

# Inspection of a good school: Templars Academy

Cressing Road, Witham, Essex CM8 2NJ

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 May 2024

## Outcome

Templars Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of the school is Victoria Gooding. The school is part of the Inspires Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ceri Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Barry Collyer.

## What is it like to attend this school?

There is a keen sense of community at Templars. Pupils settle quickly and grow in confidence here. Whenever they join the school, they can be guaranteed a warm welcome into the 'family'. Pupils like the exciting learning and extra trips or visitors that the school arranges. Music, theatre and art workshops help them with their writing and creativity.

Pupils say that their teachers make learning 'fun and interesting'. All staff expect pupils to be involved in their learning and to present their work to the best of their ability. Pupils make links between different subjects and like the way their 'learning comes round again'. They recognise that this helps them to remember what they have learned and build on it.

Pupils feel safe. They behave very well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Play leaders support other pupils at play time and are proud of their responsibilities. Pupils play well together and work well in small groups or pairs, following the school's mantra of 'together we are greater'. They respect each other and adults. Pupils know that everyone is different and that 'everyone has a talent in some way'.

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

From day one, all staff build a comprehensive picture of each child, ensuring that the correct provision is in place. Parents typically say that staff 'know each child very well and take the time to get to know families and interests'. This in turn ensures that children get off to a good start when they arrive in the early years.

The curriculum is ambitious and broad. It is well sequenced and builds effectively on previous knowledge. Following poor previous results at the end of key stage 2, leaders introduced a mathematics scheme and a detailed subject-based curriculum. These initiatives, along with the recruitment of new staff, have made a considerable positive difference.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and the global world through cross-curricular themes. The 'big idea' captures pupils' immediate imagination and interest. For example, in English lessons they read about Greek gods and the idea of 'power'. Pupils can then see how power developed in history and apply this concept to their own school council.

Typically, teaching is lively and engaging. Teachers are adept at checking on pupils' understanding and learning. They use this information to prepare for or alter future lessons. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), particularly like the challenge of 'teacher interruptions', especially in mathematics. These might be more difficult questions or tasks that encourage pupils to think more deeply.

Some subjects are at a more advanced stage of development. In English, mathematics and history, leaders are easily able to check how well pupils are doing. In a minority of other subjects, leaders' checks on how well pupils are remembering the content are still developing. This means that leaders are not as clear about what pupils know and can remember. This aspect of their work should be developed further to ensure pupils' knowledge is effectively built on. This will give leaders a stronger oversight of each subject and any improvements.

The school has made the teaching of reading its top priority. This permeates every subject. Following a drop in the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading at the end of key stage 2, the school introduced a new scheme for teaching phonics. This is having a demonstrable and beneficial effect, particularly with those children in the very first stages of reading. Some older pupils and those who join the school mid-year, of which there are many, are still catching up. Strategies to support these pupils are effective. They are enabling pupils to successfully access the content in other subjects.

Pupils are confident and inquisitive. Expectations for following rules are clear, and therefore pupils consistently behave well. They settle and begin their work quickly and calmly.

Securing high levels of attendance has been a long-standing challenge. New strategies, including better partnership working with parents have improved attendance, including those who have found coming to school difficult. However, there are still too many pupils missing time in school.

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is expertly and deliberately woven throughout the curriculum. The school's mantra supports pupils'

understanding of celebrating and accepting difference. Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Over the past 18 months, changes to staffing have meant that some teachers have needed to take on new responsibilities. However, these staff feel that leaders have considered their workload and well-being during this period.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some older pupils, and those who join the school throughout the year, do not read as fluently as they should, because there are many gaps in their phonics knowledge. The school should continue to accelerate intervention strategies for these pupils so that all become fluent and confident readers.
- Some subject leaders' oversight of the effectiveness of the curriculum is not sharp enough. In some foundation subjects, the checks leaders conduct do not always identify areas for improvement that will enable pupils to progress well. The school should ensure that leaders conduct a range of checks on the implementation and impact of the curriculum so that any improvements can be identified and made.
- A significant minority of pupils do not attend well enough. This impacts their learning and they miss the wider opportunities for learning and well-being that exist. The school should continue and further strengthen its efforts to secure the regular attendance of those pupils who do not attend frequently enough.

## **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 in April 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142813
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345427
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	401
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Barry Collyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Victoria Gooding
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.templarsacademy.com">www.templarsacademy.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	24 and 25 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Inspires Trust with new leadership and a new board of trustees since the previous inspection.
- The school offers nursery provision for two- and three-year olds.

## 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. To complete each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke with teachers. She also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- A wider sample of curriculum documentation was considered beyond the deep dives, including those in PE and geography.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector looked at safeguarding policies, the school's record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of child protection files. The inspector 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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector held further meetings with the chair of trustees, other senior and middle leaders, school staff and various groups of pupils.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of trustees' meetings, school improvement plans, the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness and various school policies.
- The inspector spoke with a local authority representative on the telephone.
- There were 41 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, alongside 42 free-text responses from parents and 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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