

Saint Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Wellington Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN32 7JX

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, are relentless in their drive to improve outcomes for pupils. They have successfully improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have created an inclusive and caring culture across the school. They have very high expectations of staff and pupils.
- The progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics over their time in school is now mostly good from their low starting points. However, progress is still not sufficiently rapid to ensure that all pupils meet the national average standards in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Robust systems for checking pupils' progress ensure that effective support is put into place. This means that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are also making accelerated progress and now catching up quickly with their peers.
- Middle leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be undertaken to improve English and mathematics. Even so, the early developments in improving the teaching of mathematics are not yet as well established as those in English.
- Strategies to improve pupils' fluency in and enjoyment of reading have increased the progress pupils make in reading.
- The curriculum is rich and broad, with religious education a particular strength. Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences across the curriculum both in and outside of school.
- Pupils are very well cared for. The school identifies pupils' individual needs and ensures that actions are in place to help them from the moment they enter the school.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school and challenge and support leaders effectively. They have a good understanding of the school.
- The safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. The support for the most vulnerable pupils and their families is strong.
- Pupils behave well and have good relationships with their teachers and their peers. However, too many pupils are still repeatedly absent from school.
- Teachers do not insist on better presentation of work, including correct letter and number formation, and for some pupils this hampers their learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the most able pupils are not yet all making the progress of which they are capable, as work set is not always appropriate or as challenging as it could be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes in mathematics, to match those in reading and writing, so that even more pupils attain the expected standard of knowledge, skills and understanding by:
 - continuing the work started with the developments in mathematics
 - providing appropriate resources, including adult support and guidance, to all pupils to aid with their learning
 - supporting the youngest children in the early years to get off to an even better start in school by further enhancing the mathematics provision, both indoors and outdoors.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school in order that all groups of pupils make faster progress so that they reach higher standards of attainment by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently use assessment information to plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those with SEN and/or disabilities
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects, including challenging the most able pupils
 - clearer action plans are written to enable subject leaders to check precisely that the impact of actions they take are leading to improved outcomes
 - pupils' pride in and presentation of their work, including correct letter and number formation, are of the highest quality in work across all subjects
 - teachers provide more regular and extended opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and mathematical skills in work across other subjects.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by continuing to work with parents to ensure that fewer pupils are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Saint Mary's has improved markedly since its previous inspection. Decisive and determined action by senior leaders and governors means that teaching is now good and standards are rising.
- The mission of the school – 'We value all in the name of Jesus the Christ' – is reflected in senior leaders' and governors' high expectations of staff and pupils, together with the inclusive culture which nurtures and develops all children. It is no surprise that all parents who met with inspectors said that they would recommend the school to others.
- The school's view of how well it is doing is accurate because robust systems are in place to check the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. Senior leaders have taken resolute action to address previous underperformance and, as a result, pupils are now making better progress and are achieving well.
- Leaders manage the high numbers of pupils who join or leave the school partway through their early years or primary education well. The new arrivals are inducted carefully and, as a result, they settle well and quickly become part of the school community.
- Teachers are held to account by leaders for the achievement of all pupils through rigorous performance management arrangements. Teachers' pay progression is clearly linked to their performance. Professional development and training opportunities are well planned to meet the needs of all the staff, including teachers new to the profession.
- The school has a curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets the needs of its pupils. It is planned so that pupils have a range of learning experiences that are stimulating, engaging and mostly challenging. Exhibitions of pupils' work, including the well-presented displays, give pupils a real purpose to their learning and an opportunity to showcase what they have learned.
- Pupils' spirituality is very well promoted through participation in regular collective acts of worship and weekly mass. The school's assemblies, visits and regular visits by church leaders promote effective reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. Pupils show respect for people from all backgrounds and faiths and have a good understanding of fundamental British values.
- Leaders use the sport premium funding effectively to develop pupils' skills in physical education and in making healthy lifestyle choices. Participation and success in competitions and sporting events have greatly increased. Teachers are developing their own teaching skills as they work alongside coaches. Behaviour has improved as a result of clear, high expectations and the promotion of resilience and sportsmanship.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils. Effective support for these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is helping to close the attainment gap with other pupils.

