

# Knutton St Marys CofE Academy

Church Lane, Knutton, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 6EB

## Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The principal's passion and high expectations have been central to the recent improvements of the school.
- An inclusive and nurturing atmosphere is evident within the school. Staff are attentive and support pupils' emotional well-being effectively.
- Since July 2018, outcomes have risen. Pupils' starting points on entry to school are typically low. Good teaching enables pupils to progress well.
- Leaders are developing the curriculum. This is particularly the case in history, geography, science and religious education, where pupils' knowledge and understanding develop well.
- The teaching of reading is having a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment. Pupils develop their skills through a wide range of texts, and their progress is carefully monitored by staff.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Pupils are now given more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills, solve problems and reason.
- The school needs to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- The school needs to improve attendance rates so that they meet national averages.
- Early years is well led. Staff in the Nursery and Reception are highly skilled. They provide a wealth of learning opportunities for children within an attractive and stimulating environment.
- The pupil premium is put to good use. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from the school's strategies.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium has been effective. Pupils receive a broad range of physical and sport-related opportunities, both within lessons and when using the playground at social times.
- The local governing committee of St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust provides appropriate challenge for school leaders. They know that there are further improvements to outcomes that need to be made.
- The safeguarding culture in school is effective. Staff and governors take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

## Full report

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

- Improve the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Increase the percentage of pupils attaining the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Improve attendance rates so that they meet national averages by further supporting and challenging families of pupils who are persistently absent.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the school opened as an academy, the principal has played a pivotal role in improving the school. She is passionate about the school and has high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. She and the deputy principal make a strong team and have a firm and thorough understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. Middle leaders also take initiative for school improvement. They know their subjects and areas of responsibility well and are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have created a positive culture of mutual support and improvement among staff. They share a clear sense of direction and a desire to get the best out of pupils, both academically and socially. Staff are proud to work at the school and feel that leaders support their development through a range of training opportunities.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and focused. Leaders use the detailed information they have about pupils' progress to identify strengths and put in place relevant priorities for improvement.
- Pupils enjoy some of the wider curriculum opportunities. This is leaders' commitment to developing the school curriculum. Progression of learning in science and religious education is a notable strength. Pupils list PE among their favourite subjects, with the PE and sports premium funding being used appropriately.
- St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust has commissioned a review of pupil premium spending, which is due to take place shortly. Several of the strategies to support disadvantaged pupils have had a positive effect on their progress, and the home-school link worker has been key in supporting vulnerable families.

### Governance of the school

- St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust and the local governing committee of the trust board receive clear and accurate information about the performance of different groups of pupils. This has enabled them to ask challenging questions when outcomes for pupils have been low.
- Governors are knowledgeable about their roles and take their responsibilities seriously. They know that part of their core work is to ensure that outcomes are raised for all pupils.

### Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are vigilant in their duty of care. Any unexplained absences from school are followed up quickly, and staff report any concerns about safety to the right people. The school works with the multi-academy trust and other professional organisations when necessary.
- Leaders carry out all the correct employment checks on school staff and make sure that they receive regular safeguarding training. Many staff have first-aid training.

- The school site is secure, and access by visitors is controlled. Safety procedures, such as lock downs, are carried out regularly.
- Medicines are stored in the correct places.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching at the school has improved. Over the past year, the staff team has focused on getting the basics of reading, writing and mathematics right. St Bart's Academy Trust has been instrumental in providing staff with relevant training courses.
- In all classes, the teaching of reading has come on in leaps and bounds. Pupils read regularly, enjoy being read to in class and have many opportunities to interrogate and explore the meanings of words. In key stage 2, the whole-class book approach captures pupils' attention and helps pupils access age-appropriate texts. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed studying an extract from Ian Fleming's book, 'Dr. No'.
- Teachers also make sure that pupils practise writing at length. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are noticeable strengths of the school.
- The teaching of mathematics is also improving. Pupils have more opportunities to solve problems and apply their mathematical skills through 'guided reasoning' lessons. Increasingly pupils are able to articulate how they solved a problem and whether their method was the most efficient way.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in pupils' learning. They achieve a good balance of guiding pupils, while also encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.
- Evidence in books shows that pupils are able to transfer their literacy and mathematics skills to other areas of the curriculum. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about other countries and cultures. For example, Reception children have sampled fruits from Uganda and compared them to fruits grown in England. Year 3 pupils have explored the work of artist Daudi Karungi, and used his styles to create their own African masks. Year 5 have studied the Shang Dynasty and gained an understanding of China's history.
- Pupils are taught a range of computing skills, including stop motion animation. This is where pupils make models, photograph the models, re-model the scene slightly and repeat, before running the sequence as a short film to tell a story. The work seen was of a high quality.
- A specialist music room and teacher mean that music lessons are interesting and pupils really enjoy the subject. Pupils get the opportunity to play a wide range of instruments. Pupils enjoy singing, and many take part in the two choirs, 'Song Birds' and 'Boys Noyz', that are open to girls and boys respectively. Pupils take part in competitions and events, including the 'Big Sing', and talk enthusiastically about their successes in singing and the arts.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

#### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils recognise that it is 'good to be different' and that this makes us unique and special. A display of all pupils' photographs in the entrance hall echoes this idea.
- The school council and pupil parliament help pupils to learn about the importance of democracy and enable them to have a voice within the school.
- The school has taken on the running of the community library. This enables pupils, parents, carers and the community to access a wide range of information and books. This further supports the positive culture of reading throughout the school and provides a valuable service for the wider community.
- The on-site forest school area is fully utilised by key stage 2 pupils and encourages teamwork and cooperation. It also provides pupils with opportunities to learn outside the classroom.
- The recently developed playground area includes sensory apparatus, a 'Hobbit' house and the 'Knutton mile' challenge. This encourages pupils to play, exercise and stay fit and healthy through fun activities.
- Pupils are taught and know how to keep themselves safe, including 'Bikeability' training, encouraging safe cycling and road use. Visits by the NSPCC help pupils to understand the importance of healthy relationships.
- The core Christian values of community, respect and perseverance are at the centre of all the school does. These values could be seen in action through pupils' interactions with one another and with staff. One pupil said that 'the best thing about our school is the community and the respect we have for one another.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority of pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times is impressive. They move around school sensibly and respond well to instructions from staff.
- There are some pupils who have very complex emotional and behavioural needs. These pupils are managed well by staff. The school's nurture programme and the appointment of a home-school link worker have helped secure improvements to behaviour over time.
- Absence rates remain above the national average. A range of strategies are employed by the school to ensure that parents and pupils know that 'every day and minute counts', including a permanent external wall plaque by the main entrance. Despite leaders' best efforts, attendance remains stubbornly low. There are a few families of pupils who are persistently absent.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Standards are rising, and current pupils are doing well. A relatively high proportion of pupils enter school with skills below a level that is typical for their age. Good teaching enables pupils to progress well as they move through the school.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average. The large majority of current Year 1 pupils are making good progress in developing their phonic skills.

- At the end of key stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are slightly below national figures. However, pupils are making strong progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national averages for the last two years. This is a reflection of the gaps in pupils' knowledge due to previous weaknesses in teaching the curriculum. However, while historically attainment has been low, it has shown year-on-year improvement. Pupils currently in the school have had more time to benefit from improved teaching and are making good progress. However, the proportion of more-able pupils attaining the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 remains below the national averages.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective teaching and support, which is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet their changing needs. Consequently, they make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well across the school. The school's assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils make good progress and sometimes outperform their classmates.
- Work in pupils' exploration and discovery books and in other exercise books shows that their knowledge and skills are developing well in other subjects. This is particularly the case in history, geography, science and religious education.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Relationships between staff and children in the early years are a strength. Staff are attentive and meet children's needs well. In the Nursery, children are very well settled into the start of their life at the school.
- Children are encouraged to have good manners and behave well. Staff model their expectations and put in place consistent routines. Children were observed taking turns and collaborating with each other and were dressed smartly in their uniforms. There is a calm and productive learning environment.
- A high number of children enter early years with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below the levels typical for their age. Strong subject knowledge and good teaching from both teachers and teaching assistants enable children to progress well across the different areas of learning. Basic skills such as phonics are taught well.
- Staff are constantly seeking ways to develop children's language and communication skills. Classrooms are set up to prompt questions and discussions, and adults offer lots of encouraging words that build children's confidence. In the class role-play areas, children can be 'veterinary surgeons'; they look after 'pets' and paint animals. Learning environments are bright and attractive, and learning occurs both inside and outside of the classroom.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the provision. She supports staff well and has a clear view of the progress the children need to make. Parents are openly welcomed and encouraged to support their children's learning.

- Children make good progress, with the proportion of children achieving a good level of development rising from 2017 to 2018. While slightly below national averages, work in books and the school's assessment information show that children make good progress from their starting points.
- Children are well supervised and kept safe at school.

## School details

Unique reference number	142078
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10088451

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled Church of England academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Governors	Anne Gadsden
Principal	Anna Weaver
Telephone number	01782 568680
Website	<a href="https://ksmacademy.com">https://ksmacademy.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@ksmacademy.com">office@ksmacademy.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The principal and vice-principal were permanently appointed to the school in October 2015 after a period of leadership instability.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school is in St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust. The board of trustees is responsible for setting the strategic direction of its schools. The trustees employ a chief executive officer (CEO) to oversee and work with all of the multi-academy trust's schools.
- At a local level, the local governing committee of the trust board holds the principal to account and monitors the day-to-day running of the school.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Inspectors also examined pupils' work in books and on display and considered the school's own assessment information.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and the school's routines. They observed pupils in lessons, at lunch and when they were moving around the school site.
- By the end of the inspection, there were five free-text comments from parents. The inspection team considered these and spoke to some parents during the inspection. In addition, the inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, school leaders, governors, and the CEO and the director of school effectiveness and standards of the multi-academy trust. Inspectors also looked at the 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors examined school documents. These included information about pupils' progress and attainment, evaluations of the school's performance and several policy statements. Records relating to leadership, governance, staff training, SEND, early years, attendance, safeguarding and the quality of teaching were scrutinised. The school's website was also checked.

## Inspection team

Heather Phillips, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ed Masterson

Ofsted Inspector

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