

Inspection of SS. Mary and John's Catholic Primary Academy

Caledonia Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV2 1HZ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Saints Mary and John's Catholic Primary Academy is a welcoming, caring school. Pupils are happy and safe. They enjoy attending school. Bullying is not tolerated. Staff deal with it properly if it happens.

Pupils are polite and friendly. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily together. On occasion, when teachers' expectations are not high enough, some pupils become distracted in class. Some staff do not feel supported by leaders to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. They say that differing advice from senior leaders leads to inconsistencies in the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour.

Leaders do not set high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Phonics is not taught well. Work provided for some pupils does not meet their needs and they struggle with reading. Some areas of the curriculum are at an early stage of implementation. However, leaders have not checked to see if all subjects are delivered effectively and that pupils can remember and do more.

Activities, like after-school clubs, have been cautiously reinstated as COVID-19 restrictions have eased. Pupils enjoy attending these clubs again and walking to the local church.

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

In the main, leaders have created a structured and coherent curriculum. Staff teach pupils the vocabulary needed to deepen learning. This helps pupils begin to build up knowledge over time. However, teachers do not have the subject knowledge they need to teach some areas of the curriculum well enough. This means that they do not always set work that meets pupils' needs. When this happens, pupils' attitudes to learning decline.

Leaders have recently reintroduced some subjects, including French and physical education (PE), following the pandemic. Leaders have not yet evaluated how well these subjects are delivered or what pupils know, can do and remember.

Leaders know that they need to improve early reading. They have appointed a new early reading leader and identified pupils who have fallen behind. However, early reading is not taught effectively. Some staff do not have the knowledge and skills they need to teach phonics well. Work set does not allow pupils to practise the sounds they are learning. As a result, some pupils continue to struggle to read and do not gain the skills needed to become confident and fluent readers.

Staff in the early years do not consistently support children to learn well. Early mathematics teaching does not enable all children to build on what they know and can do. When writing, letter reversals are left unchallenged. Children respond with enthusiasm when teaching focuses on their interests, such as when retelling the

story of the 'Three Little Pigs' using puppets. Children welcome each other in the morning. They share and take turns when working together. Parents and carers are positive about the care and support their children receive.

Recent improvements to the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are starting to impact. Most pupils with SEND are now supported to access the same curriculum as other pupils in school. However, some adults do not have the subject knowledge they need to help and support pupils with SEND effectively. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders provide a sequenced personal development offer for pupils. It is carefully structured so that pupils learn to make safe decisions. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of positive and respectful healthy relationships. Pupils say that staff are caring and listen to them. They know there are trusted adults with whom they can raise issues or concerns. Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy the range of activities on offer at lunchtime. They particularly enjoy using the trim trail and visiting the peace garden.

Teachers do not feel supported by leaders to manage their workload effectively. They state that leaders provide conflicting advice in relation to managing pupils' behaviour as there are inconsistencies in policy and processes within the school.

Governors and senior members of the St Francis and St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Company have an understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. However, they have not ensured that school leaders have taken sufficient action to tackle weaknesses in curriculum implementation and phonics to improve outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. They are aware of specific areas of concern, such as protecting pupils from sexual harassment, domestic abuse and radicalisation. Leaders seek the right support for pupils. This includes support from external agencies when necessary.

Leaders ensure the appropriate checks on staff are undertaken before they are appointed. Pupils know how to raise concerns with trusted adults in school. They learn about healthy relationships and how to keep safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff have secure subject knowledge and teaching is not always well matched to pupils' learning. When this happens, pupils' attitudes to learning decline. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum effectively so that all pupils, including those with SEND, consistently engage positively in their learning and achieve well.
- Leaders have recently revised the curriculum in the early years. However, weaknesses in early mathematics and writing have not been picked up. French and PE have also been revised recently. Subject leaders have not evaluated how well these areas are being implemented or how well pupils are achieving. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is monitored closely in all areas to identify where improvements are needed.
- Some staff do not have the knowledge and skills they need to teach phonics effectively. As a result, a number of pupils have fallen behind in their reading, particularly in key stage 1. Leaders should support the new early reading leader to ensure that reading is taught well and that pupils catch up quickly.
- The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. Staff do not feel well supported by senior leaders. Leaders should ensure that there is a clear and consistent behaviour policy in place and that all staff adhere to this.
- Teachers have concerns about workload, particularly the time taken to plan mathematics lessons. This is because they do not have the pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach the curriculum effectively. Leaders need to provide further training so that teachers have the knowledge and skills to plan and teach all subjects successfully.
- Governors and trust leaders have not challenged leaders well enough or held them to account sufficiently. This has resulted in pupils not making the progress they should. Leaders should address all priority areas identified so that pupils receive a good quality of education and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

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	139800
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10210909
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Connie Mergen
Headteacher	Joanne Hanslip
Website	www.ssmaryandjohns.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- One pupil attends alternative provision provided by the local authority.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in French, mathematics, PE and reading. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, discussing the curriculum with leaders and talking with pupils and staff. They also looked at work from a sample of other subjects. Inspectors considered information on the school's website.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day.

- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, the early years leader, governors, the multi-academy company chief executive officer and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspectors took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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