

Inspection of a good school: St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Alvechurch Road, West Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 3PN

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Mrs Leanne Rogers. This school is part of Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Collins-Smith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Vince.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, where they say, 'we love, learn and pray as one family'.

Warm, respectful relationships are evident between adults and pupils. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite to each other, staff and visitors. Pupils know that, if they have a worry, there is always a trusted adult to talk to.

This is a school where adults are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils work hard to meet these expectations and enjoy their learning across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy the many opportunities on offer. They contribute positively to their local community and beyond. For example, the choir visits care homes, and pupils pack Christmas boxes for people less fortunate than themselves. Pupils in Year 4 visited the Houses of Parliament and took part in a debate, to further understand how democracy works.

Pupils also contribute to school life. Older pupils visited a book shop to help adults choose books for the school. Pupils vote for school councillors. 'Mini Vinnies' and 'Caritas Ambassadors' bring about change in their local community, for example by writing to their local Member of Parliament.

Everyone who speaks of the school talks about the sense of 'family'. This shines through.

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

There is a purposeful atmosphere in this school. All staff want the very best for every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Parents recognise and value this. Pupils' positive attitudes and good manners mean that learning is not disrupted.

The school has given a high priority to pupils' learning to read and learning to love reading. From Reception to Year 6, teachers read to pupils every day, using a wide range of books by different authors. Pupils recommend books to each other and enjoy spending time in the inviting library.

As soon as children start school in Reception, they begin learning phonics. Staff are well trained and support pupils skilfully. Pupils read books which are carefully matched to the sounds they are learning. Regular assessment means that any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly identified. Extra help is put in place to enable them to keep up. As a result, pupils enjoy reading.

The mathematics curriculum is well organised. Effective staff training and skilful subject leadership enable the school to plan new learning that builds on what pupils have learned before. Teachers regularly check on what pupils know. They make sure that pupils remember the really important facts that will help them to learn the next stage of mathematics. Pupils with SEND are expertly supported to ensure that they can learn and enjoy mathematics alongside their classmates.

In other subjects, curriculum documents set out what pupils should learn. In some subjects, the quality of curriculum planning is particularly strong. In history, for example, key themes and skills have been very precisely identified. These help pupils to build on their knowledge, in depth, over time. In a very small number of subjects, the content pupils are to learn has not been identified as precisely. This means that teachers are not always sure which content to emphasise and revisit so that pupils can build in subsequent learning.

The school is particularly alert to identifying any pupils who might need extra help in lessons or during the more informal times of the school day. Skilful additional support is quickly put in place. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEND, can flourish.

The personal development of pupils is a real strength of the school. The school knows the pupils, families and local area well. There is a very carefully planned 'children's charter', which maps out opportunities for all pupils to enjoy. From clubs to trips and spiritual retreats, there is something for everyone to enjoy and all pupils are fully included. Pupils are taught about, and remember in detail, fire safety rules. They learn about beach safety before visiting the seaside. Pupils enjoy opportunities to sing on the stage at the local symphony hall and watch world class athletes compete. They learn about other beliefs and welcome in missionaries to understand how they can support and welcome refugees and asylum seekers. Pupils at St John Fisher are being incredibly well prepared for life in their local community, in Birmingham and the wider world.

Staff, pupils and parents could not speak more highly of the school. One parent, voicing the views of many, said, 'This is a safe and caring school community. We feel blessed that our children attend here.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of curriculum subjects, the school has not fully identified all the content that pupils are to learn and practise. As a result, there are not as many opportunities to develop and build this content over time as there could be. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, precise content and opportunities for its progression are identified so that pupils can build on this over time.

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, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, to be good in November 2013.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148266
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294707
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	210
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Vince
Principal	Leanne Rogers
Website	www.stjonfsh.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company.
- The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in October 2019.
- The school manages after-school provision. Before-school care is provided an external provider.
- The school does not use any 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 their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans where they were available, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils'

work. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum for history. The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector held meetings with the principal, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector held meetings with the chair and representatives of the local governing body, representatives from the multi-academy company and the diocese.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke to pupils about pupils' behaviour.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks, looked at safeguarding records and talked to pupils and staff.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. The inspector also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector talked to parents and families at the school gate.

Inspection team

Rachel Henrick, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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