

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

Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are united in their aim that pupils will enjoy lessons and leave school with a love of learning. This school inspires pupils with a determination to change the world by spreading kindness and love.

Staff have high expectations. They are ambitious and ensure that pupils achieve well, becoming happy, successful learners. Pupils are keen to be active and make positive changes for others. For example, they have lots of opportunities to undertake leadership roles, such as 'Hope not Hate' ambassadors. Pupils take their leadership responsibilities seriously. They help others in lots of ways, including fundraising for additional play equipment and supporting charities for homeless people.

From the early years, pupils show a love of learning. They experience a well-planned and tailored curriculum that meets their educational, social and emotional needs. Between them, determined leaders and teachers provide a high-quality education. Pupils are thriving.

Pupils are clear that there is no bullying and that they feel safe in school. They say, 'Teachers sort out any problems if we have them.' Pupils behave impeccably around the school and in lessons.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They trust staff and give them freedom to present learning in creative and exciting ways. This enables pupils to have a wide variety of engaging opportunities to develop as learners. Staff encourage pupils to experiment and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils say, 'School teaches us to make our own decisions to help us grow.'

In the early years, children relish learning. They have a wealth of interesting experiences that provide well for their social, emotional and learning needs. Staff provide just what

each child needs to feel secure and to learn in a safe and caring environment. Teachers develop children's curiosity, through exciting opportunities for making and playing. Children have richly planned activities that help them to understand the world. For example, they eagerly measure and discuss objects to see if they are shorter or longer than each other.

Reading is the central core of learning from the early years onwards as it is at the heart of the curriculum. There is a continual and rigorous approach to ensuring that every pupil has a wealth of support to develop confidence and fluency. They are taught, from the early years onwards, to apply phonics in order to secure understanding of unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy phonics and have books and activities well matched to the sounds they are learning.

Pupils who need extra help with their reading get effective, timely and ample support to catch up. There are highly effective and well-established systems that have embedded a strong reading culture. Pupils strive to secure their 'Star Reader' badge for reading 50 or 100 books. An experienced team of reading volunteers devotes time to providing valued buddies to engage and build confidence for developing readers.

Leaders have a good understanding of the school's areas of strengths and development. They have taken effective action to embed a strong curriculum across the school. In some subjects, leaders are further refining the curriculum to ensure that all subjects, such as art and science, are as strong as the best. This is because pupils cannot always make links between the activities they enjoy and the skills and subject knowledge they are building up and developing. Pupils work closely with a nearby independent secondary school to further enrich their experiences in science.

This school confidently teaches pupils to celebrate the similarities and differences between cultures and religions. Pupils know the unique worth of their Catholic education but value the distinctiveness of other faith beliefs, such as Hinduism and Islam.

Pupils enjoy learning about other beliefs and cultures, stating, 'New people settle in well and there is a warm welcome for everyone.' Pupils care for others around the world. They listen carefully and discuss world events. They show concern for people in other countries and know why it is important that 'world leaders work together to strive for peace because war would be awful'.

There is no low-level disruption. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are keen to learn. They have timely support from caring staff who know each pupil's needs well. Pupils say there is no bullying. The Rainbow Room 'helps us to manage our feelings' and 'kind teachers help us and resolve what is wrong.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong, embedded culture and secure safeguarding practice throughout the school. Staff are well informed and know the signs to look for as they are regularly trained in how to keep pupils safe from harm. Record-keeping shows timely and effective actions to child protection concerns. Parents and carers are regularly informed, through newsletters and assemblies, about potential risks and how they can support their children to stay safe online. There are robust systems to keep all pupils safe from harm. If staff are not satisfied with the response from external professionals, they do not stop until someone listens because keeping pupils safe is a priority.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders know their school well and how to further improve it. They ensure that teachers' continued professional development is given a high priority to secure the strongest practice in all areas of the curriculum. They should further refine the curriculum so that all subjects, such as art and science, are as strong as the best.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 18–19 May 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	123225
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10122269
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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Debbie Brooks
Headteacher	Maria Delany-White
Website	www.st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 May 2016

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school in Oxfordshire.

Information about this inspection

- I did deep dives in writing, reading and science. To find out about these subjects, I carried out a number of activities, including: lesson visits; looking at pupils' work; speaking to staff and pupils; and listening to pupils read.
- I reviewed the school's single central record, policies and a wide range of documentation.
- I took account of the 36 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the additional views of parents at the start of the school day.
- I spoke to staff to gather their views of the school and took into account the views of 22 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I held telephone calls with representatives from the Catholic diocese and the local authority.

Inspection team

Catherine Davies, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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