

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy

Abbot Road, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 4HX

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Inspection dates:

23 and 24 April 2025

## Outcome

Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Steve Brogan. 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 (CEO), Kevin Gritton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Noon.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy. They told inspectors that they are proud to be part of this school community. Pupils enjoy learning and value the positive relationships that they have with staff. Pupils are kept safe in the school and know who they can turn to if they are worried.

Pupils are polite and respectful. Most of the time, everybody gets along. Classrooms are calm. Distractions to learning are rare. Around school, and during social times, pupils follow routines without fuss.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The curriculum is aspirational for all. It has been designed to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to contribute to society. Pupils work hard and achieve well.

Character development is a priority for the school. The school's 'CARED FOR' virtues inspire pupils to be active citizens. Through an array of leadership opportunities, pupils develop confidence and resilience. Memorable experiences, including a variety of trips and visits, enhance the curriculum and strengthen the sense of community in the school. Extra-curricular activities in sports, the arts and other pursuits help to develop pupils' wider talents and interests.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the curriculum. In key stage 3, pupils learn a full range of subjects to a depth that matches, or exceeds, the expectations of the national curriculum. In key stage 4, pupils choose from a variety of academic and vocational courses. The number of pupils who choose subjects that meet the requirements of the English Baccalaureate has increased.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. The school has identified the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils will learn. This is sequenced well so that pupils build knowledge over time. There are plenty of opportunities to revisit topics. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned before and connect new learning to what they know already.

The school has established effective systems for identifying when pupils need extra help to access the curriculum. Staff are well informed about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables staff to adapt learning activities or provide extra support, when it is appropriate. The school uses a range of suitable strategies to help any pupils who struggle with reading to gain fluency and confidence.

Staff have collaborated to develop teaching strategies that support all pupils to learn and remember important knowledge. Teachers explain concepts clearly. They check carefully that pupils are secure in their understanding before moving on. Learning activities give pupils time to practise and to think deeply about what they have learned. Most of the time, teachers apply these strategies effectively. However, this is not entirely consistent across the curriculum. On some occasions, the delivery of the curriculum is less effective and pupils' learning is less secure as a result.

The school prepares pupils well for the next stages in their education and future lives. Pupils learn how to lead healthy lives and maintain positive relationships. They are well informed about keeping themselves safe, including online. All pupils benefit from detailed, personalised advice about their next steps and potential careers.

Most pupils attend school well. The vast majority show positive behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around school. There are clear routines in place to support good behaviour and reinforce the school's high expectations. However, these are not applied consistently by some staff. On some occasions, when pupils are disrespectful to each other or do not follow routines, this is not dealt with effectively.

School leaders, supported by the multi-academy trust, have worked well to maintain high standards across all areas of the school's provision. Leaders routinely reflect on the impact of the school's work. They strive to make sure that the offer is inclusive and provides aspiration for all pupils. Staff are proud to be part of the school. They value the support that they get to manage their workload and develop their expertise.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the school need to do to improve?**

#### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There is some variation in the delivery of the intended curriculum. At times, agreed pedagogical approaches are not followed as effectively as they could be. As a result, sometimes, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that its planned strategies are implemented consistently and effectively across the curriculum.
- There is some inconsistency in the way that staff respond when pupils do not meet the school's high expectations for behaviour and conduct. This means that pupils are not always clear about what is expected of them, and some do not conduct themselves as well as they could. The school should make sure that staff apply routines consistently and deal with incidents of poor behaviour effectively.

## **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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137908
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347522
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	685
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sarah Noon
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Kevin Gritton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Brogan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk">www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	15 and 16 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic School in the Diocese of Nottingham. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2023.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2020.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector held conversations with representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the chair of the board of trustees. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors held discussions about, and scrutinised records relating to, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and pupils. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the online surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

John Spragg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ellenor Beighton

Ofsted Inspector

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