

Inspection of St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

Park Nook Doncaster Road, Thrybergh, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 4AE

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Bernadette Baxter. This school is part of St Francis Catholic 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), Siobhan Kent, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin McDonagh.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a safe and welcoming place to be. Pupils enjoy coming to school. At social times, they play well together. Pupils encourage each other to join in games. They celebrate each other's successes. Staff expect pupils to engage positively in learning. Pupils rise to these expectations. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils collaborate well with their classmates, which helps them to learn from each other.

The school has strengthened the curriculum. Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils learn the knowledge and skills that they need to be ready for their next stage. There are some areas of the curriculum where pupils' knowledge is less detailed. The school has identified this and continues to refine those areas of the curriculum.

Pupils have opportunities to explore their local area and the natural world. The school's outdoor classroom develops this further. Pupils learn new skills, such as preparing a campfire, and work together to solve problems. Older pupils say that the residential visits have boosted their confidence to try new things.

There are a range of leadership opportunities for pupils, such as school council member and playground leader. These roles mean a lot to pupils. They are keen to be good role models and to help others. Pupils' community spirit is a strength of the school.

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

The curriculum continues to develop. In core subjects, lesson sequences are designed well. Teachers explain new learning clearly. They carefully show pupils how to complete tasks. This helps pupils to succeed. Teachers typically check how well pupils are learning the curriculum and provide support, if needed. In some wider curriculum subjects, some of the intended learning is not clearly sequenced. When this happens, pupils are not supported to build on what they already know by making clear connections to prior learning. Their knowledge sometimes lacks depth.

The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND learn well. There are clear processes in place for identifying the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt learning effectively, where necessary, because they understand individual pupils' learning needs.

Pupils quickly learn to read. Staff are highly trained to teach phonics. The school provides effective support for pupils who need extra practise. This helps them to learn to read fluently and confidently. Staff work closely with parents and carers, so that they know how to support their child's reading at home. Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books that they have read. They use what they learn from texts they study to develop their own writing.

Children in Reception Year have a positive start to their education. Staff are skilled in supporting children to learn about feelings and friendships. Children help each other and

play well together. To prepare children for Year 1, staff help children to learn lots of useful vocabulary. The school provides a range of activities to help children to explore the curriculum and develop skills. The school intends children to access some of the activities without an adult, so that children develop independence. However, occasionally, these tasks are not deliberately designed carefully enough to enable children to succeed without adult support. Where this happens, children do not learn as well as they could.

The school has introduced a new programme to support pupils' personal development. Pupils explore a range of activities so that they are ready for life in modern Britain. They learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy. They learn how to keep safe, including online. Pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance. They celebrate difference and care for others. Their knowledge of different faiths is less developed. The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop empathy, such as supporting the local foodbank and preparing Christmas presents for vulnerable children. Through this, pupils learn about the experiences of different people in the community.

The school has developed effective routines to support pupils to behave well. Pupils understand these and follow the rules. Teachers' strategies, such as those used to gain pupils' attention, are successful. Pupils move sensibly around the school at transition times. They get on well and learn to resolve friendship issues.

The trust has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and provides effective challenge and support. Those with responsibility for governance are committed to the school. They carry out their statutory duties well. Leaders regularly meet with colleagues from other schools in the trust to share best practice. This helps the school to continually develop. Staff morale is very high. They are proud to work in a school that is highly valued by its local community.

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 wider curriculum subjects, pupils are not supported to build on what they already know or to make connections to their previous learning. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced, so that it supports pupils to know more and remember more.
- Some learning opportunities provided to children in the early years, which are intended to be accessed independently, do not enable children to learn successfully without adult support. Where this happens, children do not securely learn what is intended. The school should ensure that independent learning opportunities enable children to build successfully on their current knowledge and skills.

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	139877
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10370371
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Martin McDonagh
CEO of the trust	Siobhan Kent
Headteacher	Bernadette Baxter
Website	www.stgerardsprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school became part of St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Hallam. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in April 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due within five years of this date.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher. The lead inspector also met with the CEO, the chair of the trust and representatives from the local academy committee.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, 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. Inspectors discussed and reviewed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and their experiences at school. An inspector also spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- 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 throughout the school day, including at social times. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their views on behaviour at the school.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses received through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses received to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Zoe Helman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Sharp

Ofsted Inspector

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