Inspection of a good school: St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Costessey

Westend, Old Costessey, Norwich, Norfolk NR8 5AG

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Rachel Swindell. This school is part of 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?

Pupils are at the heart of everything the school does. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils feel safe. They know staff will support them if they have any concerns because adults understand their individual needs.

Pupils typically behave well. Pupils reflect the school's values in how they conduct themselves. These values help pupils develop responsibility for their own behaviour. The school addresses bullying effectively and incidents have reduced.

Pupils contribute to the school community by taking on a number of roles and responsibilities. For example, pupils serve as chaplains who lead prayers in assemblies and eco-warriors who lead projects such as litter-picking.

The school has clear expectations for all pupils to achieve well. This ambition includes pupils who are disadvantaged, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some subjects of the school's curriculum are inconsistently implemented and checked. Consequently, pupils' learning is not as good as the school intends in some areas.

Pupils learn about different cultures and traditions. These reflect the diversity in the school community and help develop a sense of belonging and togetherness across the

school. Pupils say that everyone is welcome at their school. They are tolerant, caring and understanding.

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

The school has designed a carefully considered curriculum which reflects the needs of the mixed-age classes. The school has thought about the knowledge pupils need to learn to help them build learning successfully over time.

Subject leaders have the essential skills and required subject knowledge to develop and improve the curriculum in their subjects. However, there have been few opportunities for subject leaders to check the teaching of the curriculum. As a result, the quality of the implementation of the curriculum varies and leaders are unable to identify what needs to improve. On occasions, the curriculum is not delivered as leaders intend, so some content is missed. Pupils' achievement does not always reflect the school's ambition.

The way the school checks how pupils achieve is better developed in some subjects than others. For example, in mathematics and phonics, teachers identify specific gaps in knowledge. They use this information to address misconceptions. However, in some other subjects, the checks on pupils' knowledge are less precise. This is because systems to check how well pupils are doing in these subjects are not developed. When this happens, teachers do not address gaps in knowledge or misconceptions as well as they might.

Learning to read is a priority in the school. The daily phonics sessions are typically well structured and ensure that pupils quickly learn to recognise letters and sounds. They read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. The school provides effective targeted support for pupils to close any gaps in their knowledge of sounds. Many pupils become fluent, confident readers by the time they leave Year 1.

The school is determined that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, experience the full breadth of the curriculum. There are well-established systems to support pupils who need additional help. For pupils with SEND, effective plans are in place. The school works closely with parents and seeks advice from external agencies. As a result, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers and, consequently, achieve well.

Pupils generally behave with respect and kindness. Staff follow the clear behaviour procedures and teach pupils how to behave. As a result, pupils typically have a positive attitude to their learning and conduct themselves well.

The school is committed to providing pupils with enrichment opportunities to help them gain new experiences, for example theatre visits, residential trips and choir performances. These raise the aspirations of pupils. The curriculum is supported by a range of educational visits. For example, pupils were keen to describe their visit to 'Bugs UK', where they learned about hissing cockroaches! Pupils are well prepared to contribute positively to society as responsible, active citizens. They gain age-appropriate knowledge about healthy relationships.

The trust supports the school well. Trustees have prioritised the well-being of staff as well as identifying ways to reduce workload. As a result, the majority of staff are happy and proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Systems that allow subject leaders to fully monitor their subject areas are new. This means most subject leaders have not been able to check whether the planned curriculum for their subject is being delivered consistently across the school. As a result, the implementation of the school's curriculum is inconsistent and pupils are not always learning as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the monitoring schedule is followed so subject leaders can carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- Assessment in some curriculum areas is at an early stage of development and not yet embedded. This means teachers do not always know how well pupils are developing their knowledge through the curriculum. As a result, teachers are not always able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should make sure teachers have a secure understanding of the school's assessment system so it is used effectively to support teachers to ensure pupils learn what they need to achieve well.

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 Augustine's Catholic Primary School, to be good in February 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' 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	142730
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323763
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	337
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth Hollis
Headteacher	Rachel Swindell
Website	www.st-augustines.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative education 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and representatives from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 reviewed a range of school documents, including the school improvement plan, curriculum plans, governor minutes and school policies.
- 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 inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and around the school.
- The inspector considered the 26 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text responses. The inspector also reviewed the 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. The inspector met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school.

Inspection team

Jo Nutbeam, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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