

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St George and St Martin's Catholic Academy

Boulton Street, Birches Head, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 2NQ

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

St George and St Martin's Catholic Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Dawn Farmer. This school is part of The Newman Catholic Collegiate, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Beardmore, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gillian Meller.

What is it like to attend this school?

St George and St Martin's Catholic Academy is a happy, vibrant place where everyone is welcomed and no one is left out. Pupils, and children in the early years, form strong, positive bonds with each other and with staff. Staff care for them well. This helps pupils to feel safe and part of the warm, nurturing school community.

Older pupils are excellent role models. They are proud to be reading 'buddies' and playleaders for their younger friends. They recognise that these roles prepare them well to be responsible citizens in the future.

The school is ambitious for its pupils. Most pupils achieve well across a broad range of subjects. Pupils talk with confidence about what they are learning. Older pupils have impressive recall of knowledge they learned in previous years.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are supported to live up to these expectations by following the school's values and virtues. These include being 'grateful and generous' or 'learned and wise'. As a result, pupils behave very well. They listen and concentrate for extended periods in lessons. Pupils are sensible, respectful and well-mannered. Parents hold the school in high regard.

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

The school provides an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. It is designed to help pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to build knowledge securely over time. The trust and the school have worked diligently to improve and refine the curriculum since the previous inspection. The curriculum is carefully crafted to meet the needs and the interests of the pupils well.

Staff receive the training they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. They use their secure subject knowledge to design engaging learning that helps pupils to deepen their understanding. The school collaborates with other schools in the trust to share curriculum ideas that enhance learning. Staff appreciate this opportunity to work together as it supports their workload.

Pupils gain the reading and mathematical knowledge needed to succeed. In the early years, children develop their early reading skills through listening to engaging stories. Pupils learn to read fluently and accurately. Well-trained staff provide effective support for any pupils who need extra help with their reading. The strong focus on vocabulary builds pupils' knowledge of spoken and written language. Pupils develop a love of reading and become confident readers.

Staff use well-crafted questions to encourage pupils to deepen their understanding. When pupils struggle, staff provide extra support to help them secure the knowledge they need to learn. The school identifies and meets the needs of pupils with SEND well. It provides helpful guidance for staff in supporting pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers.

At times, learning activities are not as closely matched as they could be to pupils' needs. For example, the school, on occasion, expects pupils to complete complex tasks before they have secured the knowledge and skills that they need to complete them. When this happens, pupils do not learn the curriculum as securely as they could.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to the typically calm and purposeful learning environment. This begins in the early years, where children learn to share, take turns and to work together. This helps to prepare them well for the demands of Year 1. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most attend regularly. The school works very effectively to improve the attendance of pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should.

A wide range of educational trips help pupils to develop their knowledge of the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about the importance of places of worship to different faiths through visits to a mosque, a gurdwara and a Hindu temple. This helps them to understand the importance of tolerance and respect. The school's very generous offer of after-school clubs provides opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. Themes for these clubs are often chosen by the pupils and include cookery, street dance, chess, computing and gymnastics.

The work of the school council helps pupils to understand democracy. Pupils value their school council representatives, who take their role exceptionally seriously. They make a promise to their peers that they will represent them well. Pupils learn to keep safe, including online. They learn about healthy and safe relationships. Pupils raise impressive funds for local charities through organising activities for pupils, parents and the wider community. They develop meaningful relationships with older members of the community through strong links with a local day centre. Pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, some activities do not help pupils to develop a secure knowledge of the subjects that they study. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they could. The school should ensure that it supports staff to design learning activities that help pupils to know more and remember more across the curriculum.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2015.

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	140145
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10371387
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	229
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Meller
CEO of the trust	Ian Beardmore
Principal	Dawn Farmer
Website	www.sgsmacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic primary school in the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in February 2025.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to pupils during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector met with the principal, vice principal and other leaders. The inspector met with the CEO, the chair of the trust and a representative from the archdiocese. A meeting was held with directors and members of the local governing body.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke to parents and carers. The inspector also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Cleo Cunningham, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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