

Inspection of a good school: St Mary Queen of Martyrs Voluntary Controlled Academy

Nidderdale, Sutton Park, Hull HU7 4BS

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

St Mary Queen of Martyrs Voluntary Controlled Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they feel happy and safe at school. Pupils told the inspector that the safeguarding team is always around to help, if they need it.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils are polite and respectful of the views of others. Staff remind pupils regularly of the high behaviour expectations or 'SM Qualities'. As a result, pupils are ready, respectful and safe. Classrooms are very calm and productive places in which to learn. Some pupils use the 'calm zones' near classrooms to get them in the right frame of mind to learn. Pupils with social and emotional needs receive support from trained adults. This helps these pupils to deal with their anxieties and grow in confidence.

Pupils say that bullying is rare. When it does happen, they say that adults talk through the problem with them. Leaders' record-keeping supports this view. The number of recorded bullying incidents is very low.

Pupils are proud of their school. One pupil described the school as 'a loving, understanding and hardworking place'. Pupils say that they work hard because they want to be the best they can be.

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

Leaders have recently reviewed their mathematics and history curriculums. This has raised expectations in mathematics and provided greater clarity for teachers on what should be taught and when. In wider curriculum subjects, such as history and design technology, leaders need to continue this process. The curriculum in these subjects does not set out clearly what pupils need to know by the end of each year, and learning is not revisited often enough.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. All staff have received the training they need to teach phonics well. Leaders' use of assessment means that pupils are placed in the right phonics groups for their understanding. Reading books are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils know. This helps pupils develop their reading fluency. Leaders have carefully planned the texts that pupils will read each year. This ensures that the books pupils get to know are suitably ambitious. Classes that read the most get to choose a book from the specially adapted vending machine. This encourages pupils to read widely and often. Children in early years follow the same phonics programme as the rest of the school. Their phonics lessons start as soon as they join the school in Reception. Children have plenty of opportunities to practise the sounds they have learned during play.

The mathematics curriculum has been carefully planned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the 'rapid recaps' at the start of each lesson. This helps them to remember what they have learned before. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They clearly demonstrate the mathematical principles they want pupils to understand. 'Anchor tasks' give pupils the opportunity to practise these skills before they start work. Teachers make regular checks during the lesson to see whether any pupils are struggling. Pupils in need of support get extra adult help. In early years, adults teach daily mathematics lessons. Children's learning is broken down into small steps. Children are well supported by skilled teachers and resources, such as counters and shapes, which help them practise their counting. During the inspection, pupils were practising making numbers to 10 and sorting shapes according to whether they had a curved or a flat surface.

In subjects such as history, leaders have carefully considered the knowledge they want pupils to learn in each topic. Teachers use quick quizzes at the start and end of topics to check on pupils' learning. However, the checks they make do not cover everything that has been taught. As a result, the assessments that teachers use do not provide a clear enough understanding of what pupils know and can do.

The school supports pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils speak with pride about the different roles they have in school, such as digital leaders, house captains and religious education (RE) ambassadors. 'Mini Vinnies' help to promote the Catholic life of the school and raise money for charity. Older pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Through weekly assemblies, pupils learn about the importance of virtues such as resilience, respect and love. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have started to reintroduce educational visits and experiences for pupils. However, the opportunities pupils have to attend after-school clubs remain too limited.

Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to help them manage their workload. Staff describe a close, professional team where morale is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding team in school. Pupils know that they can tell these adults about their worries. A comprehensive training schedule ensures that all staff have the

knowledge they need to keep pupils safe. A culture of vigilance means that all concerns are recorded and passed to the person with responsibility for safeguarding. The necessary checks are made on adults to ensure that they are safe to work with children.

Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe when online. Leaders ensure that online safety is regularly revisited to help pupils remember what to do if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some wider curriculum subjects, such as history and design technology, the curriculum is not well sequenced. The curriculum does not identify precisely what pupils need to know by the end of each year. In the longer term, the curriculum does not provide opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning often enough. As a result, pupils do not remember what they have been taught in detail. Leaders need to ensure that pupils are helped to remember more by revisiting previous learning more frequently and setting out clearly what they intend pupils to learn at the end of each year. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Approaches to assessing pupils' learning in the wider curriculum are not precise enough. The checks that teachers make do not cover sufficiently the knowledge and skills that pupils have been taught. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified and addressed. Leaders should review their assessment systems in the wider curriculum to help staff evaluate and support pupils' skills and knowledge.
- The breadth of clubs that pupils can attend is not wide enough. Too few pupils can access an after-school activity that interests them or stretches their talents. Leaders should ensure that more pupils have the opportunity to participate in after-school clubs and activities.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Mary Queen of Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School, to be good in March 2012.

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	140903
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10227145
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	330
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Fearnley
Headteacher	Catherine Coldham (Headteacher) Michelle Ryan (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.smqhull.org
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character was carried out in May 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the head of school and the assistant head of school. The inspector spoke with the special education needs coordinators.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. The inspector also reviewed curriculum plans in design technology. As part of the deep dives, the inspector met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils'

books and talked to pupils and teachers. Curriculum leaders and the head of school were involved in many of the activities with the inspector.

- The inspector held a meeting with curriculum leaders for RE and personal, social and health education. The inspector also met with the head of school to discuss the responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited phonics lessons.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the trust, including the chief executive officer, the director of school improvement, the director of teaching and learning and a foundation director. The inspector also spoke to a representative of the Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- The inspector spoke with a selection of parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding documentation and behaviour information.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day, including during lesson visits and at breaktimes.
- The inspector considered the responses that were received through the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including free-text responses. The inspector also reviewed the responses that were received through the Ofsted staff questionnaire. There were no responses received through the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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