

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Gladstone Street, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8NE

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy attending St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy. They say they feel safe and cared for by the staff. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are respectful of each other. They show respect for the school's religious character. Pupils know the importance of being kind. They try to show kindness every day. They do this by upholding the school's mission, 'Learn to love, learn to believe and learn to achieve'.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Older pupils take on responsibilities, including as lunchtime stewards. They are role models for the younger pupils and children in school.

The school environment is calm. Pupils behave well. Leaders celebrate excellent behaviour in many ways, including the 'mover and shaker award', 'proud points' and 'star pupil awards'. Pupils are proud of their achievements when they receive one of these awards. Bullying is rare. Pupils say that if it does happen, teachers deal with it.

Parents and carers are extremely happy with the school. One parent, typical of many, said: 'My son really enjoys his time at school and has been really supported by the staff. It is a caring school.'

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

The school has made rapid improvements since joining the trust. Leaders have prioritised their work on the curriculum. They have developed strong leaders for each subject area.

The curriculum is well planned and ambitious for all pupils. In designing the curriculum, leaders have been forward-thinking. For example, when planning learning for Year 6 pupils, they have considered the key stage 3 curriculum that pupils will learn at secondary school. This has enabled leaders to ensure that pupils are prepared well for when they start at their secondary school. The curriculum in some of the foundation subjects does not yet start in the early years. Leaders have rightly identified as their next priority the need to identify more clearly where all aspects of the curriculum begin in the early years.

Teachers regularly check how well pupils understand what they are learning. Teachers use this information effectively to identify any gaps in learning and to provide the right support. Most pupils build on their learning over time and can easily recall information. They know what helps them to remember key facts. For example, in mathematics and science, pupils say the '5 questions' activity helps them to remember more of what they learn.

Leaders have prioritised early reading. They have recently put in place a new phonics scheme. All staff have received training to teach phonics. Teachers quickly

identify any pupils who may struggle with their reading. They ensure that these pupils receive support to catch up quickly. Most pupils enjoy reading. Staff ensure that stories come to life for children in the early years. For example, during story time, children enjoyed going on their own 'bear hunt' in their forest area. As a result of leaders' prioritisation of reading, pupils progress to become fluent and confident readers.

Children in the early years know the expectations adults have of them and follow the class routines. They enjoy their vibrant learning environment. Leaders ensure that all children develop their spoken language. Those children who start school with low communication and language skills receive the support they need to catch up.

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are quick to identify pupils' additional needs. Teachers provide appropriate support. Teachers make learning accessible for all pupils by adapting their teaching effectively.

Leaders offer a wide range of opportunities through which they promote pupils' personal development. There are a selection of clubs on offer, including gymnastics, netball, drama and multisports. These clubs are popular with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Leaders prioritise the mental health and well-being of all pupils. Most pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves healthy, both physically and mentally.

Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They know the importance of respecting others who may be different to them. They celebrate diversity through their assemblies and the 'character awards'. Pupils study a character curriculum, including considering inspirational people. Staff encourage pupils to try to demonstrate key values these people have shown, such as resilience, determination and working hard.

Leaders have worked hard to reduce the number of pupils who are regularly absent. Their actions have seen improvements for some pupils. However, there are a minority of vulnerable pupils who remain absent from school too often.

Staff feel supported by leaders. They say that leaders consider their well-being.

Trust leaders and governors work closely with the school's leaders, providing them with effective challenge and support. All leaders are rightly focused on improving the school further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding pupils is everybody's responsibility. All staff receive training and regular safeguarding updates. They identify any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff report all concerns promptly. Leaders act appropriately to follow

up any concerns. They work closely with external agencies. They ensure that pupils and their families get the right support.

Leaders ensure that pupils understand any potential safeguarding risks in the community. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They have a good understanding of how to protect themselves when using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of learning, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge they want children in the early years to know, and when. Where this is the case, subject leaders do not always know if children are achieving as well as they should. Subject leaders should ensure that there is clarification around what children learn and when in all areas of learning to best prepare them for Year 1.
- The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced recently. However, there are a minority of vulnerable pupils who continue to be regularly absent. Leaders should ensure that these pupils receive the support they need to enable them to attend school consistently, so they can benefit from the good education and care the school provides.

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.

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	146322
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10254734
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Paul Ackers (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.saintmarysglossop.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a Catholic school with a Christian ethos. It joined the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in September 2018.
- A section 48 inspection of the school took place on 12 November 2015.
- There is a daily breakfast and after-school club managed by the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, computing and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector listened to a sample of children in the Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from the early years and key stages 1 and 2.
- Inspectors also looked at the curriculum plans for other subjects, including history and personal, social and health education. For these subjects, they checked the work pupils had produced and spoke to subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. She reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, looked after children, pupil premium, attendance and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. Inspectors also reviewed documents related to the external quality assurance of the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Anita Denman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Long

Ofsted Inspector

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