

Inspection of a good school: St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy

Lightwood Avenue, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 2AU

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy care strongly about each other and their school. Pupils live up to the school's ethos to 'be safe, respectful and responsible' in their school life. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils are happy at school. They told the inspector that they get on well together and have lots of friends. Children in the early years settle into the Nursery and Reception classes well. On the very rare occasions when bullying occurs, pupils are confident that they could tell staff and it would be dealt with swiftly.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have positive attitudes to their learning and take pride in their work. As a result, the school has a calm, purposeful atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), take part in a wide range of activities beyond the academic curriculum. These help to develop their interests and talents. For example, pupils take part in archery, netball and chess clubs, and they sing in the choir. Pupils are proud to represent their school in local and national competitions.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious and engaging curriculum, which enables pupils to build a deep body of knowledge from the early years to Year 6. Leaders have designed the subject curriculums so that pupils have the opportunity to learn and remember important knowledge. As a result, pupils across the school, including those with SEND, are well prepared for the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum leads have worked with their colleagues in the early years to devise a curriculum which ensures that children are ready to meet the demands of Year 1. Teachers in the early years and across the school devise lesson activities that enable pupils to build on previous knowledge. Teachers use assessment well to check that pupils have learned and remembered this knowledge.

In a few curriculum subjects, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking about important academic language that pupils should learn. This means that teachers are unsure of the subject-specific vocabulary that should be taught and when this should be delivered. Consequently, a few older pupils do not know the specialist vocabulary they need to be able to read, write and speak about some topics in the wider curriculum.

Children learn phonics from the very beginning of the Reception Year. Teachers and support staff deliver the phonics programme well. They regularly check that pupils are keeping up with the programme. Those pupils who find reading more difficult receive effective support to help them catch up. Pupils talked to the inspector about their love of reading and its importance for their learning. Older pupils read to younger ones at lunchtime. Most pupils learn to read accurately and fluently by the end of Year 2.

Leaders ensure that the additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. They involve parents and carers in discussions about their children's needs. Teachers adapt the curriculum and lesson activities so that pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have ensured that there is a calm and orderly atmosphere around school, which provides a supportive environment for learning. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are able to get on with their work without distraction. Two- and three-year-old children are encouraged to take turns and share. These children are keen to lend a hand. They are kind to their classmates.

Pupils, including those with SEND, have access to a range of opportunities and activities that support their wider development. Leaders' 'pastoral peaks' programme provides pupils with a wide range of clubs, activities and events, such as orienteering and craft clubs. Older pupils carry out their responsibilities as prefects and monitors diligently. Pupils develop a knowledge of and respect for different faiths and cultures in modern Britain.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are mindful of staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel supported, listened to and empowered by leaders.

Trustees and the local governing board are well informed about the school. They share leaders' passion and commitment to nurturing and inspiring their pupils. They offer appropriate support and challenge, which ensures that leaders implement and maintain a high-quality education for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a robust culture of safeguarding. All staff have regular training. This helps them to understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff know the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report and record any safeguarding concerns appropriately. Leaders respond swiftly to concerns raised.

For many children and their families, leaders provide additional support to reduce the risk of potential safeguarding concerns. Leaders work well with external partners to ensure that pupils and their families get any specialist help and support they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school and in the wider community. For example, pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and how to report any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not given sufficient thought to the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils should learn. This hampers pupils' ability to talk, read and write confidently and competently in these subjects. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these subjects so that teachers know what subject-specific vocabulary they need to teach pupils across the wider curriculum.

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 school to be good on 11 and 12 July 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	141115
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10240827
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie McLeod
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Smith
Website	www.stcuthbertsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character took place in October 2018.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair. He also met with the executive headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the academy trust.
- The inspector spoke by telephone to a representative of the diocese.

- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted’s parent questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also reviewed the results of recent surveys for parents, pupils and staff conducted by the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. 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 heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector talked with pupils, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils’ behaviour at breaktimes and as they moved around the school.
- The inspector considered pupils’ responses to Ofsted’s survey.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders and checked how leaders record and respond to safeguarding concerns. The inspector checked the school’s safeguarding policies and leaders’ records of checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. The inspector spoke to the executive headteacher, leaders and other staff about safeguarding procedures and training.
- The inspector spoke to staff about their workload and well-being. He considered staff’s responses to Ofsted’s survey.

Inspection team

Iain Sim, lead inspector

Ofsted inspector

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