- The additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not yet used as effectively as it could be. These pupils have clear plans for support; however, not all are making good progress from their starting points.
- The work to improve partnerships with parents has been effective. The determination to make sure that parents feel welcome and part of their child's learning is paying off. Parents speak passionately about their involvement in the school, how they feel confident to approach staff and how the school supports them and their child. One parent stated, 'Staff have done great things in supporting our child.'
- Work with parents has resulted in attendance now being above the national average, but there are still too many pupils being persistently absent from school. This impacts on the pupils' ability to make ongoing connections with their learning.
- Leaders have recognised that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the early years and have taken action to ensure that more children make good progress so that they achieve the expectations for their age at the end of Reception.
- Middle leaders, some of whom are recently appointed, have developed their roles and they now have a greater understanding of their areas of responsibility. However, the plans they write sometimes lack sufficient detail to help them check that the actions planned and undertaken lead to the desired impact.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly ambitious for the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to improve to ensure that they are 'building the school's rightful place at the heart of the Parish and the wider community'.
- Governors are not afraid to challenge leaders for further information to enable them to check that pupils are making the best progress they can. Governors acknowledge the good progress already made. They recognise the journey of improvement that the school is on and they support leaders effectively.
- Governors bring a relevant range of expertise and knowledge that help to provide effective challenge and support. They have received appropriate training. They are led effectively by an experienced chair of governors who is ably supported by a committed and knowledgeable body who are in turn supported well by the diocese.
- A sense of mutual confidence exists between the governing body and the academy trust. Governors know that they get to do the work that really matters for their children and community, while valuing the benefits of support that the trust brings.
- Governors make regular visits to the school to check the school's work. They provide effective challenge in meetings and to leaders to ensure that the impact of actions taken is leading to improvements for all pupils.
- Governors receive detailed information about the achievements of different groups of pupils. They know that in the past, for example, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils. They are clear about how additional funding to support these pupils is used. They know that funding is having a positive impact on improving achievement.

- Governors also ensure that leaders use school finances effectively to provide additional support to meet the specific needs of pupils. This includes the appointment of an attendance leader as well as additional teachers to ensure that pupils' outcomes are their highest priority and, as such, continue to improve.
- Governors are fully conversant with their statutory duties for safeguarding and ensure that their systems and processes comply with government requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that robust policies are in place and they are lived out in daily practice. Staff and governors make every effort to ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are of the utmost priority.
- Comprehensive systems and procedures, including the keeping of detailed records, are supported by well-trained staff and sustain a high level of vigilance and high-quality support for vulnerable pupils. Staff know what to do if they believe a pupil may be at risk of harm.
- There is very strong support to help families, including close work with other agencies when appropriate.
- All necessary checks are undertaken in the recruitment of staff, and induction processes provide relevant information and training. Staff and governors receive regular updates and training throughout the year. The culture of safeguarding in school is strong.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Effective action since the last inspection has improved the quality and consistency of teaching across the school. As a result, the vast majority of teaching is good, enabling most pupils to now make good progress.
- Adults have built positive relationships with pupils. Classrooms are places where pupils enjoy learning because learning is exciting, engaging and connected to the curriculum themes.
- Generally, teachers use their assessment information well to plan work for pupils so that they make good progress from their starting points. They build on the interests and enthusiasm of pupils and as a result pupils usually engage well with their work. For the most able pupils and those with SEN and/or disabilities, the work is not always appropriately matched to their need. Consequently, the progress they make is limited as they are capable of more.
- The new approach to teaching mathematics is in its early stages and is designed to ensure that pupils develop their fluency and reasoning skills and pupils are challenged to apply their mathematical skills in solving problems. The impact of this new approach is yet to be seen in pupil outcomes.
- Reading has a high profile throughout the school. There are many ways in which the school encourages pupils to read, such as enabling all pupils to access a reading

programme and exploring language in other subjects, such as geography and history. Pupils apply the grammar, punctuation and spelling rules they have learned to other pieces of writing. As a consequence, pupils' writing has improved so that they make good progress from their starting points.

