

Inspection of a good school: St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Uplands Avenue, Littleover, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 1GG

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 March 2023

Outcome

St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are very ambitious for all associated with the school to succeed. There is a shared and united vision. Underpinning this is a well-thought-out curriculum and policies that are consistently applied. The school mission statement, 'Grow in faith, have faith in growing', encourages pupils to develop into confident individuals who enjoy learning. Pupils make the most of the opportunities the school offers. As a consequence, pupils achieve well.

Expectations of behaviour are high. Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong. They remain focused and engaged throughout lessons. Pupils respond well to the house rewards system. They receive reward points for demonstrating positive attitudes to their learning code. As one pupil said: 'They encourage children to work hard. You don't get them for nothing!'

Pupils embrace the school's values of 'kindness, respect, faith, perseverance, acceptance and service'. They talk about each value's significance and what it means to themselves and their behaviour. There is a powerful sense of respect for one another and celebration of difference. This sense of respect is woven throughout the school. As one parent stated: 'I really appreciate how the school promotes British and Christian values in a multi-ethnic and multicultural environment.'

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

Pupils learn to read as soon as they start school. Well trained staff provide focused support. Regular assessments identify when pupils fall behind. Swift help enables these pupils to catch up. Books closely match the needs of all pupils especially for those who require the most help. Reward schemes encourage pupils to read regularly. Leaders provide a wide range of books. Some of these books encourage pupils to explore many

issues so they can become tolerant and active citizens. 'Reading champions', chosen for their love of books and reading, support younger pupils if they need help. Pupils understand the significance of learning to read. One pupil said: 'Reading is an escape to another world. When I pick up a book it expands my mind.'

There is a very well planned and sequenced curriculum. Leaders have identified the key knowledge pupils need to learn, remember and use. Staff expertly shape learning activities to engage and hook pupils. Probing questions challenge thinking. As a consequence, pupils' attitudes to their learning, and work, are strong. Assessment systems helps adults to identify and record when pupils do not remember what they have learned. Pupils explain their thinking well. When watching a video clip in history, one pupil said about the source: 'It may not be a reliable source and could be biased for dramatical effect'. That aside, a very small number of pupils are not able to articulate their learning well, even though they have understood what has been taught.

Children settle well into the early years foundation stage. Carefully crafted learning activities develop independence. Adults' interactions with children challenge children's thinking. Children collaborate well and show high levels of resilience and perseverance. They are keen and excited to share their learning with others. Adults systematically check what children know and can do. This is because leaders have clear expectations for where children should be at 'points in time'. Children achieve well.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Clear plans outline the needs of these pupils. Staff receive the training necessary to provide for these pupils. Pupils with SEND are well supported within class. Expectations are high for them and they achieve well.

The school is a very calm and ordered place. Pupils get on well with each other. They are proud to be a part of the school. As a consequence, they love coming to school. Pupils say bullying does not happen. However, they do know adults deal with it if it occurs. Pupils learn to self-regulate and share their emotions and feelings. They know the 'anti-stigma ambassadors' will help them. These are pupil ambassadors who are well trained to help other pupils with any worries or concerns. If they cannot help, they refer them to the very effective pastoral support team.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop character and personality within school. 'School councillors' and the 'chaplancy team' collaborate to provide a better lunchtime experience and ensure the school is more environmentally aware. There are a wide range of clubs and activities on offer. Pupils learn to be tolerant of difference and understand a wide range of faiths and cultures.

Leaders care about their staff. One member of staff stated: 'Morale is very high and we all work really well together. I'm really happy to come to school.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding in this school is strong. Staff state that safeguarding is everyone's business. Extensive training ensures adults working in the school are knowledgeable about signs of concern. Staff know what to do should they have concerns. Regular quizzes for staff keep safeguarding at the forefront of their mind. Systems for safeguarding are rigorous and extensive. These are regularly monitored. Leaders make appropriate checks on adults who work in school.

Pupils feel safe. They learn how to keep themselves safe in their community and online. They know there are adults they can talk to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has established a well-constructed curriculum and pupils demonstrate a high level of knowledge. However, a very small number of pupils are not able to articulate their learning well even though they have understood what has been taught. This means their learning is not as deeply embedded in their memory as it could be. Leaders should ensure the established assessment systems identify these pupils, verify their levels of understanding and provide opportunities for them to articulate their learning in different contexts.

Background

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

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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	138666
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10254902
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	334
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Rachael Snowdon-Poole
Website	www.stgeorgesderby.srscmat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of an alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, history and science. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. They also looked at plans for music.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing board, one other board member and the chair of trustees.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, pupil survey and staff survey, along with written comments from parents. Inspectors spoke informally to parents outside the school.
- Attendance, behaviour logs and safeguarding records were scrutinised. This included the school's single central record. Inspectors also conducted meetings with leaders to discuss the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Angela Kirk

Ofsted Inspector

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