

Inspection of a good school: Saint Francis Catholic Primary School

Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 0BP

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 February 2023

Outcome

Saint Francis Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say they enjoy learning at Saint Francis Catholic Primary School. Most pupils are polite and respectful. They say that they know to 'value everybody'. Pupils say that bullying happens only occasionally. They know whom to speak to if it does happen. They are confident that staff would deal with any issues well.

Leaders have set out their expectations of pupils' conduct through the 'Saint Francis way'. Pupils understand and live up to these expectations. This means that most lessons are calm and orderly. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Children in Reception enjoy learning in a nurturing and settled environment.

Most pupils enjoy taking part in the clubs and extra-curricular activities that the school provides. For example, pupils enjoy attending chess club, choir and dodgeball. Many pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities. They can be part of the chaplaincy team, and can be prefects or librarians.

Leaders consider how to involve parents in the school community. Parents can attend the Friday celebration worship with pupils. Recently, the school held a 'big breakfast', where parents received an invitation to come into school to see what their child was learning. Many families took up this opportunity.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is a well-sequenced curriculum in place for all subjects. They are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Curriculum plans detail the knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to learn. Leaders have also identified the key vocabulary they want pupils to use. The curriculum plans start in the early years. This means that children in Reception follow an ambitious curriculum. It prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Leaders ensure that teachers' subject knowledge is up to date through regular training. Teachers say that this training and the detailed curriculum plans help them to deliver the curriculum well. Teachers present information clearly and question pupils well to check their understanding. They use 'flashbacks' to help pupils recall knowledge. Pupils say this helps them to remember what they have learned. Assessment and 'class feedback' records help teachers to identify and address misconceptions well. Pupils develop secure knowledge and achieve well.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Through adaptations and in-class support, pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as other pupils. They achieve well. Pupils with more complex needs are well supported and included in all parts of school life.

Staff in Reception know the children well. They have high expectations of what they can achieve. Well-planned activities engage the children in all areas of learning. As a result, children are confident in applying what they have learned. Children practise writing simple sentences and enjoy reciting stories they have learned.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils develop a love of reading through class texts and regular story times. Reading books match the sounds pupils know. All staff are trained in delivering the phonics scheme. They deliver it well. They ensure that all pupils know the sounds before moving on. Assessment identifies those pupils falling behind with their phonic knowledge. Leaders have ensured that pupils who need help with reading get daily support. This means that most pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They are clear about how they want pupils to behave in lessons and around school. Pupils settle well to learn at the start of lessons. Lessons are rarely disrupted. Some pupils do not behave as well at lunchtimes as they do in lessons. Leaders are aware of this and have begun to address it.

There is a well-planned curriculum in place for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and how to be safe. They learn about other cultures and religions. Pupils learn about democracy and tolerance. They know to treat others who are different with respect. Leaders give pupils opportunities to be part of the local community by being 'helping hands'. For example, pupils do litter picking and take part in fundraising events.

Leaders have developed different ways to engage with parents. For example, a parents' forum takes place every half term. Some parents say that the school does not always communicate well with them.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload. Trustees and governors know the school well. They provide effective support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of care and safeguarding in the school. They know their pupils and families well. Staff are well trained. They know how to report any concerns they may have. Safeguarding records show that leaders respond to any concerns quickly. They take appropriate actions to keep pupils safe. The single central record is well managed.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know whom to speak to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about online safety and healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not behave well at lunchtime. This means that, sometimes, poor behaviour disrupts this time for other pupils. Leaders have started to address this. Leaders should ensure that they review how they deal with behaviour incidents at unstructured times so that pupils meet the same high standards as they do in lessons.
- Some parents feel that the school does not communicate well with them. As a result, some parents are not always clear about how the school supports their child. Leaders should ensure that communication is effective by considering how they meaningfully engage with parents.

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, Saint Francis Catholic Primary School, to be good in May 2017.

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	146180
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10254878
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	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Gosia Brown
Website	www.st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Saint Francis Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2018.
- Saint Francis Catholic Primary School is sponsored by St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The last section 48 diocesan canonical inspection for this school took place in February 2020. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders in school.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and the chair of trustees.

- The inspector met with representatives of the trust.
- The inspector considered the responses of parents, pupils and staff through discussions during the inspection and through the Ofsted surveys.
- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewing a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Deep dives were carried out in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum in geography and computing.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation, behaviour and governance.

Inspection team

Paul Halcro, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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