

# Inspection of a good school: Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School

Little Wheatley Chase, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 9EH

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Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2023

## **Outcome**

Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at this school embody the school's mission statement, which describes it as 'a place of Mercy, where everyone is welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to learn'. They feel happy and safe in the school's warm, caring environment.

There is a culture of aspiration, not only to learn well, but also to behave well. Adults model the positive behaviours that they expect, and pupils respond accordingly. Learning is not interrupted by poor behaviour, and bullying is not tolerated. Pupils trust the adults to sort out any friendship issues that may arise.

Older pupils are excellent role models for their younger peers. They are play leaders in the playground, librarians and corridor monitors inside, and they lead buddy groups. These are 'like little families', made up of pupils from all year groups. They meet regularly to share ideas on learning and other issues important to the group.

Pupils get many opportunities to develop their skills and talents. They enjoy a range of clubs and trips. They regularly run competitions to fundraise for their chosen charities. They learn to ride a bicycle, swim and speak French before they reach key stage 2. From Year 3, they learn to play more than one musical instrument.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn in each area of the curriculum. They have broken learning down into small steps. These will enable pupils to build a body of knowledge and skills over time. They have also identified the vocabulary associated with each subject area. The curriculum is ambitious and, in some subjects, it goes beyond the expectations of the national curriculum, for example in modern foreign languages (MFL), physical education and music.

Reading is prioritised, and the school promotes a love of reading in various ways. Its well-stocked library is a popular place at lunchtimes. Librarians from Year 6 support younger

pupils to choose books and they run the borrowing system. Teachers read good-quality texts to their classes often. Pupils bring in a 'birthday book' to share with friends on their special day.

Leaders have refined the school's approach to phonics teaching. Phonics lessons begin soon after children join Reception. Teachers are skilled at using the routines and language of the phonics programme. They ensure that pupils learn the sounds they need in order to become confident readers. The books pupils read are closely matched to their phonic knowledge. Pupils use their decoding skills confidently when they come across unknown words.

The curriculum in early years is designed to prepare children for what they will learn in later year groups. In mathematics, for example, the numbers one to 10 are represented throughout the environment in a variety of ways. During the inspection, pupils compared different quantities of conkers. They used tape measures to find out how tall they are.

Throughout the school, teachers explain new learning clearly. They check pupils' understanding through discussion, questioning and by working with focus groups. These checks, along with other assessments, inform future teaching. Some teachers are not as skilled as others at addressing misconceptions or at choosing the right activities to reinforce and deepen learning. This slows down progress for a minority of pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early, often before they start at the school. Leaders are determined to ensure that these pupils get the right help. Sometimes, external professionals are involved in supporting them. The high quality of the provision they receive means that they achieve well.

The school provides for pupils' wider development extremely well. 'Learning and life forums' enable pupils to develop skills that will serve them well at school and in their future lives. Pupils' honesty and ability to self-assess are highly developed. They are not afraid to make mistakes, nor to admit when they struggle. The school's mission statement underpins pupils' approach to difference. They are accepting of it and show respect for each other, the adults they work with and visitors. A school learning council, with representatives from all year groups, links its activities to leaders' school improvement plan. Members are considering ways of promoting reading even more widely.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel genuinely valued by senior leaders, who support their well-being and professional development. Leaders act in the best interests of staff and pupils, taking account of staff workload when introducing new initiatives. Governors are very committed to the school. They, along with the Assisi Catholic Trust, oversee leaders' work. They are all confident in leaders' ability to continue to drive improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance around keeping pupils safe. All staff know the signs of potential neglect, abuse or exploitation and are quick to report any concerns they have. Annual training and regular updates ensure that they have all the information they need. Leaders liaise with external agencies to put support in place if this is needed. The systems for record-keeping and checking adults who come to work or volunteer at the school are robust.

Pupils learn about safety, including when they are online. They know that they must talk to an adult if they have any worries.

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

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

- Some teachers do not always use the agreed approaches to address pupils' misconceptions or when selecting the right activities for the pupils they teach. Consequently, some pupils do not progress as well as they could do. Leaders should continue with their focus on supporting staff to strengthen their practice, so that the curriculum is implemented as effectively as possible, and pupils achieve well in all subjects.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School, to be good in May 2016.

## **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>	145996
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255150
<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>	399
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Amanda Pelham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Parascandolo
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.olorcps.net">www.olorcps.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy, as part of the Assisi Catholic Trust, in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- At the time of this inspection, the school was using two providers of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and seven members of the governing body. She spoke on the telephone to a representative from the Assisi Catholic Trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and MFL. For each deep dive, she 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

their work. The inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. She also looked at samples of pupils' work in their art sketchbooks.

- The inspector met the special educational needs coordinator to discuss provision for pupils with SEND.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and two deputy DSLs. She scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The inspector also spoke to governors, staff and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school improvement plan and minutes of governors' meetings.
- To gather pupils' views, the inspector spent time observing and speaking to pupils. There were 148 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- To gather the views of parents and carers, the inspector reviewed the 156 responses and 101 free-text comments submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 31 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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