

Inspection of St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

McKean Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 4BA

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

St Francis Xavier Catholic primary school is a warm, caring school where pupils are happy and safe. It is an improving school, but there is still work to do to ensure that pupils get a good education.

Leaders and staff want the best for pupils. However, the school has experienced a period of turbulence due to the impact of COVID-19 and significant changes in its staff. Consequently, not all pupils achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy learning and finding out new things. However, there are occasions where learning becomes interrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils recognise different types of bullying and know that it is wrong. They are confident to 'speak up' about it and adults respond to pupils' concerns and work hard to resolve issues.

Leaders make sure that pupils enjoy different experiences and learn new skills. For example, pupils talk fondly about visits to Dudley Zoo, the Black Country Museum and a visit to the seaside.

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

The multi-academy company (MAC) has taken firm and decisive action to improve the school since the start of the academic year. They work closely with the school's local governing body. Together, they are providing high levels of support and challenge for leaders. This has led to a number of recent changes and improvements.

Developing the early years has been a priority for the school. Leaders have worked hard to improve the classroom and outdoor learning environments. Children enjoy sitting in the book corner and sharing their favourite stories with a friend, dressing up in the role-play area and performing songs on the outdoor stage. During the inspection, children were watching 'living caterpillars' turn into butterflies in their specially created butterfly habitat. It is here that staff's high expectations of learning and following routines are better preparing pupils for their next stage of learning.

Leaders are developing the curriculum in all subjects and areas, including the early years. Pupils receive a broad curriculum. Pupils are beginning to build subject-specific skills and knowledge more successfully, such as in music. However, subject leaders are yet to review how consistently and effectively the intended curriculum is being delivered.

Pupils are developing a love of reading. They enjoy it when teachers read books to them. Leaders make sure all pupils have access to high-quality books at home and in school. Staff teach phonics effectively and, as a result, pupils learn to read well.

Teachers use assessments carefully to identify and address any gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. Teaching assistants provide highly effective support with reading.

Staff do not consistently deliver the curriculum effectively in all subjects and year groups. When it is delivered well, teachers explain new learning in a clear, structured and well-thought-out manner. However, when this is not the case, pupils lose interest, and some low-level off-task behaviour occurs. In some lessons and subjects, teachers do not focus on what higher-attaining pupils already know and can do. These pupils are not able to then build on their prior knowledge and skills and achieve as well as they should.

Staff identify the additional needs of most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Teaching assistants are well deployed to provide these pupils with extra support in class or individually. This enables pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. Pupils with significant difficulties also access specialist support. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Leaders track pupils' attendance carefully. Despite the pandemic, attendance is improving. Most pupils behave well. Staff record all incidents in the school's system. However, leaders do not analyse the data they collect for behaviour. Therefore, they do not understand how pupils' behaviour changes over time and how to further improve their behaviour.

Leaders find creative ways to ensure that pupils continue to experience a range of opportunities during the pandemic. Personal, social and health education helps pupils to respect each other and value differences. Pupils have a growing understanding of fundamental British values (FBV), but this is not yet fully embedded throughout the school.

A number of parents raised concerns during the inspection. They told inspectors that leaders do not provide them with sufficient information about school life. They say that leaders are slow to respond to concerns. It is clear that the school's communication has not been as effective as it has been historically, partly due to the pandemic. The majority of staff are on board with the changes leaders are making to improve things. Staff say leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant about pupils' safety. They receive safeguarding training and quizzes to check their knowledge. They know about local risks and are clear about what to do if they have a concern. Any concerns are reported swiftly. They are followed up well. Leaders make sure all staff undergo detailed employment checks. These checks are recorded clearly on a well-organised central record.

Pupils learn how to stay safe as part of the curriculum. This includes learning how to stay safe online. Visitors and collective worship sessions are also used to reinforce and share important safety messages.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There continues to be turbulence in staffing. Many subject leaders are new to their post and have not yet been able to monitor the delivery of the curriculum. As a result, they do not have a detailed understanding of how well the curriculum is being implemented. Leaders need to ensure that subject leaders have opportunities to plan and monitor the implementation of their curriculum so they can identify how to improve it further.
- Teachers do not consistently deliver the curriculum in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, well enough. As a result, not all pupils, including higher-attaining pupils and children in the early years, achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive further support and training to enable them to deliver the planned curriculum more effectively in all year groups and subjects.
- Leaders do not analyse the information they collect about behaviour incidents to identify any trends in pupils' behaviour. Consequently, leaders are unable to identify additional support and actions that may be needed to improve pupils' behaviour. Leaders should use information about behaviour incidents to better detect any patterns or trends and identify the actions needed to further improve pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' knowledge about FBV is limited to democracy. Consequently, pupils are not being prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of FBV are purposefully planned and delivered throughout the curriculum.
- Several parents are concerned that leaders do not provide them with sufficient information about school life and are slow to respond to issues they raise. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders' communication with parents has not been as effective as it has previously been. Leaders should ensure that parents receive clear information about school life and that their concerns are responded to in a timely manner.

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	141922
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10211774
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors Emmaus Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Chair of Board	Joanna Griffin
Principal	Jenni Downes
Website	www.st-francisxavier.sandwell.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2007

Information about this school

- The school joined EMMAUS Catholic MAC in February 2021.
- In the last few years there has been a high turnover of staff. The vice-principal has been in post since January 2022.
- The school was inspected under section 48 in June 2018. The next inspection is due in 2023.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This is the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspectors met with the principal, vice principal and the operations manager from the MAC. Meetings were also held with governors and trustees and the Catholic Senior Executive Leader/Chief Executive Officer of the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and music. Inspection activities in these subjects included: lesson visits, discussions with staff and pupils, meeting with subject leaders and work scrutiny. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Inspectors looked at records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, and talked to pupils formally and informally about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspectors talked to parents at the start of the day and considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and their free-text responses. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to the staff questionnaire and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion with these groups.

Inspection team

Heather Phillips, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Vanessa Payne

Ofsted Inspector

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