

# Inspection of Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Sandon Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 9AX

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Inspection dates:	17 and 18 June 2025
The quality of education	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early Years	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 since conversion.

The headteacher of this school is Sara Tyers. The school is part of our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), James McGeachie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Stevenson.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Primary School to be good for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming school. They are happy and feel safe. They attend well. Pupils model the school's values and demonstrate a deep understanding of love and kindness. Pupils know that staff will listen and help them if they have a concern.

Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They manage any incidents consistently well and behaviour does not prevent pupils from learning. Pupils behave well in a calm and orderly environment.

Pastoral support for pupils is effective. Pupils receive the support they need. They have a range of opportunities to develop their character. Pupils enjoy their leadership roles, for example the school council and the 'agents of change' who look at wider issues beyond the school. A range of clubs and trips enhance the curriculum. The school is rightly proud of its success in sports and music.

The school has gone through a period of significant development since the last inspection. It acknowledges that published outcomes in 2024 are not where they should be. The school has raised its expectations of what pupils should learn. It has made significant improvements to the curriculum. However, these changes have not fully impacted on how well pupils achieve.

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

The school has ensured that the curriculum is broad, aspirational and ambitious. The curriculum sets out what pupils will learn as they progress through the school. This enables teachers to create learning that builds pupils' knowledge in the right order.

In lessons, staff present information clearly and demonstrate secure subject knowledge. However, the activities chosen do not always support pupils to learn the intended curriculum. As a result, some pupils are unable to recall their learning confidently.

The school has identified that pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge due to a previously weak curriculum. In response, it has introduced a consistent structure to lessons. This includes opportunities for teachers to check pupils' understanding and for pupils to revisit prior learning. While this routine is now well established, teachers do not always use it effectively to identify gaps in knowledge or address misconceptions. This means that teaching is not consistently adapted to meet the needs of pupils.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) swiftly. While staff carefully consider the needs of pupils with SEND, in some subjects, staff do not always sufficiently adapt the learning for these pupils. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Children in Reception Year are enthusiastic. They develop independence, for example, when changing for physical activities. The development of communication and language is prioritised and staff model language effectively to children. This supports children's early language and communication skills. Staff know the children well and address misconceptions to promote learning. Children are well prepared for key stage 1.

The school is passionate about ensuring that pupils become confident and enthusiastic readers. Phonics sessions start straight away in the early years. Pupils' reading books are carefully chosen to match their phonics knowledge. This helps them to become fluent and confident readers. The school makes sure that all staff are experts in teaching phonics. Staff effectively check how well pupils are learning. If pupils fall behind, staff ensure that they are supported well to catch up. The school wants pupils to develop a deep love of reading. Pupils enjoy the daily story times with their teachers.

The school's ethos underpins the curriculum for personal development. Pupils speak confidently about the school's values; however, they do not demonstrate a deep understanding of fundamental British values. Staff teach pupils how to be physically and mentally healthy and how to be safe online. Pupils have a breadth of opportunity to contribute positively to the community, both within school and in the wider locality. For example, lunchtime leaders provide effective support for younger pupils in the dining hall. They also benefit from participating in activities, such as performing at the local care home. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of respect. However, their understanding of protected characteristics is in the early stages of development, and they have a limited understanding of different faiths.

Leaders, including the trustees and governors, know the school well. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have identified the right priorities for school improvement and understand what needs to be done to improve the quality of provision. Staff respect the consideration given to their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some of the activities that teachers design to deliver the curriculum do not allow pupils to think as deeply as they might about the subject content. As a result, some important knowledge and vocabulary are not readily recalled by pupils or used to answer subject-specific questions. The school should ensure that pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise using the knowledge they are taught and to show what they know in lessons across the wider curriculum.

- In many lessons, teachers do not check closely enough on how well pupils are acquiring content. This means that teaching is not always closely matched to pupils' learning. The school should ensure that teachers consistently assess how well pupils achieve in lessons and, where necessary, adapt teaching in light of this.
- Learning is not always adapted well enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not always learn as well as they should. The school should ensure that the curriculum is matched closely to the needs of pupils with SEND, so that these pupils can learn effectively.
- Pupils' understanding of the fundamental British values, of the protected characteristics and of different faiths is limited. As a result, pupils do not have the knowledge they need to engage effectively in these aspects of life in modern Britain. The school must ensure that its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes pupils' understanding of different faiths, British values and the protected characteristics securely.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146226
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10324202
<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>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Nigel Stevenson
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	James McGeachie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sara Tyers
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarysrcprimary.co.uk">www.stmarysrcprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	25 and 26 April 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in August 2022.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2024.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Nottingham. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in February 2025.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the continuing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the early years leader, those responsible for SEND and groups of staff and pupils.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and science. 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 lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors met with the CEO and the deputy CEO for the trust. They also met with two members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses and Ofsted's survey for school staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, and around the school site. They scrutinised the school's records for attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Donna Chambers, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cat Thornton

Ofsted Inspector

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