scrutinised.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Mensah

Ofsted Inspector

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