

Inspection of a good school: Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Loughborough

Hastings Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 5AX

Inspection dates:

29 to 30 March 2022

Outcome

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Loughborough continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their culturally diverse and welcoming school. Teachers help them to be reflective and confident to share their views. Relationships are positive and respectful.

Expectations are high. Pupils are keen to learn and achieve well in most subjects. They enjoy reading a variety of books and discussing interesting questions. They relish challenges in mathematics and use their knowledge of arithmetic well. Pupils are interested in what they learn. For example, older pupils find out about the different geographical features of unfamiliar countries. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not always receive the precise help they need to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils enjoy residential trips and visits to interesting places such as museums. These activities enrich their learning. Pupils appreciate opportunities to learn musical instruments and play different sports.

Pupils are happy. They behave well and work hard. Pupils enjoy fundraising to help local and national charities, as they care about their community and the wider world. They take pride in receiving team points and certificates to celebrate learning and determination. They say that bullying rarely happens. They trust adults to help them to resolve issues fairly.

Parents say that their children feel safe. Opportunities to promote pupils' emotional and physical well-being are well considered.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have put in place a well-structured and sequenced curriculum in most subjects. Leaders identify the important knowledge that pupils need to know and by when. In mathematics, for example, teachers help pupils to build their knowledge securely. They explain new ideas clearly, step by step. They check that pupils understand concepts before moving on. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge. For example, they use their knowledge of arithmetic to solve complex

challenges. In lessons, pupils complete calculations quickly and accurately. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics because they feel successful.

Teachers ensure that pupils learn and revisit important knowledge. In geography, for example, pupils revisit what they know about the location of different countries. Teachers regularly check what pupils remember and understand. This enables teachers to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. However, in some subjects, including geography, teachers do not routinely show pupils how to use what they already know when learning about bigger and more complex ideas.

Leaders make sure that reading lies at the heart of the curriculum. They make sure that phonics is taught well from the start of Reception. Pupils are given books that match their reading abilities. Leaders carefully select books, including poetry, stories, non-fiction and ones that are linked to topics. Leaders ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding of the increasingly demanding books they read and listen to. They make sure that pupils understand the complex language they encounter in books. Teachers read to pupils every day. They nurture a love of reading. Pupils talk thoughtfully about the books they have read.

Leaders place high importance on building pupils' confidence in using vocabulary across all subjects. Teachers help pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary to make connections between topics. Pupils are thoughtful about their choice of words when explaining new ideas or summarising their learning. Children in the early years are well supported to become confident in using new words.

Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as other pupils. Teachers quickly and accurately identify pupils with SEND. Teachers and teaching assistants provide sensitive support. However, leaders have not ensured that this support consistently helps these pupils to become confident in using the precise knowledge taught. They do not always check to make sure that any gaps in knowledge for these pupils are closed quickly.

Staff ensure that children are safe and happy in the early years. Children settle in well and quickly learn the routines of school life. They enjoy the interesting activities that staff prepare. Leaders think about how learning in Reception connects with the learning that pupils will encounter in the future. This sets up children well to succeed in Year 1 and beyond.

Leaders prioritise pupils' mental and physical well-being. Pupils celebrate how they show resilience and ambition to achieve their goals. They understand the importance of being respectful, including of different beliefs and family structures. They learn useful strategies to help them work through difficult issues.

School and trust leaders work together to grow their staff as well as their pupils. The trust provides effective support for staff's professional development. Staff value working with colleagues across the trust. They see it as a 'talent pool' that they can 'gain from and contribute to'.

Staff feel part of a valued team. Leaders are considerate of the well-being of all staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders put pupils' welfare first. Leaders have clear oversight of pupils' behaviour and attendance and safeguarding. They know pupils well. Staff receive regular training. They are alert to and share even the smallest of concerns with leaders.

Leaders seek advice from other agencies. They are persistent to secure the support that pupils and families need.

Pupils say that they trust adults in school to listen and help with any worries. Pupils are alert to the risks of the online world. Pupils learn about respectful relationships and personal space. Older pupils learn about peer pressure and consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure that gaps in knowledge for pupils with SEND are identified precisely enough. They do not routinely check to make sure that these pupils consistently receive the support they need to close any gaps in their knowledge. As a result, these pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that pupils with SEND receive the extra help they need so that they can achieve as well as they can.
- In some subjects, including geography, leaders do not always enable pupils to apply their knowledge to bigger and more complex ideas. As a result, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could in these subjects. Leaders should consider how they can make sure pupils receive opportunities to apply knowledge when exploring complex ideas, helping them to achieve consistently well in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138295
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10212372
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Priscilla Jordan
Website	www.stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher joined the school after the last inspection. There have been several changes in staff in the past eight months, including a new deputy headteacher and three teachers.
- The school joined the St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust in September 2018.
- The school is a Catholic voluntary academy. A section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in June 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. A meeting was held with the chief executive officer and representatives of the St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust and of the school's local governing body.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including school policies.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. This included meeting with subject leaders, visiting lessons and speaking with teachers. The inspector listened to pupils reading to adults, considered leaders' curriculum plans and scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils. The inspector visited the lunch hall and playground. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was evaluated.
- The single central record was scrutinised as part of the inspection of safeguarding. The inspector met with safeguarding leaders, spoke with a range of staff and pupils and considered safeguarding records.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Consideration was given to the seven responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the seven responses to the free-text facility. The inspector also reviewed 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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