

Inspection of Saint Mary’s Catholic Voluntary Academy

Wellington Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN32 7JX

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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 the school is Joseph O’Connor. The school is part of Our Lady of Lourdes 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), James McGeachie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Stevenson.

What is it like to attend this school?

There are high aspirations for all pupils. The school is a warm and welcoming place to learn. Leaders have established an engaging and well-structured curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They enjoy coming to school and attend well. Leaders are determined that all pupils will flourish at Saint Mary's. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and caring.

Pupils welcome the challenge to be respectful and resilient. They demonstrate these values in lessons, around school and at breaktimes. Behaviour is calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy the rewards they receive in recognition for their hard work and positive behaviour. They relish the opportunities to organise events to raise money for charities. There is a strong culture of wanting to help others. Pupils are safe at this school. They learn how to stay safe in the community and online.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop their interests. They enjoy the debating club, where they learn to discuss and listen to the opinions of others. They like the opportunities to participate in sports competitions such as cheerleading and athletics. The school offers a range of trips linked to curriculum themes. These include a recent visit to a local museum to learn about the lives and work of local people from the past.

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

Pupils' outcomes in national assessments are below average. Until the last academic year, teaching was inconsistent due to significant turbulence in staffing. However, staffing is now stable. Leadership of the school is secure. Leaders have worked tenaciously with staff to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Pupils across the school are beginning to know more and remember more of the curriculum. Outcomes for all pupils are beginning to improve.

The curriculum is now broad and well sequenced. The most important knowledge that pupils need to know is clearly identified and broken down into small steps of learning. Leaders make sure that the curriculum in different subjects considers the increasingly diverse needs and interests of pupils. Pupils appreciate that learning is more interesting now than it was previously. For example, in writing, pupils now learn how to structure their writing to write for different purposes. Typically, pupils talk animatedly about how they enjoy writing creatively and letting their imagination 'run wild'. Pupils engage well in their learning and work purposefully in lessons.

In most subjects, pupils confidently recall their learning. In science, for example, pupils can discuss the different stages of the human life cycle in depth. Older pupils can describe in detail the functions of a human heart. Pupils remember the vocabulary they learn. In some lessons, however, pupils do not have the chance to revisit what they have learned as often as they need to. When this happens, pupils do not have the knowledge they need to support new learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. The school is in the process of further developing its support for pupils with SEND. There is some specialist equipment and additional support for pupils who need it. However, some pupils with SEND do not have the range of support they need to succeed as well as they could.

The school has a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading. All adults implement the school's chosen phonics programme well. Pupils read books that contain the sounds that they know. Pupils who need to catch up have regular, individual phonics lessons. The school celebrates reading in many ways across the school. Pupils enjoy listening to their teacher read the class reading book each day. They are proud of their new library.

The school has made changes to the early years curriculum recently. Leaders have identified the important vocabulary and small steps of learning that children need. Children enjoy recalling the rhymes they learn. They know how to clean their teeth. Children understand the importance of visiting the dentist. Staff encourage children to be active. They access the outdoor learning environment independently. For example, children know if they practise climbing, they will get better at it. They show great determination to cross the climbing bars. Children show a sustained level of concentration. They learn how to get on with each other. Children in the early years are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils benefit well from the school's personal development programme. They demonstrate a knowledge of different faiths. Visitors from other religious communities help pupils understand what belonging to a different faith means. Everyone in the school community embraces equality of opportunity. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities in school. For example, some pupils value being a member of the chaplaincy team. As part of the chaplaincy team, pupils plan and present school assemblies. Pupils learn how to stay healthy. They talk confidently about the strategies they use to support their well-being, such as taking part in exercise. Pupils can describe what they need to have for a healthy meal.

The school is persistent in making sure that pupils attend well. The school promotes the importance of regular attendance to parents and carers. Most pupils attend very well.

Trustees and governors have a clear vision for the school. The school is well supported by the trust. School and trust leaders have provided suitable training to curriculum leaders to develop their subjects. Governors and trustees perform their statutory duties well. They hold school leaders to account effectively. Staff say that leaders consider their needs and prioritise their welfare when introducing new initiatives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teaching does not sufficiently take account of what has been previously learned. This means that pupils do not consistently have the depth of knowledge they need to allow them to access the next task. The school should ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to learn, revisit and recall important subject knowledge to prepare them for the next stage in their learning.
- The school's provision for a small number of pupils with SEND is underdeveloped. This is affecting how well these pupils can access parts of the curriculum. The school should review the support available for pupils with SEND to ensure that the needs of all pupils in the school are met consistently and effectively.

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	139009
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10297377
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Stevenson
CEO of the trust	James McGeachie
Headteacher	Joseph O'Connor
Website	www.saintmarysprimarygrimsby.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, teachers and other trust staff.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- An inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum in art and writing. The inspector spoke with some pupils and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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 positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through meetings and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The inspection was deemed incomplete after the first two days. Two of His Majesty's Inspectors returned on 16 April 2024 to gather additional evidence about the quality of education.

Inspection team

Lesley Allwood, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deb James	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Innes-Taylor	His Majesty's Inspector
Philippa Kermotschuk	His Majesty's Inspector

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