# Inspection of a school judged Good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Edward's Catholic Academy

Newhall Road, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 0BD

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 January 2025

## Outcome

St Edward's Catholic Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Kay Methven. This school is part of the St Ralph Sherwin Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kevin Gritton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Noon.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring school, where pupils are happy and safe. 'The Edward's Path' defines the school's family ethos. This is understood by pupils and acted on by all. Pupils speak proudly about the school virtues, 'True Mind, True Heart and True Spirit'. They appreciate how qualities such as friendship, citizenship and service, guide their journey through school. Pupils understand that these qualities help everyone in school to 'live well' and 'be a good person'.

The school's positive culture encourages pupils to behave well. Pupils show kindness and love to each other and are clear that everyone is welcome. Pupil play leaders organise popular games, such as cricket. They thrive from the responsibility of coaching their peers during social times of the day.

Pupils benefit from an extensive and well-considered personal development programme. This helps to broaden pupils' understanding of significant world events. For instance, they learn about the relevance of democracy through elections at home and abroad. They are taught how to consider the impact of natural disasters sensitively.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils work hard and enjoy their learning. Most achieve well.

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

The school has made positive improvements to the quality of education for pupils. The curriculum is carefully sequenced, with progression from the early years and coherent links between subjects. High-quality books enhance subject content. Activities for pupils are relevant and interesting. For instance, pupils listen and respond to a well-known announcement of the Second World War in history. They ask appropriate questions because they are curious and interested in the subjects they are taught. Despite this, the curriculum in some subjects is not embedded fully. Pupils recall the recent knowledge that they have understood and typically achieve well. However, some longer-term recall and understanding are not as secure. Pupils do not always make links or connect ideas with what they know already.

The school makes sure that staff subject knowledge is secure so that they can teach the curriculum effectively. Teachers revisit important knowledge to ensure that pupils remember what they are taught. For instance, teachers ask questions that help pupils recall prior learning and check pupils' understanding. However, sometimes, teachers are not consistent in acting on these checks and do not always select the most appropriate next steps for pupils.

The school has improved the English curriculum. Knowledgeable staff teach the phonics curriculum effectively. Children make a positive start in nursery, where staff support them to listen attentively. In reception, staff help children grasp letter sounds quickly. The school provides appropriate support to those pupils who need help with reading to keep up. Pupils, including children in the early years, achieve well. Staff implement the curriculum for grammar, spelling and punctuation with precision. They ensure that pupils understand sentence structures. Pupils take care with the presentation, the accuracy of spelling and the fluency of their handwriting.

The school identifies and meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Well-trained staff provide close guidance to support these pupils. Staff break down concepts into manageable steps. This allows pupils with SEND to achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils show positive attitudes and concentrate well in class. They listen carefully to their teachers and respond appropriately to instructions. Classrooms are studious.

The school monitors pupils' attendance closely. Many pupils attend well. However, too many pupils miss too much of the quality education that the school provides. Also, some pupils are often late for school.

The school's personal, social health and economic curriculum is being embedded. Pupils have a developing knowledge of how to be safe online. They understand about respectful relationships. Pupils know about some aspects of life in modern Britain and the fundamental British values. They are respectful of different faiths and beliefs.

Leaders have successfully navigated a difficult period for the school. They have ensured that pupils' education has not been disrupted and have continued to make improvements. Governors understand their statutory duties. They know the school well and routinely check on improvements. Staff appreciate the support that the school offers them and the opportunities to improve their practice. They note how the curriculum changes have helped to reduce their workload. Parents and carers appreciate the school's committed staff and its positive ethos.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is new and is still in the early stages of being implemented. Pupils' knowledge and skills in these subjects are still developing. Their recall and connection of important information is sometimes insecure. The school should ensure that the curriculum in each subject is implemented effectively so that pupils know more and remember more.
- On occasions, teachers do not use their assessment of pupils' learning carefully enough to spot pupils' misunderstandings or learning gaps. This means that teachers sometimes do not make appropriate decisions about pupils' next steps. The school should continue to support staff with checking what pupils have learned and what they need to revisit or do next, so that pupils' knowledge of the curriculum is secure.
- Too many pupils are absent from school too frequently. Some pupils do not arrive at school on time. These pupils miss too much important learning and too many wider experiences. The school should strengthen the processes to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

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| **Unique reference number** | 143513 |
| **Local authority** | Derbyshire |
| **Inspection number** | 10347648 |
| **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** | 243 |
| **Appropriate authority** | Board of trustees |
| **Chair of trust** | Sarah Noon |
| **CEO of the trust** | Kevin Gritton |
| **Headteacher** | Kay Methven |
| **Website** | www.stedwardsswadlincote.srscmat.co.uk |
| **Dates of previous inspection** | 24 and 25 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## Information about this school

- In September 2023, the school was found to need structural attention due to reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete. Most pupils were educated off site for a period of six months while the building was made safe. At the time of this inspection, pupils were being educated on site and the building had significant structural adaptations inside corridors and classrooms to ensure its safety.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team were new to their roles in September 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the St Ralph Sherwin Multi Academy Trust.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior school leaders, trust leaders, the chair of the board of trustees and representatives from the local governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector discussed pupils' attendance and behaviour with school leaders.
- The inspector considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector held discussions with staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered a wide range of evidence, including the documents published on the school's website.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

## Inspection team

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|---|---|
| Donna Moulds, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |

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