

Inspection of a good school: Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Primary Academy

Ashlawn Drive, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 9PX

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Saint Mary's is a friendly, welcoming school where all pupils have a sense of belonging. Pupils are happy and they feel safe. One typical pupil comment was, 'The teachers help us and look after us here. They make us feel comfortable.'

Pupils know the school's values and try their best to live by them. Pupils learn about the importance of love, hope, truth, peace and mercy. They enjoy earning merits, badges and 'Shining Lights' awards linked to these values.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. They make sure that every pupil is fully included in all aspects of school life. Staff make sure that pupils get the support they need to access all parts of the curriculum and make good progress.

Pupils behave well. They show respect towards others. They try their best and take pride in their work. Pupils understand what bullying is. They know that it is not tolerated at their school.

There are many opportunities at Saint Mary's for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils enjoy going to book club, drama club and cookery club, as well as sports clubs, such as those for badminton, table tennis and football. Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility too.

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

Leaders have designed a strong curriculum. Subject plans clearly set out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils must learn. Staff follow these plans closely, making adaptations if necessary for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures that those pupils with SEND learn the full curriculum. The leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND makes sure that pupils receive precise support that is matched to their individual needs. Support plans are checked and reviewed

regularly to ensure that these are having an impact. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Reading is a high priority at Saint Mary's. Leaders have carefully planned the texts that pupils will read. Pupils experience a diverse range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. They enjoy these stories and have positive attitudes towards reading. As one pupil said, 'I am encouraged to read a lot at this school – we read really exciting books in class!'

Leaders are doing everything they can to raise attainment in phonics. They make regular checks on all pupils' progress. Staff give extra help to pupils straightaway if they need it. Leaders monitor the quality of phonics teaching closely. They make sure that phonics is taught consistently well. All staff use the same terminology and resources when teaching phonics. The books that pupils take home to read contain the letter sounds that they know. However, some pupils do not read these books as fluently as they might. This is because they sometimes sound out and blend words aloud when they do not need to.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain things clearly and show pupils exactly what they need to do. Teachers focus on developing pupils' spoken English in all lessons. They provide resources that enable pupils to work independently. In Year 2, for example, pupils use unit blocks and counting sticks to add two two-digit numbers together. Teachers give pupils the time they need to rehearse new skills and to memorise important facts. In mathematics, this leads to pupils being able to recall times-tables facts quickly and to calculate proficiently. Year 5 pupils, for example, can confidently explain how to find percentages by using their knowledge of fractions, division and multiplication.

In some foundation subjects, teachers do not use the knowledge that pupils have learned in the past as effectively as they might. They sometimes miss opportunities to make links between what has been taught before and what is being taught now. This prevents pupils from deepening their understanding of some key concepts.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn how to persevere and how to be courageous, charitable, kind, respectful and compassionate. Pupils know what it means to be a good friend. They are interested in difference and diversity. Pupils hold welcoming and inclusive attitudes. Pupils know about protected characteristics and why these are important. Year 6 pupils said, 'They allow you to be your own person and they stop people being unfair and mean.'

Trust leaders have a clear vision for the school. They know what is working well at the school and what they need to work on next. They support and challenge school leaders effectively.

Staff enjoy working at Saint Mary's. Leaders are mindful of the workload and well-being of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are well trained. They are vigilant and know the signs to look out for that might show that a pupil is in need of help. All staff know how to report concerns and do so promptly. Leaders meet regularly to check on pupils' welfare. They work closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils get the support they need straightaway. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They know to tell a trusted adult immediately if anything is worrying them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, it is not clear how pupils will build their knowledge of important concepts over time. This means that pupils do not systematically deepen their understanding of all the themes and ideas that run through subjects. Leaders must ensure that teachers add to pupils' knowledge of key concepts by linking the important things that pupils have learned in the past with what they are learning now.
- Sometimes, younger pupils sound out and blend words aloud when they do not always need to. This means that they do not read fluently, and it prevents them from having a clear understanding of what they are reading. Leaders should ensure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading fluency, so that pupils get the help they need to become fluent readers as quickly as possible.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Boston St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, to be good in March 2012.

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	146241
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10254877
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	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Stevenson
Headteacher	Lisa Glead-Thornley
Website	www.bostonstmarys.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic voluntary academy. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2017. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- When its predecessor school, Boston St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school joined the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in September 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dives, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at subject plans for art, geography and physical education.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff. The inspector met with the leaders responsible for pupils with SEND, behaviour and personal development.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- The inspector examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading to a familiar adult. The inspector met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer, the deputy chief executive officer and the director of performance and standards from Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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