

Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

St Faith's Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6AG

Inspection dates: 12–13 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff want the best for pupils. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders are starting to address this. They have designed a curriculum to give pupils the knowledge they need for future learning. But there is more to do. In some subjects, teachers' expectations are not high enough, particularly for older pupils in each mixed-age class. Children in Reception have a poor start. Too many children are not fully prepared for Year 1.

Most pupils enjoy school. They value their friendships with other pupils. Pupils know that staff care about them. They feel safe at school. Pupils trust that adults will help them if they are worried or upset. Bullying is not an issue. Pupils are confident that staff resolve any problems quickly.

Pupils of different ages get along well. In lessons, they listen carefully to adults and each other. At social times, pupils play happily together. Older pupils enjoy looking after their younger peers.

Leaders provide well for pupils' personal development. They plan a range of trips to broaden pupils' experiences. Older pupils take responsibility, for example, as lunchtime helpers, house captains and 'Mini-Vinnies'. Pupils and parents value the many clubs on offer.

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

The headteacher and trustees know that the quality of education needs improving. Over time, pupils have not achieved well enough, particularly in English and mathematics. Leaders have concentrated on improving mathematics. Pupils are now doing better in this subject. The English curriculum still needs work.

The teaching of phonics and reading varies. Teachers know the sounds they should teach and the order in which to teach them. However, because of weak teaching in the early years, children enter Year 1 not being able to read the sounds and words they should. Effective teaching in key stage 1 ensures that most pupils catch up. However, in key stage 2, the teaching of reading falls off again. Pupils' reading skills do not build sufficiently. Teachers do not check pupils' reading books. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could, including the most able pupils.

Curriculum plans make it clear what pupils should know by the end of each year group. In some subjects, teachers' plans develop pupils' knowledge step by step. Pupils remember what they have learned. For example, in science, key stage 1 pupils have a secure understanding of food chains. However, in some subjects, teachers do not adapt their plans to ensure that the older pupils in each class build on their previous knowledge.

Leaders have successfully improved the mathematics curriculum. Teachers have sequenced plans for what to teach. These plans break learning down into small chunks that build in a logical order. Pupils' knowledge is growing as result. They are starting to enjoy mathematics. In contrast, English plans do not sequence teaching so that it builds on pupils' previous learning. Gaps exist in pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation knowledge. Teachers' expectations are not high enough.

The physical education (PE) curriculum equips pupils with skills in a range of sports. Pupils of all abilities enjoy participating in sports competitions. They have achieved success in football, netball and athletics.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. Leaders have put effective processes in place to identify pupils' needs. Pupils receive extra support. However, lessons do not always meet these pupils' needs well enough to support their learning.

Children in the early years get off to a poor start. Adults care for children and look after them well. Children are happy and safe. However, adults do not use information about what children know to plan what they need to learn next. The order of what children learn is not well sequenced. Children who are behind where they should be do not receive the help they need to catch up. As a result, children develop gaps in their knowledge. Over the past two years, approximately half of children have left Reception not ready for learning in Year 1.

Pupils are keen to learn. They behave well. Leaders are taking steps to improve pupils' attendance. This has been successful for individual pupils. However, attendance overall remains below the national average.

Leaders promote pupils' physical and mental health through 'Well-being Wednesday'. Pupils learn to be active citizens. For example, the choir sings at the local home for the elderly and pupils volunteer as tour guides in nearby Stratford-upon-Avon. Pupils respect people that have different beliefs to their own. Visits to places of interest such as the Houses of Parliament broaden their horizons. Pupils are proud of their fundraising for charity.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have up-to-date safeguarding knowledge. Staff know what to look out for. They follow the school's process for reporting concerns. Leaders act swiftly to keep pupils safe. They make referrals to external agencies when necessary. Leaders provide vulnerable pupils with the support they need.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe. They help pupils to identify five people they can talk to if they are worried. If pupils do not feel confident to talk, they can share their concerns with a 'worry monster' and an adult will respond. Pupils know how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early years curriculum is not well considered. As a result, it is poorly sequenced. Adults do not use assessment information to plan a curriculum that meets children's needs. Children are not prepared well for the next stage in their education. Leaders need to ensure that staff understand how young children learn. Adults need to use their assessments of children's learning to inform their planning. The curriculum needs to provide all children with a secure foundation for future learning in key stages 1 and 2.
- The order of what pupils will learn in English is not clear. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Too many pupils do not acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be successful writers. Key stage 2 pupils' reading skills are underdeveloped. Leaders need to put an English curriculum in place that builds pupils' knowledge and skills in a logical order. They need to develop teachers' subject knowledge so that they can deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers need to check pupils' understanding and address their errors and misconceptions so that pupils do not repeat these.
- In some subjects, curriculum plans do not take account of what the older pupils in each mixed-age class know and can do. These pupils sometimes repeat things they have already learned without building on this knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers plan the curriculum to build on pupils' prior learning. They need to ensure that teachers have a secure understanding of what pupils should know and be able to do in each year group.
- Some teachers do not adapt the curriculum so that it meets the needs of pupils with SEND and the most able pupils well enough. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is adapted consistently well to meet these pupils' needs. They need to check that the support pupils with SEND receive is making a difference.
- Leaders' improvement plans lack precision. They do not get underneath exactly what needs to improve and why. Actions and milestones lack detail. This makes it difficult for governors and trustees to check if things are getting better and to hold leaders to account. Leaders should ensure that they have a thorough understanding of how well teachers are implementing the intended curriculum. They should use this information to develop improvement plans with precise targets, actions and milestones so that governors and trustees can hold them to account effectively.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average, and declining. This is despite the successful work that leaders have done with some pupils and families to address persistent absence. Therefore, there is a need to review approaches to tackling absence so that all parents understand the importance of their children attending school regularly.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	143632
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10122501
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	105
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eric Kirwan
Headteacher	Maggie Gourlay
Website	www.ourladystmarysfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is a Roman Catholic school. It has a Christian ethos.
- The school converted to become an academy on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, also called Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is part of the Holy Family Catholic Multi-Academy Company (MAC). The MAC comprises five primary schools and one secondary school.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, early years leader and special educational needs coordinator. We met with subject leaders and teachers.
- We met with three representatives of the MAC. We also met with eight members of the local governing body. We spoke with a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham on the telephone.

- We completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics and science. In each subject, inspection activities included discussions with the subject leader, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- We considered information about the school's curriculum in physical education and computing.
- We listened to some pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read to a member of staff. We listened to some key stage 2 pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. We spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- We met with the headteacher about the school's safeguarding procedures. We reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pupils who have left the school. We spoke to pupils, parents and staff about how safe pupils are at school.
- We reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website. We evaluated published performance data and documents relating to the curriculum and pupils with SEND.
- We took into consideration the 17 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 10 free-text comments. We spoke to parents at the start of the school day. We took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Helps

Ofsted Inspector

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