

Inspection of St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School, Haverhill

School Lane, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 9DE

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They make friends and like their teachers. A range of clubs and extra-curricular activities support pupils' development of interests and character. Pupils are encouraged to take up a range of roles which develop their leadership skills. However, there are large gaps in the curriculum, meaning pupils do not learn the vital knowledge they need to take their next steps.

There is a strong sense of community in this school, underpinned by their Catholic values. Pupils are taught how to care for other people. They demonstrate kindness and a compassion for each other.

Pupils respond positively to the leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils are polite and show good manners. They behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere in the school, with strong relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils feel safe. Bullying rarely occurs. Staff address friendship issues quickly. Pupils know that if they have a problem, there is always someone they can talk to. They trust adults in school.

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

Leaders are beginning to address serious weaknesses in the curriculum. However, there is significant work still to do to ensure that pupils receive an acceptable standard of education. Subject plans do not set out what pupils need to learn and in what order. Staff often teach the same content to all pupils without checking what pupils have learned before. This means that pupils do not build on what they have been taught already. They struggle to recall what they have learned previously.

In subjects such as science and music, pupils do not learn the content set out in the national curriculum. Pupils leave the school without the knowledge they need for secondary school.

Over the last three months, leaders have begun to make changes for the better. Previous weaknesses in the leadership structure of the school have been addressed and changes are beginning to improve the school for pupils. For example, there is a new programme for phonics, with a range of support for weaker readers. However, there is still no whole-school reading curriculum in place. This means that pupils who have mastered the basics do not go on to be skilled readers.

Until recently, leaders' evaluation of the school's curriculum relied too heavily on the scrutiny of assessment data. Gaps in pupils' learning are not picked up quickly by teachers as they rely on termly tests to tell them how pupils are doing. Pupils who become confused or make mistakes are not identified quickly and supported well. Leaders know that staff need training to improve. This work is at an early stage and has not yet had the required impact.

Staff have tried their best to interpret and deliver the curriculum. However, leaders have not provided them with effective training. Staff struggle as they do not understand some of the content in subjects such as music and history.

Pupils in early years follow well-established routines. Staff provide children with a range of activities, which they enjoy. However, the curriculum in the early years is disorganised. Leaders have not considered what children need to know and understand to be ready for key stage 1. Children in the early years are not well prepared for their next steps.

Provision for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is weak. The systems for identifying pupils' needs are underdeveloped. Tasks and activities are not adapted to meet these pupils' individual needs. Staff helping these pupils have not received effective training to be able to support pupils with SEND well. Pupils with SEND are cared for emotionally. However, they do not make the academic progress they should.

There is a strong and well-planned personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. Assemblies, wider opportunities, clubs and visits develop pupils' understanding of British values, such as respect, democracy and tolerance. These opportunities help pupils appreciate that individual characteristics make people unique, and differences should be celebrated. Staff help pupils become resilient and confident by giving them a range of roles and responsibilities. Pupils demonstrate care and respect for others.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well. Rare cases of low-level disruption in lessons are addressed by staff quickly.

Governors and trustees are committed to and passionate about the school. Previously, they have not possessed the required knowledge to hold leaders to account for the quality of education the school provides. They have not taken effective action to ensure that timely improvements to the school curriculum are made. Recent changes to the leadership structure of the school have improved governors' oversight of the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. They know how to identify and support vulnerable pupils. They understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Required recruitment checks are completed before staff start work at the school.

There is a clear system of keeping safeguarding records, which staff understand. However, occasionally this is not followed. This is easy to put right and does not leave pupils either being harmed or at risk of harm.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep safe. Pupils trust adults in school. They know where to go to get help when they need it. Pupils learn about different types of risk and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, for example in science and music, the curriculum does not cover all the national curriculum requirements. Pupils do not learn all the knowledge they need to be ready for the next stage of their education. Leaders must ensure that the school curriculum is sufficiently broad and ambitious.
- There is no coherent reading curriculum from the early years to Year 6. Pupils do not learn how to interpret, consider and enjoy interesting texts. Leaders should ensure that a comprehensive reading curriculum is in place that exposes pupils to rich and varied texts and builds their understanding of literature.
- Assessment is not used effectively. Leaders and staff rely too much on data. Staff do not pick up on mistakes quickly enough, meaning pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Effective assessment processes must be put in place so teachers know what pupils have learned and lessons can quickly address any misconceptions pupils have.
- Teachers do not identify and support pupils with SEND well enough. These pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff receive training to adapt their teaching, so that pupils with SEND learn well in all subjects.
- Governors and trustees do not monitor the effectiveness of school curriculum robustly enough. As a result, they have an overgenerous and incorrect understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Trust leaders should review their processes so that trustees and governors can form an accurate view of the school's performance and check that improvements are effective.
- There are minor weaknesses in the recording of safeguarding incidents. These have not left pupils at risk of harm. Leaders should ensure that all staff know how to report safeguarding concerns and that their subsequent actions are recorded on the central system.

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

Unique reference number	143624
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10241053
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Magalie Cooper
Headteacher	Andrea Dodds
Website	www.stfelixhaverhill.com
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School is part of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a nursery class.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, the special education needs coordinator and the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors met groups of staff and members of the local governing body and trust representatives.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at school. They reviewed how well the designated safeguarding leads act on concerns about pupils' welfare. Inspectors talked to staff, governors and pupils about how the school keeps them safe.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 15 free-text responses, 25 responses to the Ofsted's staff survey and 52 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Anna Vaughan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sam Nixon	Ofsted Inspector
Oriana Dalton	Ofsted Inspector

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