

Inspection of St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Uplands Avenue, Littleover, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 1GG

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Rachael Snowdon-Poole. This school is part of St Ralph Sherwin 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, Kevin Gritton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Noon.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and flourish at St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy. The school is highly ambitious. Staff are dedicated and all are committed to enabling every pupil to succeed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils receive everything they need to be successful here. Everyone thrives.

The school invests considerable time and thought into the character traits they want pupils to develop, such as perseverance, respect and acceptance. Pupils demonstrate these traits by being friendly, polite and by greeting visitors with confidence and warmth. Pupils consistently spoke about the fact that 'we all respect each other and respect each other's differences'.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Routines are clear, consistent and commonly understood. Every moment of lesson time is devoted to learning.

There is a wealth of pupil leadership roles that enable pupils to develop confidence and leadership skills. These include being reading champions, 'anti-stigma ambassadors', librarians, or being members of the 'learning parliament' or the popular 'chaplaincy team'.

One parent, whose comments were typical of many, said: 'St George's has gone above my expectations. I am impressed with how much my child has learned and developed at this school and how much the school cares about every child.'

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

The curriculum is meticulously planned. The curriculum in each subject is designed so that pupils revisit important concepts. This helps pupils build on what they know. The school prioritises language and communication in the curriculum. Pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary so that they can understand and talk about what they are learning. Learning is further enriched by visits to museums and zoos and through expert visitors. For example, pupils had a virtual meeting with a marine biologist from the Maldives to learn about pollution in the sea.

The curriculum is delivered by skilled staff. They receive high-quality training and use the latest research further to enhance their teaching. Pupils engage well in their learning because their teachers enthuse them and make lessons interesting. Teachers skilfully use assessment and give pupils immediate feedback. Lessons have been carefully structured so that feedback and retrieval activities are at the start of all lessons. This enables pupils' misconceptions to be quickly identified and addressed.

Teachers expertly adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND. The school monitors the progress of pupils with SEND closely to ensure that they achieve. Every effort is made to remove barriers for these pupils. They receive carefully crafted support that

is well matched to their individual needs. Pupils with SEND feel well supported here. They spoke about how 'we are blessed by all the wonderful teachers here'.

All pupils develop a love for reading at this school. Teachers ensure that pupils read and share texts that explore diversity and different groups in society. This helps pupils to broaden their understanding of the wider world. Teachers and other adults have received expert training to ensure that they deliver the phonics programme exceptionally well. Pupils who struggle to learn to read get extra support and practice.

Children in the early years settle quickly and develop a passion for learning. Teachers plan activities to bring the curriculum to life. The environment is fun, stimulating and carefully constructed so that learning opportunities are everywhere. For example, children were learning about life cycles and had the opportunity to design a butterfly's wings. Children were able to talk about what they had learned about butterflies and link it to their mathematical knowledge. One child said, 'We need to make the pattern on the wings symmetrical.'

There is a consistent approach to behaviour across the school. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are consistently positive. Attendance is high. Leaders swiftly identify pupils who need additional support to attend school regularly and on time.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is exceptionally well planned. Themes of equality and diversity are thoughtfully embedded across the curriculum. Pupils from different backgrounds learn about each other. They celebrate differences. This curriculum goes beyond the expected. For example, pupils' talents and interests are nurtured through the enrichment offer. Pupils get opportunities to play their violin with an orchestra, visit Parliament, participate in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) workshops and career talks.

Leaders, governors and the trust have a shared vision for the school based on success for all. High-quality professional development, including masterclasses and coaching, play a key role in the school's success. Leaders listen to staff and work with them to ensure that workload is manageable. Staff feel incredibly well led and are proud and happy to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	138666
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10324149
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
CEO of the trust	Kevin Gritton
Headteacher	Rachael Snowdon-Poole
Website	www.stgeorgesderby.srscmat.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.

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.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of the governing body and trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to

groups of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to a member of staff. The inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work for geography, music, physical education and design technology.

- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. An inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, as well as the staff survey.
- 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 and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Fullwood	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Gordon	Ofsted Inspector

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