

# Inspection of a good school: Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Sandon Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 9AX

---

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have developed a clear vision for the school. The school's motto, 'We believe, we succeed, we soar' is at the heart of the important changes they have made to improve the school.

The school is a caring and happy environment. Pupils are welcomed each morning with a smile and a cheerful greeting from staff. Pupils know that the adults in school look after them well. They feel safe. Pupils identify the adults they can go to if they need help with a problem. They do not worry about bullying. They say that their school is a 'bully free school'.

Pupils behave well. 'The Saint Mary's Way' sets out precisely how they are expected to behave. They 'track the speaker' as they listen in lessons. When their teacher instructs them, 'team stop', pupils respond immediately. Pupils are able to learn without distraction. At playtime and lunchtimes, they get on well together. Their manners are impeccable.

Pupils, staff, governors, the trust and a large majority of parents are proud of the school. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that there is still significant work to be done to improve aspects of the school's curriculum.

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

The current leadership have an accurate view of the school. They have worked closely with governors and the trust to identify clear priorities to improve the school. While there is more to do, leaders have achieved a great deal since they joined the school.

Much of the curriculum is new. It is at an early stage of implementation. Leaders have not yet reviewed curriculum plans to make adjustments where they may be needed. Some

subject plans are clear and are being implemented successfully, enabling pupils to know and remember more. For example, in early reading and mathematics, the small steps of learning are well sequenced and help pupils to reach the end points identified. Other subjects are not developed as well.

Teachers' own subject knowledge is good. However, the delivery of the curriculum is inconsistent. At times, teachers do not make good choices about the learning activities they provide for pupils. In some lessons, teachers ask pupils to remember too much content. Pupils become overwhelmed and find it difficult to remember the most important knowledge.

Teachers check that pupils remember the intended learning in some subjects. In mathematics, teachers routinely identify pupils who need extra help. Additional support is given promptly, so that pupils can move on to new learning. Pupils who are absent from school watch a 'catch up' video, so that they do not miss crucial learning. In some of the other subjects, these important checks are not made.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers identify their needs without delay. Skilled staff and carefully chosen resources mean that pupils with SEND can learn the curriculum alongside their classmates. Leaders are ambitious that these pupils can achieve well.

Leaders place significant emphasis on the teaching of reading. Children learn phonics from the start of the Reception Year. All staff receive training to deliver the phonics programme. They teach phonics with skill. Any pupils who struggle, or fall behind, receive help to catch up and keep up. Pupils gain the phonic knowledge they need to learn to read.

Pupils enjoy reading. They talk about the books and authors they like with enthusiasm. Each class has their own reading area with a wide range of books. Leaders choose these books with care. They make sure that pupils have access to books that become more challenging over time. Pupils and staff recommend 'good reads' to one another.

Leaders strategically plan the activities and opportunities for pupils' personal development. Much of this is centred around the ethos of the school. Pupils learn to take personal responsibility in order to become 'missionary disciples'. Respect and kindness for one another is an expectation. Pupils also learn to care for the wider world. They raise money for charity by selling cakes and participating in sponsored walks. Pupil voice is valued. The school council play an active role in the life of the school. The head and deputy head students are role models for others. Leaders promote pupils' physical and mental well-being.

Leaders have established a positive working culture in the school. Staff support the changes that leaders have made to improve the school. Staff morale is high. However, there are some areas of the school's work where staff say they are asked to replicate tasks. They say that these unnecessary tasks add to their workload.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are committed to keeping every pupil safe. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and relevant safeguarding training. Staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They pass their concerns on. The records they keep are detailed. They include the actions that leaders take. Leaders work with external agencies to provide additional help for pupils and their families when it is needed.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. They say they are a 'telling school'. They know who to talk to if they have any worries.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Much of the curriculum is new. It is not clear that the planned curriculum is successfully enabling pupils to know and remember more over time. Leaders must review the impact of the curriculum in order to refine and adjust the plans where needed.
- The curriculum is not effectively delivered with consistency. In some lessons, the learning activities are not well designed to help pupils to remember key learning and pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the skills they need to successfully match learning activities to the intended learning.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the systems they want teachers to use to check what pupils know and remember. Teachers do not know where pupils may have misconceptions, or gaps in their learning. Leaders must develop a strategic approach to assessment in all subjects while considering the workload of staff.
- In some areas of areas of the school's work expectations of staff workload has not been considered carefully enough. Staff spend time completing unnecessary or duplicated tasks. Leaders should review and reduce some of the paperwork that staff are asked to complete.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be 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 predecessor school, The Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, to be good in November 2012.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146226
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10254876
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Nigel Stevenson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Luisa Maylard-Mason
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarysprimaryrcprimary.co.uk">www.stmarysprimaryrcprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in August 2022. When its predecessor school, The Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2017, it was judged that the school continued to be good.
- From September 2022, a new executive headteacher and acting headteacher have been appointed. The executive headteacher is also responsible for another primary school in the trust.
- A new chair and vice-chair of governors were appointed in November 2022.
- Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is part of the Diocese of Nottingham. The school's last diocesan canonical inspection took place in November 2017.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and the leader with responsibility for SEND. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair, and representatives from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. She checked the single central record.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime was observed. The inspector spoke to pupils to gather their views about the school, including behaviour.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the staff online survey. She spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments received.

### **Inspection team**

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023