

Inspection of a good school: English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Willow Crescent, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6EH

Inspection dates:

13 October 2021

Outcome

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being at school. They told inspectors that the teachers make school fun and that 'we don't even realise that we are learning'. Pupils say that they feel safe. They know there is always a member of staff they can speak to if they are worried about anything. Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being. Pupils engage with their learning and contribute positively to the life of the school.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Leaders promote pupils' academic, personal and spiritual development. The school's 10 virtues are at the heart of this inclusive school. Pupils understand the virtues. They are highly motivated.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes embody the school values. They know what is expected of them. Pupils are polite and caring towards each other. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils have a clear understanding of equality. They told inspectors that 'everyone is welcome here'.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent's comment summed up the views of many when they said that, 'We feel very lucky to be part of such a nurturing, happy school.' Parents appreciate that the staff are approachable. They know that staff care for their children. Parents describe the school as being like a family.

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

The school continues to provide a good quality of education. The headteacher is determined that all pupils thrive at the school. She wants the very best for every pupil. Leaders have developed a strong curriculum in phonics, early reading and mathematics. In the wider curriculum, it is not yet fully clear in some subjects what pupils should learn and when. Leaders are currently reviewing the plans in these subjects, to identify the knowledge pupils will learn and when, so that they know and remember more over time.

Reading is a central priority in the school. There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils acquire a wide vocabulary in every class. The daily phonics sessions are highly structured. Pupils learn to read in a very systematic way. They use their decoding skills well to sound out unfamiliar words. Books are matched to the letters and sounds pupils are learning. Pupils enjoy reading and talking about books. Staff regularly check how successfully pupils learn new sounds. If pupils fall behind, staff provide frequent support. Nothing is left to chance.

The mathematics curriculum is carefully sequenced so that pupils secure knowledge over time. Pupils can explain their learning and how it relates to their learning in the past. Pupils use mathematical vocabulary. They know they can ask for help if they get stuck. Teachers provide mathematical equipment to help pupils understand the learning, or if they fall behind. For example, pupils use place value grids to help them understand place value. Other pupils use a number square to help them understand factors and multiples.

The quality of education in the early years is good. Children study the full requirements of the new EYFS framework. Leaders ensure that there is a sharp focus on children's vocabulary and the language and comprehension necessary to read. For example, in mathematics children are confident in explaining vocabulary such as 'add', 'move' and 'sum'. Leaders provide an engaging environment. Relationships are very positive between children and adults.

Leaders ensure that staff provide high-quality support in lessons so that all pupils can access the curriculum. Staff adapt the curriculum well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders routinely assess all pupils' understanding across the curriculum.

The school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality. Leaders create a positive and respectful culture. Pupils celebrate each other's achievements in assemblies. Pupils' understanding of British values and different faiths is strong.

Governors and representatives of the multi-academy trust (MAT) know the school well. They support leaders to develop the curriculum and hold them to account. MAT representatives understand their statutory responsibilities. Leaders engage very well with staff. They take account of workload and provide regular professional development. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school's leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of care at the school. Leaders provide support to vulnerable pupils and their families. Staff pass any concerns on quickly. Record-keeping is thorough. Trustees and governors regularly check the school's safeguarding procedures. Leaders ensure that all staff are knowledgeable and receive frequent training.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils told inspectors that they know who to go to if they have a concern. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects, such as history, music and design technology. In these subjects, it is not yet fully clear what pupils should learn and when. However, it is clear that leaders have already begun to review and plan the curriculum in these subjects. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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 on 4 October 2011.

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	139611
Local authority	Rutland Council
Inspection number	10199835
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	135
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Linda Heaver
Headteacher	Alison Chambers
Website	www.englishmartyrs.rutland.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the St Therese of Lisieux Catholic Multi Academy Trust in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, curriculum leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, and a sample of teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and two representatives of the chief executive officer of the MAT.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading; mathematics; and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader. The safeguarding policy, training records and examples of safeguarding concerns were scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the 34 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and the 31 responses to Ofsted's free-text service. We also considered the responses to the staff survey and the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Damien Turrell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Karen Slack

Ofsted Inspector

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