- Opportunities to write at length, however, are limited. In addition to this, teachers' high expectations of pupils' writing and presentation in English and mathematics lessons are not always replicated in other subjects, such as science, history and religious education. These factors are preventing pupils' learning and outcomes from improving further.
- Prompt and effective support in lessons for pupils who need to 'catch up' or to address misconceptions enables them to be ready to tackle new learning at the same time as their peers and so they too make good progress.
- A programme for the teaching of phonics is not yet taught consistently in the early years and Year 1. In some of these lessons, learning is slow because pupils repeat what they already know and so some are not challenged enough in their learning. This has a negative impact on some pupils' reading skills in key stage 1 because they are not able to use the phonic sounds to help them to read fluently. Nevertheless, good teaching of phonics and reading in Year 2 helps to address previous weaker teaching so that all pupils now make the progress they need to reach the expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 1.
- Teachers plan lessons to build upon what pupils already know. Activities that pupils begin with each lesson are usually well matched to their needs. However, sometimes teachers do not identify when pupils need further challenge or help as a lesson progresses. Consequently, learning is limited for some; not enough challenge is provided for some, or others are unable to complete the tasks they are set. Basic errors in handwriting, letter and number formation or spellings are not always identified and corrected, which means that pupils repeat them in subsequent learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's welcoming and caring ethos is central to its work in raising standards for pupils. From the moment pupils enter the school each day, they are greeted with respect and a genuine sense of care from the adults in the school.
- Pupils' welfare and safety are a major priority of the school. Leaders work successfully with other agencies when they identify any pupils or families that are or may be at risk.
- Staff know the pupils very well, and pupils benefit from good pastoral care. The school's 'Eden base', an area to support pupils' behavioural needs and social and emotional well-being, is led effectively and used well. Pupils welcome the support that helps them to make good progress socially and emotionally. Pupils also choose to use the room as a safe haven when they feel the need to do so to regulate their own behaviour.

- Pupils have been taught well how to manage risk. This knowledge equips them well for life beyond school. Pupils understand the risks of using the internet and, for their age, have an appropriate understanding of the potential risks of social media, including the use of mobile phones. Pupils can articulate clear procedures for keeping themselves safe in school and within the community.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on a range of responsibilities such as sports leaders, school council representatives and chaplaincy leaders. Older pupils are keen to be role models for their peers and are proud of being appointed to do these jobs.
- The school's ethos promotes effective reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. The theme 'welcoming' is promoted in lessons and assemblies. Time for reflection and prayer is used to help pupils consider what qualities they need in order to show how they welcome and support others.
- Pupils state that they feel safe in school. They say that any instances of bullying are rare. On the occasions that this happens, the school deals with it well. Pupils learn about different forms of bullying and are taught to respect others' beliefs and views.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show a good awareness of the expectations that leaders have of their behaviour. This was seen consistently in all years within lessons and at breaktime, although a little less convincingly at lunchtime, with some boisterous behaviour from a few.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and work cooperatively and respectfully with one another in lessons. They listen to each other's points of view, and were seen by inspectors to be keen to help one another with their learning.
- The school site is well kept and cared for. Pupils generally respect the learning environment, which is clean, bright and inviting.
- Leaders have established rigorous systems and procedures to check pupils' attendance. Absences are followed up swiftly on the first day, and the school engages with a range of agencies where there are attendance concerns. As a result, attendance is now above the national average and most pupils attend regularly. The school's action has been particularly effective in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Overall, parents' and pupils' responses to school questionnaires, and in conversation with the Ofsted inspectors, indicate that the school operates in an orderly and safe manner. Inspectors agree.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders, including governors, have relentlessly focused their efforts on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, teaching is mostly good and makes consistent demands of pupils' levels of concentration, perseverance and commitment.

