

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

Mere Close, Off Mere Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 3HH

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy because they are now getting a better quality of education than before. Leaders and staff have raised their expectations of what pupils can do. They are determined that all pupils achieve well. They are committed to providing a school full of 'joy, hope and fulfilment'.

Staff help pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils talk enthusiastically about reading and learn to read quickly. The school library offers a wide range of high-quality books for pupils to enjoy. They say that the library is where they can 'relax the mind'.

Pupils are happy at school. They are kind to each other. Staff and pupils get on well. Pupils know that staff are fair and treat everyone equally. Staff make sure that school is a safe place. Pupils understand the well-established rules and behave well around school. They are confident that staff would deal quickly with issues like bullying.

Parents and carers appreciate the support they get in helping their children to learn. This was especially the case during the national lockdowns.

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

Leaders have improved the quality of education at the school but are ambitious to improve the school further. They have clear plans in place to achieve this.

Leaders say that reading is 'everything' in this school. The strong focus on developing children's reading skills starts in the early years. Children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes. They listen well and are excited to learn new things. Effective daily phonics teaching helps children begin to read quickly. Teachers identify pupils who need extra help. Well-trained adults work with small groups and individual pupils so that they keep up with their reading. Pupils have frequent opportunities to read. They enjoy listening to stories told by teachers. Leaders have carefully planned how staff will develop and enrich pupils' vocabulary, so that pupils can read and speak confidently.

Teachers deliver the well-established mathematics curriculum consistently well. Topics are sequenced carefully from the early years onwards. Teachers benefit from regular training and support. Pupils enjoy their learning in mathematics. They appreciate the opportunities they get to challenge themselves and achieve well.

The curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics is mixed. In some, plans set out clearly what pupils will learn and when, starting in the early years. Pupils' learning builds on what they already know and can do. In these subjects, pupils get the chance to revisit learning and teachers make regular checks to see what pupils have remembered. This is not yet the case in every subject. In some,

pupils struggle to remember what they have learned before and how it connects to what they are learning now.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Leaders identify these pupils' additional needs quickly. Pupils get the help they need to be successful. Some pupils get effective extra help for their behaviour and social skills.

Pupils are polite and respectful to each other. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. There is little low-level disruption in lessons. Leaders are taking effective action to improve pupils' attendance.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and the local community. Pupils take on extra responsibilities, such as being a member of the 'Eco Council', with enthusiasm. They have planted trees and save electricity around school. They learn how to be good citizens and have a good understanding of faiths and cultures. As one pupil explained, 'We are all equal here.'

Staff are highly committed. They appreciate leaders' support in managing their workload and promoting their well-being.

Trustees and governors work together to ensure that the school continues to improve. They know the school and the community it serves well. They provide effective support and challenge for leaders to overcome any barriers they may face.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors place a high importance on keeping pupils safe. Leaders understand potential safeguarding risks in the local area. They make sure that pupils and families get the help they need.

Staff receive frequent training and updates on safeguarding. They know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils.

The carefully planned curriculum gives pupils lots of opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe, including when working online. Pupils know about the dangers of knife crime from their work with a local charity.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan the curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

- In a few subjects, leaders are at an early stage of developing curriculum plans. As a result, the curriculum is not as well planned and ambitious as it could be. Senior leaders need to ensure that all curriculum leaders have the appropriate training and support to construct a curriculum that gives pupils the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- In some subjects, it is not always clear what children should have learned by the end of a unit of work. Some pupils cannot always remember well enough what they have been taught. Leaders need to develop effective systems for checking that pupils are learning and remembering the intended curriculum in these subjects.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	138081
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10200128
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	438
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Catherine Hayles
Website	www.sacredheart.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic voluntary academy. A section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place on 23 February 2017.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and groups of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the local governing body and four representatives of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust, including the chair of the board of trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, looked at curriculum planning, reviewed pupils' work, listened to pupils read and spoke with pupils and teachers about their lessons.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to curriculum leaders about some other subjects.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including two free-text responses, and considered one email received from a parent. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Finch	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector

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