

Inspection of St Anthony's Catholic Primary Academy

Stafford Road, Fordhouses, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 6NW

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

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 behave well and want to learn. They attend regularly, look smart and work hard. Indeed, a distinctive feature of the school is the expectation that pupils will do their best and think of others. The school's motto of, 'Let your words teach and your actions speak' is drawn from the words of St Anthony. Pupils know what this means in practice and show respect to others. Respect is identified as an important right in school, along with the right to learn and the right to be safe.

Bullying is uncommon but pupils know how to spot it. If it does happen, pupils and adults do not allow it to continue. There is also a healthy culture of helping pupils to learn from any mistakes, so that everyone feels encouraged and valued. The 'guiding hand' of supportive adults is very evident in the school.

Reading is a key priority and pupils achieve strongly in several subjects, including English and mathematics. Beyond the classroom, there are lots of different clubs that pupils can join.

Parents say positive things about the school. They trust leaders and staff to do their best for their children and to keep them safe. Inspection evidence supports these views.

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

From the start in Nursery, staff introduce children to books. Each day is full of supportive conversation and stories that give children the words they need to express themselves and to learn about the world. By the time they start in Reception class, all children are following a structured phonics curriculum. Staff teach this daily and it continues into key stage 1. They also put on extra sessions for anyone who needs extra practice to keep up. All of this means that pupils learn to read as quickly as possible. It also means they are well prepared to read widely and often once they move into key stage 2.

Other subjects such as mathematics and science, are also very well structured. The curriculum design anticipates possible misconceptions and provides clear guidance for staff to follow. This ensures that staff in all classes teach the right things, and in the right order. Teaching regularly revisits previous learning and makes pupils use it, which helps key knowledge stick in their minds. In science, for example, older pupils showed a strong knowledge of how light travels. They could then draw on this knowledge to help them explain how the eye works.

Curriculum design in foundation subjects is at different stages of development. However, in most cases leaders are pushing ahead with informed direction. In history and design and technology, for example, there is a clear line of sight through different topics that supports meaningful progress over time. In a few subjects, however, pupils do not revisit and use what they have learned often enough, which makes it harder for them to remember it. In geography, for instance, pupils learn

about different places. But the curriculum does not require them to use their earlier learning about locational language to help them develop their knowledge of the world.

All staff make regular checks on pupils' learning. Where this works well, staff ask pupils questions which explore and remind them about what they know. However, in some foundation subjects, assessment records are not as helpful as they might be to support future learning.

Leaders are quick to identify any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide additional adult support or adapt resources, so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as everyone else.

Across the school, adults model language well. They prompt children to talk and to increase their knowledge of words. In the Nursery and Reception classes, there are some high-quality interactions between adults and children. However, occasionally, some adults do not make the most of these to extend children's learning even further.

In addition to their learning in class, pupils learn about how to take responsibility and to show initiative. Pupils take on leadership jobs such as junior health and safety officers, who check on site safety and report back to school leaders. Furthermore, the school's values support pupils to know the difference between right and wrong.

There are plenty of after-school clubs and sports events, and participation rates are high. Within the school day, staff organise some school trips but recognise that it would be beneficial to offer more.

Pupils' behaviour in classrooms is calm, respectful and attentive. Pupils listen to their teachers and work hard. Staff appreciate this and say that they like working at the school. Teachers report that leaders are supportive and find ways to keep their workload manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have effective routines to keep all staff up to date with safeguarding matters. They are well informed about local circumstances and make sure staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. When concerns arise, staff act quickly to check that pupils are safe.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about safe and respectful relationships. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe online. They also make sure that computers in school have robust filtering in place, so that pupils cannot view the wrong things.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in a few subjects is not as well developed as in others. This means that pupils' learning in some subjects, such as art and design and geography, is not as strong as it could be. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum, so that learning in all subjects is well organised and sequenced.
- The school's use of assessment in foundation subjects could be better. Currently, leaders keep records of what pupils have done and achieved in all subjects, but this does not always help to inform future learning. Looking ahead, leaders should review the way they use assessment in some foundation subjects to support all pupils to know and remember more over time.
- The level of high-quality interactions between adults and children in the early years could be strengthened further. While all staff guide and talk to children, occasionally they do not prompt children to take learning further. Leaders should continue to promote strong practice in early years, so that all children make the best possible progress.

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	147367
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10268471
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	351
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Walker
Principal	Tamsin Davis
Website	www.stanthonyscatholicsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the St Francis and St Clare Catholic multi-academy company (MAC). It converted to become an academy in September 2020. When the predecessor school, St Anthony's Catholic Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2017 it was judged to be good.
- Before- and after-school childcare is provided on the school site. This is run by a private provider and subject to a separate inspection at a different time.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school is a Catholic school. It is required to have a section 48 faith school inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection of the predecessor school took place in October 2017. The next section 48 inspection is scheduled to take place before 31 August 2025.

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 the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and physical education. In these subjects, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to an adult.
- The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects to check how these were organised and taught.
- The inspectors looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, governance and school improvement planning. They examined documents published on the school's website.
- The inspectors asked school leaders, pupils and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. They examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other records.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's, pupils' and parents' views. Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground, at clubs and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the principal, other leaders, school staff, pupils, governors, directors and the senior executive leader of the MAC. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a diocesan education adviser.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Amieli	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Cadwallader	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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