

Inspection of a good school: St Martha's Catholic Primary School

Field Lane, Gaywood, St Martha's Catholic Primary School, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 4AY

Inspection dates:

30 and 31 January 2024

Outcome

St Martha's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Rachel Edwards. This school is part of the St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kim Payne, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth Hollis.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a warm, welcoming and nurturing school that sits at the heart of its community. The school's vision to 'be the best that you can be' is achieved as pupils respond well to the high expectations set. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that lessons are fun and interesting.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They know their teachers expect them to work hard and they respond with enthusiasm. Many pupils take advantage of the wide range of opportunities available to them in music and sport. These help them learn to persevere and to develop resilience.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful. There are warm relationships between adults and pupils. Most pupils are attentive to their teachers and listen carefully when others in class are expressing their opinions.

Pupils develop a wide range of leadership skills through roles as playground leaders, sports leaders and members of the school council. Pupils participate in sports clubs, such as football and basketball, and their competitive teams have performed well in a number of competitions.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. There is a clear aim for pupils to do well in every area. The subject knowledge that pupils will learn is carefully set out, so that pupils can develop their learning in small steps. Most pupils leave the school prepared well for the next stage in their education. Teachers think carefully about how best to adapt their teaching, so that everyone keeps up wherever possible.

In many subjects, teachers check effectively that pupils are learning and remembering important knowledge. In a small number of foundation subjects, these checks are not in place consistently well. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning, so their understanding is less secure.

The school has made reading a high priority. Skilful staff help children in the early years develop their speaking and listening skills well. The phonics curriculum starts quickly in the early years and transition into Year 1 is planned for carefully. All classes follow the phonics curriculum but there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of its delivery. Sometimes, pupils do not get enough time to practise their sounds. When this happens the pace of learning is slowed. Reading lessons for older pupils are taught well. Leaders carefully track how well pupils learn to read. This allows them to provide effective additional support for those pupils who have fallen behind.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported at school effectively. Teachers adapt their lessons, so that these pupils can join in. They give extra help in class for pupils who need it. Adults are skilled at ensuring that pupils with SEND achieve well and access the full curriculum. Pupils with SEND also benefit from opportunities to take part in the wider life of school.

Children in the early years get off to a good start in school. There is a strong focus on developing vocabulary, so children can share and develop their ideas. Staff make sure that the children get the most out of the purposeful activities they provide. They encourage children to become independent learners and children show high levels of concentration when introduced to new ideas.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in school, in the community and when online. They show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their work. Pupils are kind and caring. Older pupils look after the younger ones and enjoy sharing reading activities together. Leaders have effective strategies for making sure that pupils attend school regularly.

The support for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and develop respect for all in the community. Pupils appreciate the various additional opportunities the school provides, such as sporting, musical and cultural events. This includes a range of trips and visitors to the school. Leaders invite parents into the school to talk to pupils about their jobs or their differing faith beliefs. Pupils care deeply for their local community. They recognise the importance of recycling and how it provides many benefits to the environment. Pupils raise money for charities.

The quality of music and drama in the school is exceptional. The two choirs perform to a very high standard and there are numerous opportunities for pupils to perform shows to their parents and the community. Shakespeare presentations in Year 5 are of a high standard.

Those responsible for governance understand the school's strengths and areas for development well. They work closely with leaders, asking challenging questions and

ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. They ensure that staff get the right training to develop their subject knowledge. Staff feel that their contributions are valued and that their views are considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, teachers do not use assessment consistently well. This means that staff do not always identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should support staff to accurately check pupils' understanding and use this to inform their teaching in each subject area.
- Occasionally, some teachers do not provide sufficient time for pupils to practise the sounds they are learning in phonics. This slows the pace of learning for pupils. The school needs to ensure that all teachers provide sufficient time for pupils to learn and practise using their phonics knowledge to help all pupils develop a secure understanding 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school St Martha's Catholic Primary school to be good in September 2019.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	147415
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10295114
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	418
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth Hollis
Headteacher	Rachel Edwards
Website	www.st-marthas.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Martha's Catholic Primary School is part of the St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust. The last inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act, was in June 2016. The school's next section 48 inspection is due within eight years of its previous section 48 inspection.
- St Martha's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2019. When its predecessor school, St. Martha's Catholic School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with school leaders, the chief executive officer, the trust deputy chief executive officer, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and members of the local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector considered 58 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including 58 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered 35 responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff and 4 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. The inspector gathered the views of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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