

# Inspection of St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Matlock Road, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 2JD

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Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Amanda Clemens. 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?**

St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a harmonious and caring school. There is a strong culture of mutual respect and kindness across the school. As a result, relationships between staff and pupils are warm. The school has a nurturing, family feel. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve their potential across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils aspire to these expectations. They enjoy school. They show a mature attitude towards their learning and commitment to their studies. Pupils achieve well.

During unstructured times, pupils support each other. They play together happily. Older pupils show care for their younger peers. Pupils commented, 'Everyone is really nice to each other here. We get rewarded for making correct choices.'

Pupils' character development is a clear strength of the school. Pupils are particularly proud of their leadership roles and the impact they have on their school and the wider community. Examples of their work include campaigning to save a local care home; glue stick recycling; and writing to governors to propose a change in the uniform policy to reduce financial strain on families.

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

In the Reception Year, learning is organised around a theme and series of carefully chosen books. Children follow well-established routines. They complete 'busy bee' activities which develop their independence. Staff support pupils with their early language and communication. Staff introduce children to new words and encourage children to use them. As part of their 'minibeast' topic, children learn and remember facts such as 'aphids suck the goodness out of plants in your garden'. Children are well prepared for key stage 1.

There is a strong reading culture at the school. Children start learning to read immediately in the Reception Year. All staff are highly skilled in delivering the phonics programme. Pupils quickly learn to recognise sounds and blend them to decode unfamiliar words. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of diverse and high-quality texts. The reading curriculum which follows on from phonics is well-structured and ambitious. Pupils discuss what they have read and support their opinions with evidence from the text or from drawing upon their real-life experiences. The published outcomes for phonics and key stage 2 reading are high.

In the mathematics curriculum, pupils practise their mathematical fluency and also reason and problem solve. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and talk about their learning with confidence. However, there are some occasions in lessons where higher attaining pupils do not always get the opportunity to think more deeply.

There are clear systems and processes in place for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are supported well. They access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Overall, the curriculum is ambitious. Learning focuses on what pupils 'know, remember and reason'. However, sometimes the tasks that pupils are given are either too easy or too hard. This means, on some occasions, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Pupils revisit their prior learning. They also reflect at the end of a lesson on precisely what they have learned in 'exit ticket' tasks. In some subjects this is highly effective and as a result pupils develop a real depth of knowledge. In history, pupils talk about concepts such as 'civilisation' and 'empire', drawing on knowledge they have learnt across a range of topics. However, in some other subjects, recaps are not designed as well to reinforce prior learning. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

The school's personal development offer is exceptional. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are proud of their inclusive school. They celebrate that 'everyone belongs here'. Pupils speak with respect about different faiths and cultures. Pupils access a range of enrichment opportunities including faith-based activities. Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of different types of family and relationships. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload in any decision making. Staff commented on how supportive leaders are in relation to their well-being. There is a strong team feeling. Those with responsibility for governance know the school's priorities well. There are clear lines of communication between the local governing body and the trust board. Staff and leaders access appropriate training opportunities. Staff networking with other professionals across the trust has a positive impact on the school's work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, the school's use of assessment information to identify what pupils know and remember is not as effective as it could be. As a result, some pupils do not build on their knowledge in these subjects over time. The school should ensure that, in these curriculums, assessment strategies are effective in checking that pupils understand key knowledge securely in the longer term.
- Sometimes the curriculum is not sufficiently adapted to meet some pupils' needs. This results in a minority of pupils becoming disengaged or being expected to complete tasks that are either too easy or too challenging. The school should ensure that it

continues to support all staff to adapt the curriculum so that all pupils can achieve their full potential.

## **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>	146119
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379594
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<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>	Amanda Clemens
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stelizabethsbelper.srscmat.co.uk">www.stelizabethsbelper.srscmat.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does use any alternative provision.
- A section 48 inspection of the school's Catholic religious character took place in March 2023.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in: reading, mathematics, history and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, personal development, early years and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and with representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments, as well as the results of Ofsted's online survey for school staff.

## **Inspection team**

Luella Dhoore, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Halil Tamgumus

Ofsted Inspector

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