

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

Chesterfield Road, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3FT

Inspection date: 4 March 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Stacey Carr. 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 (CEO), Kevin Gritton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Noon.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where staff want the very best for the children in their care. The school has a clear and ambitious vision for how it can improve. It focuses on securing high standards of behaviour and ensuring pupils are ready to learn. As a result, pupils feel safe, respected and supported, and they enjoy coming to school.

The school has a strong, caring and welcoming ethos. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand and fulfil the school's high expectations of them.

In recent years, the school has taken swift and effective action to improve standards. Pupils benefit from a broad and engaging curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the many leadership and enrichment opportunities available to them. All pupils take part in the '50 things to do before leaving St Joseph's' programme. This provides a rich variety of experiences during their school career.

Parents and carers are highly positive about the school. Many comment that their children are happy to go to school and enjoy every aspect of their learning. Parents have high praise for the school's time, dedication and love towards the children.

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

In recent years, the school has put an ambitious curriculum in place. It is clear and well designed and sets out what pupils will learn at each stage. The design takes the needs of different groups of pupils into account. For example, when new pupils arrive, the school quickly identifies gaps in their learning and puts the necessary support in place. The school ensures that teachers have the knowledge and support they need to do this effectively.

Lessons have a clear structure which is followed throughout the school. Pupils review their work at the start of each lesson. This helps them to remember key knowledge. Teachers check pupils' understanding and use this to decide the next steps. They give support to pupils who need it. However, sometimes the curriculum is not adapted well enough to meet the range of pupils' needs. The school has identified the need to ensure more consistency in the way that activities are adapted for pupils.

Reading standards are improving. The school has adopted a phonics programme, which is implemented consistently. It carries out effective checks on how well pupils read. Most pupils read books that are well matched to their reading ability. They enjoy reading, and most show growing confidence. However, some pupils struggle in whole-class phonics sessions. The school's adaptation of the phonics programme and the additional support it puts in place for some pupils is not fully effective in ensuring that these pupils become more fluent and accurate readers.

Staff provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They understand the best way to help these pupils in class and provide extra sessions, if necessary. This enables them to make progress and cover the full curriculum.

Children in the early years benefit from a well-planned and engaging curriculum that supports their early development. There is a good balance between staff-led activities and independent play-based learning. This prepares them well for learning in Year 1 and beyond.

Recently, the school has worked to improve pupil behaviour. A new policy has been introduced and communicated to everyone in the school community. This work has paid dividends. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They are polite, respectful, and have strong relationships with staff and peers. Although suspensions and exclusions have been high, they are now reducing, because of the school's targeted work with pupils. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. The school has worked to ensure that pupils' attendance is in line with national averages and continues to improve.

The school provides a rich personal development curriculum. It teaches pupils important life skills and develops their character. Pupils know and understand the fundamental

British values. They respect others, including those who are different from themselves. Pupils take on leadership roles through initiatives, such as the 'Ivengers,' the online safety team. The school has a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sports and creative arts clubs. Participation is high, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. These opportunities enhance pupils' confidence and engagement in school life.

Staff feel supported by the school in their workload and well-being. They benefit from professional development opportunities that are tailored to their individual needs. Leaders are well supported by governors and members of the trust, who provide effective challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Activities provided in lessons are not always well chosen to meet the range of pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it should be. The school could ensure that leaders at all levels carefully monitor and evaluate provision, so that activities consistently enable pupils to learn the planned lesson content.
- The new early reading programme is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of some pupils. Consequently, these pupils do not learn to read as well as they could. The school should ensure that the delivery of the early reading programme is carefully targeted, so that pupils become increasingly confident and fluent readers.

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 October 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

Unique reference number	142827
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347615
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
CEO of the trust	Kevin Gritton
Headteacher	Stacey Carr
Website	stjosephsmatlock.srscmat.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Nottingham. Its last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in November 2021. The next section 48 inspection will take place within 5 years since the date of the previous inspection.
- Since the last inspection, the school has extended the nursery provision to include two-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector met with trust leaders, the chair of the board of trustees and representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders of the school and considered a range of documents.
- Inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff and spoke to parents at the school gate. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, as well as Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Paul Heery, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Phil Abbott

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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