

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

Wexham Road, Slough, Berkshire SL2 5QR

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Fiona Maynard. This school is part of St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Joe Richardson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Catherine Davies.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School is an inclusive community. The school's values underpin its work. Pupils quickly develop a sense that they belong here, whether they are part of the specialised resource provision or have recently joined in the early years. Pupils are cared for by nurturing staff, who know them well. They seek to emulate the politeness shown to them by staff in their own actions.

Expectations of pupils' academic achievement are high from Nursery onwards. Pupils are provided with the support they need to succeed, whatever their starting points. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners. They know and follow school routines very well, including in the early years. Pupils enjoy applying themselves to the learning tasks set by their teachers and are keen to do their best. As a result, they achieve well in the national tests at the end of key stage 2.

Pupils actively look for opportunities to help others, to celebrate their differences and to positively contribute to their community. They enjoy taking on various responsibilities, such as being house captains or subject ambassadors. Older pupils run popular lunchtime activities, including chess and craft clubs.

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

The school is proud to serve the pupils and families in their community and does it well. There is a determination to improve outcomes for all. Working closely with the trust, the school has developed a comprehensive and ambitious curriculum. It has sustained the school's performance by prioritising pupils' education and well-being. Leaders, including governors and the trust, have an accurate view of the school and a pinpoint focus on the priorities for improvement. Staff are highly appreciative of the focus on their training and well-being.

Children get off to a great start in the early years. Staff build warm relationships with the children in their care. They are knowledgeable about child development. This helps them to identify when children need more support to be ready for Year 1. For example, early mark making in the Nursery means children become more skilled at using their hands and fingers for tasks like writing.

Subject curriculums build on the strong early years foundation. In each subject, teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils need to learn and when. Staff regularly meet for training and to develop activities together in year groups. In most lessons, teachers' explanations are clear, and they quickly spot pupils' misunderstandings. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught recently. However, at times, this information is not used as effectively or quickly enough to help pupils to consolidate and embed their learning.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. The school has made appropriate use of external support to improve its work on phonics. As a result, staff consistently support pupils well to learn the sounds that letters make. This helps pupils to quickly become confident readers. Pupils continue to expand their knowledge in key stage 2, engage in exciting and diverse texts and foster a love of reading.

The school is rightly proud of its work in supporting pupils with additional needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with tailored support. Leaders ensure their needs are quickly and accurately identified. Staff across the school benefit from the expert guidance from the team in the dedicated speech and language resource provision. Additional catch-up sessions, held before school, provide small-group support for important reading, writing and mathematics skills. This effective provision means that pupils are successfully prepared for, and do not miss out on, learning in their main lessons.

The school has taken appropriate steps to improve pupils' attendance. The school works closely with parents to ensure that pupils who are often absent are supported well to increase their attendance levels.

The school's personal development programme ensures pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about differences between people and are passionate that everyone should be treated the same. They learn how to keep themselves safe when they are working and playing online. Pupils know how to keep healthy, both mentally and

physically. Events such as 'democracy in action' help pupils to learn about democracy, individual liberty and the importance of their vote. The school's provision is enriched by trips, including to the Royal Albert Hall and nearby landmarks and museums. These experiences, as well as residentials, are highly valued by pupils and bring learning to life.

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 lessons, checks on pupils' learning do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. As a result, some teachers do not adapt their teaching to help pupils to make secure progress through the curriculum. The school should continue to ensure that staff are equipped with the expertise to swiftly identify and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in January 2015.

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	143802
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10341831
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	441
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Davies
CEO of the trust	Joe Richardson
Headteacher	Fiona Maynard
Website	www.stethelberts.slough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act, 2005

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Northampton. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due by the end of 2026.
- The school provides a before-school club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.

- The inspector met with members of the governing body and representatives of the trust and diocese.
- To evaluate the quality of education, the lead inspector: visited a sample of lessons in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics; spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- The inspector met some parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- 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.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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