- As a result, key stage 2 attainment has risen. Outcomes in 2017 have built upon previous gains made in 2015 and 2016. These outcomes represent good progress over time. The current progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is good.
- The school's detailed tracking and analysis of pupils' progress and achievements demonstrate that those pupils who have been at the school throughout their early years and primary education achieve more and make better progress than those who have joined partway through their school year or key stage. This is consistent across all year groups and subjects.
- Pupils across the school, but particularly in upper key stage 2, make good progress in a range of subjects. They build on their previous learning and develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills from their different starting points. Pupils make better progress than their peers nationally overall in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders have invested time and resources to ensure that the proportion of pupils that achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check increases. However, by the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reach the required standard in phonics is still below that seen nationally. Outcomes have been variable over the last two years. All pupils by the end of Year 2 achieved the expected standard in 2016 and 2017.
- At the end of key stage 1, attainment in 2017 was similar to 2016 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of the most able key stage 1 pupils achieving at greater depth in reading and mathematics improved slightly in 2017, closer to the national average.
- The outcomes for boys and disadvantaged pupils have increased across all subjects and the progress they make has also improved. However, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make less progress than their peers nationally.
- The outcomes in 2017 showed that the attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language was below all pupils nationally, despite the good progress that they had made. They continue to make better progress and this is enabling them to continue to catch up with other pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Since the last inspection, leaders have evaluated the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Nursery and Reception and they are aware of what is not working well enough. They have taken action to address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection and as a result provision in the early years is now good.
- Most children join the Nursery class with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. More children are now making the good progress through Nursery and Reception they need to make, particularly in reading and writing.
- Over the last two years, the proportion of children reaching the early learning goals in each area of learning has increased, especially for boys. However, overall this proportion is still below the national average and so these children are not sufficiently well prepared to start learning in Year 1.

- There are opportunities to read and write in different areas of the setting and children choose to participate in these activities. However, progress in number skills is not as strong as in other areas of learning. This is an area of development that leaders are aware of for both the indoor and outdoor provision.
- The progress made by disadvantaged children has improved steadily over recent years. Consequently the gap between the progress and achievement of disadvantaged children and their peers has diminished each year.
- Teaching in the early years is good; a wide range of carefully planned activities ensure that children have many opportunities to develop their love of learning. The children enjoy making choices about what they would like to learn, and the curriculum is adapted to reflect their interests. Adults are skilled in choosing when to intervene and move learning forward. Occasionally, however, the activities provided for the most able children lack challenge and are too easy to complete, as the children are capable of more and of reaching higher standards.
- Expectations of children are now high, and adults model the behaviour they wish children to display. As a result, behaviour is good and children share resources and cooperate well. The positive relationships that children form with staff and their peers help them to gain confidence as they go about their choice of activities sensibly and safely.
- The learning environment is stimulating and welcoming and there are a range of areas in which children can develop skills and play purposefully. The setting caters well for the wide interests of the children. The outdoor area is large and utilised well to allow a wide and varied choice of activities. However there is limited outdoor provision for the development of children's skills in number.
- Safeguarding and the welfare of children are a high priority and all procedures are implemented thoroughly. Children are kept safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The early years leader is determined to improve provision in the early years. She leads a committed team of staff who share the same vision for learning. She has an accurate understanding of the strengths of the early years and what still needs to be improved.
- The early years action plan identifies priorities and the next steps for improvement. However, how others are held to account for improvements in the setting is not sufficiently detailed or sharp enough.
- A programme of training linked to a robust system of performance management ensures that all members of the team continue to develop and so strengthen the quality of teaching and learning.

School details

Unique reference number	139009
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10036541

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Jan Ducey
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine McHale
Telephone number	01472 357982
Website	www.saintmarysprimarygrimsby.co.uk
Email address	head@smp.nelcmail.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is a member of the Northern Lincolnshire Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support funded by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- Each year, a larger than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other times than would be normal.
- The school has a Nursery class which children access on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and of small groups of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors observed some lessons jointly with school leaders. An inspector also observed an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work with subject leaders and in lessons.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke to governors, representatives from the diocese, representatives from the trust, visitors to the school, staff, pupils, parents and senior leaders. Inspectors also listened to various pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the school's own survey of parents' views. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of and during the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the responses from 26 members of staff and two pupils who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents in school, including minutes from governing body and trust meetings and documents relating to child protection, the performance management of teachers, attendance, behaviour, risk assessments, the monitoring of teaching, the curriculum and achievement.

Inspection team

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