

Inspection of a good school: St Margaret's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Glossop Road, Gamesley, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 6JH

Inspection date:

2 February 2023

Outcome

St Margaret's Catholic Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their small and caring school community. They say that everyone knows each other well and that they look out for each other. They feel safe and well cared for. They trust the adults in school to sort out any friendship problems they may have. They say that they do not worry about bullying. Parents and carers unanimously appreciate the support their children receive. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'There is a lovely family feel to the school.'

Leaders are ambitious that pupils will develop the qualities they need in order to be ready for life in modern Britain. Leaders identify these characteristics as: respect, empathy, self-awareness, positivity, excellence, communication and teamwork. Pupils work hard to show these in their work and play. They are keen to earn their 'respect' badge.

Leaders have set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils know how important it is to work hard. They show respect for each other and their teachers. In lessons, they listen carefully and do their best. No learning time is lost due to poor behaviour. The school is a happy and positive place for pupils to learn and staff to work.

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

Leaders have designed a well-sequenced curriculum that sets out what pupils should learn. They have considered with care how pupils' learning will build year on year in mixed-age classes. For example, in mathematics, pupils in the key stage 2 class take it in turns to spend time with the class teacher learning new concepts and with a teaching assistant to practise mathematical skills they have learned previously. This considered approach helps pupils to learn new mathematical knowledge well and to remember what they have been taught.

Teachers assess what pupils know and remember against the important knowledge identified in curriculum plans. They use this information to address misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge before moving on to new learning.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books they love. They name 'Rapunzel', 'The Gruffalo' and books about dinosaurs as their favourite stories. Pupils have many opportunities to read in school and are encouraged to read at home. Pupils receive bronze, silver, gold and platinum rewards when they read regularly. Pupils also visit the local library and can take part in the summer reading challenge.

Teachers and teaching assistants are experts in the teaching of reading. Pupils learn phonics well. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind in phonics receive the extra help they need to keep up. Pupils read books that help them to practise the sounds they have learned in lessons. Pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified. These pupils are well known by staff. Leaders believe that the best place for these pupils to learn is alongside their peers. However, the targets that are set for pupils with SEND are not defined clearly enough. The support that they receive is not identified with enough precision. Teachers do not know whether the adjustments they make for these pupils are helping them to learn as well as they can. Leaders' monitoring of the provision for pupils with SEND has not been rigorous enough.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils visit the theatre and a museum and learn to play djembe drums. They learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They can talk about the beliefs and traditions of other religions and faiths. Pupils know that it is important to accept people who are not the same as they are. They say, 'It is ok to be different.' Pupils express their ideas and opinions with confidence and respect. They are positive advocates for the school.

Staff recognise how many different roles they have in a small school. They agree that leaders, including governors, do all that they can to make sure that their workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff, including the designated safeguarding lead, receive regular safeguarding training. Everyone takes their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They know what to look out for and how to record their concerns about pupils. Leaders act without delay when staff raise concerns. They work closely with external agencies to support and protect pupils who may be at risk of harm.

Pupils learn about the risks they may face when online and in the wider community. They know how to keep themselves safe. They know that they should report concerns or worries they have if they feel unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not have a secure enough overview of the provision for pupils with SEND. Staff do not identify in sufficient detail each pupil's targets or the individual support pupils will receive in order to reach these targets. Teachers do not always know which aspects of the support that pupils are given is enabling them to succeed or where a different approach may work better. This could mean that some pupils are not learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training they need to complete this work and ensure that they monitor the impact of the provision for pupils with SEND more precisely.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Margaret's Catholic Primary, to be good in September 2016.

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

Unique reference number	146113
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10254874
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	30
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Grainne Beaumont
Website	www.assmfederation.srscmat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Nottingham. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in December 2015.
- The school is part of a federation with All Saints Catholic Voluntary Academy.
- The school joined the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust in September 2018. When its predecessor school, St Margaret's Catholic Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection and is also headteacher at All Saints Catholic Voluntary Academy.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, subject leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors also met with the chair and vice-chair of governors and three representatives of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and modern foreign language. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, discussed the curriculum with leaders, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers about their lessons. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a member of staff.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding through discussion with the designated safeguarding lead, staff, governors and pupils. The lead inspector reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses received on Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. They considered the results of Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils. An inspector also spoke to parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anne Maingay

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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