

# Inspection of St Ambrose Catholic Primary

Leswell Street, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 1RP

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Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

**Previous inspection grade** Good

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly, supportive place in which to work and learn. Staff expect pupils to be kind, polite and hard working. Most respond very well to these expectations and do their best. Pupils treat others with respect and learn to see the value of thoughtful words and actions. They take on jobs that help the school day to run smoothly and safely. If any poor behaviour happens, then adults step in quickly and stop it. Bullying is uncommon. Staff take any suggestions of bullying seriously. They work well with parents and pupils to sort out any upsets.

The school's rules are simple, fair and consistent. Everyone understands them and can talk about why it is important to be: ready, respectful and safe. In addition, leaders and staff teach pupils to take responsibility for their actions and to learn from any mistakes. This reflective and highly effective approach means the school is an orderly safe place. Pupils can get on with their learning and are happy. Even so, a few pupils do not come to school often enough.

The school's approach to teaching reading works very well. Most other subjects are also well organised, although aspects of mathematics teaching could be strengthened further.

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

From the very first day in the early years class, staff pay close attention to words, language and communication. They speak kindly and clearly to children and tell them lots of stories that widen their vocabularies and stimulate their minds. Well-trained staff use good quality materials to teach letter sounds and early reading. This continues through key stage 1, and beyond for those who need it. Indeed, across the school, reading is very well led. In all classes, adults read to pupils and regularly listen to them reading. They introduce pupils to lots of books and poems and take part in events, such as national poetry week. Pupils get many opportunities to read aloud and to develop confidence in public speaking. In short, the school has many successful ways to teach and promote reading.

Across the rest of the curriculum, some subjects are better developed than others. In most subjects, pupils build up knowledge and skills in a logical sequence, because staff know what to teach and when. After a strong start in early years, lessons in later year groups are carefully planned to build on what pupils know. Leaders make sure staff receive regular training and employ specialist teachers to support some subjects, such as physical education. Where subject guidance and assessment are not so well developed, leaders know what they need to do next. They have plans in place to improve these areas. For example, leaders know that the well-thought-out mathematics curriculum is not implemented as well as it could be. At times, staff do not check what pupils have remembered. Because of this they sometimes use resources that are not well matched to what pupils need to practise and learn. This is not widespread, but it does happen more than it should.

Outside of lessons, there are many extra opportunities. From learning to tie shoelaces to administering first aid, pupils learn lots of helpful everyday life skills. In addition, pupils take on leadership roles. Members of the pupil safety squad check on simple safety routines, such as keeping cloakrooms tidy, so that no one trips over. Well-being ambassadors watch out for others on the playground to make sure no one feels left out. Adults model respectful behaviour and expect pupils to be courteous. From returning a cheery good morning greeting to standing aside and holding open doors, pupils live up to these high expectations for good manners. However, a few families do not send their children to school often enough.

Staff provide tailored support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are quick to spot particular needs when children first start in early years. Whether pupils need help with social, emotional or academic difficulties, leaders make sure the right support, including specialist nurture provision, is in place. All pupils access the same curriculum and staff provide extra resources to support all to achieve.

Staff and parents report high levels of satisfaction. Staff say that workload is reasonable and that leaders support and challenge them in their roles. Parents

praise the attention to academic and pastoral matters and are pleased with the way leaders respond to their questions.

Indeed, calm, caring leadership from the top colours much of the school's work and day-to-day life. This is apparent in the attention to everyone's well-being, the supportive school ethos and ongoing ambition to improve the school further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk or upset. They also teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, and how to behave respectfully and safely with others. When concerns arise, staff follow the correct policies and share information with other professionals if necessary.

Leaders keep up to date with government guidance and staff attend appropriate training. Governors and Emmaus multi academy company leaders maintain attentive oversight of safety and welfare matters.

All the required checks on adults in school are carried out and recorded correctly.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The mathematics curriculum is well designed but, at times, is not implemented as well as it could be. In some instances, staff do not do enough to check what pupils already know or they use resources that are not well matched to what pupils are learning. Leaders should provide appropriate guidance and support to improve these aspects, so that pupils in all classes can make the best possible progress in mathematics.
- The curriculum in some foundation subjects is better developed than others. In a few subjects, pupils do not build up subject-specific knowledge in the most logical progression. This means they do not learn and remember all that they should. Leaders recognise this and have plans in place to strengthen curriculum design further.
- Some pupils miss much school too often, and without good reason. This hinders their learning. Leaders should continue to work with families and other organisations to improve attendance.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141413
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242202
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Joanna Griffin
<b>Principal</b>	Emma Brocklesby
<b>Website</b>	st-ambrose.sch.life
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Company (MAC), previously known as Saint Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi Academy Company.
- As a Catholic School, St Ambrose Primary is also subject to a Catholic School inspection. The most recent inspection took place in May 2017.
- A private provider runs before- and after-school childcare on the school site. This is subject to a different inspection at a different time.
- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

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

- During the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. In these subjects, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.
- Inspectors looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, training, governance and school improvement planning. They also checked the school's website.
- The inspectors asked pupils, staff, leaders, governors and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. The lead inspector examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records.
- The inspectors talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff and parents' views. Inspectors spoke with parents on the playground at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the principal, other leaders, school staff, pupils, governors and the chief executive officer of Emmaus Catholic MAC.

### **Inspection team**

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Khalid Din

Ofsted Inspector

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