

Inspection of a good school: St Charles Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

Bosworth Road, Measham, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE12 7LQ

Inspection date: 17 January 2023

Outcome

St Charles Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'It's a good place to be' is how pupils describe life at this small, friendly school. Pupils are polite and respectful. They relish receiving rewards for positive behaviour. They know the school's house points system recognises their achievements in their work while the 'STARS' celebrate their positive behaviour choices.

Pupils know that bullying in school is rare and will not be tolerated. They know that staff are quick to sort out any concerns they may have. One pupil told inspectors how the 'jar of hopes and bag of worries' is a way to let adults know that they may need to talk through their feelings and emotions.

Most parents and carers are complimentary about the school. They particularly appreciate the friendly and approachable staff. In the words of one parent, typical of many: 'Staff are amazing. I am so glad my children are part of the St Charles family.'

Pupils say teachers make their learning fun and challenging. However, sometimes adults do not use the best methods to help pupils know more of the school's curriculum. Pupils' understanding of different communities is limited.

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

'High standards alongside Catholic faith values' sums up leaders' ambitions for pupils. They have created a curriculum that identifies the essential knowledge that pupils must know and remember. It starts in the early years, where the foundations of the school's curriculum are established. Leaders ensure that the necessary vocabulary they want pupils to use is clearly identified. They recognise that fluctuating pupil numbers will require the school's curriculum to be flexible to meet the needs of mixed-aged classes.

Leaders work alongside the trust to provide well-considered professional development for staff. This helps teachers to deliver the school's curriculum. Occasionally, some adults do not use the agreed teaching methods to support pupils, including those with special

educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and in the early years. This slows down pupils' learning.

Teachers check what pupils can remember and recall by using 'flashbacks'. This helps teachers to identify any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the knowledge they gain. For example, they confidently link what they know about the Tudors to other periods in history.

Leaders have established a 'buzz' in the school's reading culture. Pupils engage with real authors. They pester leaders to purchase recent publications because they have already shared previous books by the same author. They enjoy receiving books as part of the reward systems. The school's approach to early reading is well established. When pupils fall behind, teachers provide support to enable them to catch up quickly. This helps most pupils to learn how to read fluently. Parents attend workshops to develop their understanding of how to help their child with reading at home.

All adults in school want pupils with SEND to make the best progress possible. They ensure they are included in all aspects of school life. Occasionally, some adults do not consider how the curriculum and equipment can be adapted to support pupils with SEND.

Children in the early years develop their communication and language well. They enjoy listening to, and joining in with, familiar stories. For example, a group of children enjoyed chanting 'We're going on a bear hunt' as they shared stories in the outdoor book area. Sometimes adults in the early years are not used well to support children in their play.

Pupils enjoy the different roles and responsibilities they receive in school. For example, Year 6 pupils relish their roles as play coaches which involves helping younger pupils with activities at lunchtimes. They know that there are dedicated adults in school who will help them with their mental health and well-being. They recognise the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. They understand that they live in a democratic country. However, pupils understanding of diversity and different communities is less well developed.

Staff say that they work well together. They recognise that leaders ensure their well-being and welfare are always considered. They appreciate the actions leaders take to support their workload.

Those responsible for governance provide effective support and challenge for the school. They fulfil their statutory duties diligently.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of care for pupils' well-being and safety. They ensure that they know their community, families and pupils well. Staff are vigilant. They report and record all concerns promptly. Safeguarding records confirm that leaders respond quickly to concerns. They take appropriate actions to ensure pupils are safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They know what to do if they have any worries or concerns. They learn how to stay safe online. For example, they know they must not share their personal information with others.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that all staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to support pupils, including those with SEND and children in the early years, to know more of the school's curriculum. This slows the learning for some pupils. Leaders must ensure that all resources are used well. They must ensure that all staff have an accurate understanding of, and proficiency to deliver, the school's curriculum so that over time, all pupils know more and remember more.
- Pupils' understanding of diversity and communities in modern Britain is limited. This does not prepare them well for their next stage in education or help them to develop an appreciation of contemporary society. Leaders must ensure that pupils have the necessary knowledge and understanding of protected groups so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Charles' Catholic Primary School, Measham, Leicestershire, to be good in September 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](#)' 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	146105
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10254888
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	129
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Felicity Knight
Website	www.st-charles.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Charles Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, St Charles' Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- St Charles Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy is sponsored by St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school does not make any use of any alternative provisions.
- The last section 48 Diocesan Canonical inspection for this school took place in November 2018. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and a range of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and the chair of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these curriculum areas: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors also sampled curriculum documents for other subjects.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- The inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke to a sample group of parents while on site

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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