

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

Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1QG

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Edmund's Catholic Primary School feel safe and are proud of their school. They say that people are kind and work together. If they have a worry, they can tell an adult who will help.

They feel valued because their voice brings about changes in their school, for example voting on what equipment to buy for playground games and the naming of school pets.

The school's motto of 'ready, respectful, safe' helps the pupils to understand what is expected of them. They listen respectfully in lessons and are enthusiastic about the quality of learning they receive.

There are a wide range of clubs for pupils to take part in, for example yoga, football, colouring and recorder, which helps them to learn new skills. Trips and visitors broaden pupils' learning experiences, which helps them to know and remember more, for example taking part in community art projects and performing at Snape and the local Christmas Fair.

They also have a range of ways that they can take on roles of responsibility. Some examples are eco council, school council, house captains, road safety officers and language ambassadors. This helps pupils to become respectful and responsible citizens.

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

Leaders have created a well-considered and carefully ordered curriculum which builds learning in sensible steps to ensure that pupils build on what they have learned before. This helps pupils to know and remember more so they are well prepared for their next stage.

Leaders provide effective training to make sure that teachers have secure subject knowledge and are confident to teach all subjects. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember in reading, writing and mathematics. This helps teachers to identify and address any gaps in learning. While this is the case, these checks are less established in some subjects across the wider curriculum. This means that teachers do not know enough about what pupils know and remember and consequently, teachers find it harder to adapt future learning accurately to ensure that pupils learn more.

Leaders have recently put in place a new phonics programme to strengthen the early reading curriculum. This starts in early years, where children begin by hearing the sounds in words. The children quickly move on to linking sounds to letters and reading simple words. Pupils read books that are closely matched to their knowledge and understanding. Staff have received the training they need to deliver the phonics programme well. In phonics lessons, staff model accurately the sounds that pupils are learning. However, there are parts of the phonics sessions that are not consistently implemented. When this happens, pupils are less secure with linking sounds to letters when reading more complex words.

Children in the early years are engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. They know and follow the class routines confidently. They have a wide range of learning activities to choose from that help them to learn new skills quickly. For example, stories and rhymes are carefully linked to role play activities to help them learn important knowledge, such as the sounds that letters make. The early years curriculum in all areas of learning is carefully linked to the subject areas that children will move on to learn. This ensures that they are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders know pupils well. This informs them effectively to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly and accurately identified. As a result, appropriate support is able to be carefully planned and put in place. The provision for pupils with SEND is regularly reviewed and adapted so that pupils can access the same curriculum as their peers, and subsequently achieve their best. Where more support is needed for more complex SEND needs, leaders are quick to seek external advice so that it happens swiftly.

Adults have high expectations for behaviour. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. This contributes towards the calm, positive learning environments that exist throughout the school.

Leaders plan and promote pupils' personal, social and health education and personal development well. Leaders make sure that pupils learn to consider their own well-being; this includes how to look after their mental health. They also learn how to nurture healthy relationships. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of differences. This was demonstrated when one pupil said, 'It doesn't matter what you look like, it is how you are on the inside that matters.'

Governors know the school well, despite several being new to the role. This ensures that governors are able to support and challenge leaders about continuous school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their responsibility to safeguard pupils. This includes having robust checks in place to ensure that all adults are safe to work with children.

Regular and specific training helps adults to understand and identify the risks pupils face. This helps staff to be vigilant about looking out for signs of harm. Adults know how to report a concern. Leaders take swift action in response to any concerns raised. This includes involving other agencies where needed.

Governors carry out their safeguarding duties effectively.

The curriculum content supports pupils to learn how to stay safe. This includes when online and outside of the school environment.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Checking how effectively pupils have retained knowledge and skills in the longer term, across some subjects in the wider curriculum, is not fully developed. As a result, teachers cannot be sure how well pupils are remembering their learning over time in some areas of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that systems are in place to assess what pupils know and remember across the wider curriculum. This will support teachers to be able to use assessment information to inform pupils' next steps, ensuring that pupils achieve well throughout the curriculum.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new programme for the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics and early reading that spans from early years to Year 6. This is to further strengthen their reading curriculum. Staff have taken part in relevant training. Leaders now need to ensure through their monitoring and additional training that the programme is fully and consistently implemented as they intend across the whole school.

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 school to be good in March 2012.

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	124764
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10211439
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs	Ian Cameron and Christopher Oldroyd
Headteacher	Maria Kemble
Website	https://www.stedmundsandstjosephs.com
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Edmund's Catholic Primary School is federated with another local school, the on-site pre-school and the on-site SEND resource base.
- The school has a specialist SEND resource base, which is a provision for pupils across reception, key stage 1 and 2 who have barriers to their learning. The focus at reception and key stage 1 is communication and language. For key stage 2, it is cognition and learning.
- Leaders provide a daily breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any external alternative provision.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in June 2018.

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 her evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the head of school, the speech and language lead and the special educational needs coordinators from school, pre-school and the SEND resource base.
- The inspector met with five governors, including the two co-chair of governors.
- The inspector did deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. The inspector met with curriculum leaders and visited lessons. The inspector reviewed pupils' work in these subjects, as well as speaking with teachers and pupils.
- Pupils were observed reading to a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at pupils' behaviour at play and lunchtime and visited collective worship and breakfast club.
- Arrangements for safeguarding were looked at by the inspector. This included scrutinising the single central record and meeting with the designated safeguarding leads to review other safeguarding documentation.
- The inspector considered the 121 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 121 free-text comments.
- The inspector also considered the 56 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and 67 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sharon Waldron, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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