

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

The Drive, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1PF

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 February 2024

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Higgins. This school is part of Xavier Catholic 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 (CEO), James Kibble, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter O'Brien.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their learning. They relish the many experiences available to them such as the recent residential trip to Devon when they learned new skills, like body boarding and climbing. Pupils love representing the school in sporting competitions. Despite being a smaller school, pupils are proud of the successes they have, saying, 'Do not underestimate St Edmund's!' Pupils are especially excited that a pop-up art gallery in Godalming is currently displaying their artwork.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. The quality of their work reflects this, as does their high attendance and behaviour in lessons. The new school rules, to be 'ready to learn, be respectful and safe' are being embedded well. Pupils are caring towards each other. They love 'free-flow Wednesdays' when they get to play in the playground of their choice with their siblings and younger friends.

The school encourages pupils to build up a bank of approaches to sort out any small problems they may have for themselves. Pupils have a range of successful strategies taught to them, such as 'talk it out' or 'make a deal'. They feel safe in school and are confident to share any 'big problems' with their trusted adults.

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

Pupils learn and achieve well. They study a broad curriculum, which meets their needs. Outcomes in 2023 were strong. For example, pupils achieved significantly better than the national picture at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard. In most subjects, the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is

clearly set out and builds well from Reception to Year 6. Curriculum design in the early years is especially effective. Staff in the early years motivate and stretch children well. The early years curriculum is rich in language. As a result, children develop strong communication skills.

Teachers provide clear explanations of new knowledge in lessons. They check pupils' understanding effectively. They adjust their teaching well to address misconceptions that crop up. On the whole, pupils' work is of a high quality and pupils remember what they have learned well. For example, in art, Year 5 pupils can talk confidently about the features of surrealism and how they apply certain techniques to their own surrealist art. However, in a few foundation subjects, it is not always clear what pupils need to learn over time. This means that teachers are not able to challenge pupils to learn really deeply. Expectations are not always high, and therefore, pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects as they do in others.

The school's approach to teaching reading is very successful. Pupils gain a secure knowledge of phonics when they are learning to read. Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check were well-above average in 2023. Any pupils who need extra support to learn to read get expert tuition to help them to catch up. Reading continues to be a priority as pupils transfer into key stage 2. Teachers use high-quality texts to develop pupils' comprehension, fluency and enjoyment successfully. Pupils particularly enjoy teachers reading to them.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school ensures that there are effective systems for identifying pupils' needs. Teachers use well-tailored approaches that support pupils with SEND successfully. The school has strong relationships with external professionals and uses their advice and support effectively. Many parents speak highly of this aspect of the school's work and how happy their children are. As one parent wrote, summing up the views of many, 'My son is absolutely thriving and bounces happily in to school each day.' However, a minority of parents are unclear about what they need to do to access additional support for their children. This worries them, understandably. The school knows it must continue to support parents in this.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered personal development programme. They care for others beyond their school. They raise money for a partner school in Burkina Faso. The school teaches pupils how to stay healthy and safe. For example, pupils know not to share personal details online. They also understand why they might limit their screen time to achieve a healthy lifestyle

Trustees and governors understand their statutory duties well. They fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities diligently. Trust leaders use their detailed knowledge of the school to support and challenge very well. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their well-being, allowing them to focus their efforts on delivering the curriculum well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a number of foundation subjects, the curriculum does not outline clearly enough the knowledge the school wants pupils to learn and remember. Sometimes, teachers do not know exactly what pupils have learned in the past, so they cannot build well enough on what pupils know and can do. Expectations in these subjects are not always high enough, which means that pupils do not always learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that there is clarity in exactly what pupils need to learn and remember in all subjects.

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 Edmund's Catholic Primary School, to be good in December 2013.

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

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| Unique reference number | 148510 |
| Local authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 10296474 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 210 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Peter O'Brien |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth Higgins |
| CEO of the trust | James Kibble |
| Website | www.stedmundsschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- St Edmund's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in April 2021. When its predecessor school, St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This academy school is part of the Xavier Catholic Education Trust (CET).
- This Roman Catholic academy school is part of the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in June 2019.
- There are currently no pupils attending alternative 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. 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also heard pupils read to a member of staff.
- She also looked at other aspects of the school's curriculum.
- The inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils.
- She also held meetings with the CEO, deputy CEO and other trust leaders from the Xavier CET.
- She met with the Chair of the Xavier CET and three members of the local governing committee, including the chair. She spoke with a representative from the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. She considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- 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

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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