

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

Hazell Avenue, Bedgrove, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 7JF

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 January 2025

Outcome

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

The head of school of this school is Joanna Heritage. 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. There is also an executive headteacher, Mark McLaughlin, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and ambitious school. Pupils and staff have warm, supportive and positive relationships. Pupils trust adults in the school and know that they want the best for them. Pupils rise to the high expectations that adults have for how well they achieve and behave. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning. They also act as thoughtful and kind citizens by encouraging and supporting their peers in lessons.

The school is fully inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by both staff and their peers. Pupils appreciate that everyone is different. As one pupil said, 'Some children may not learn or see the world the same way.' This compassion comes through in pupils' supportive behaviour and attitudes.

Behaviour in the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils move around the school respectfully. Social times are joyful. Pupils play well together and appreciate the engaging activities that adults provide for them. This includes the 'playground library', which is run by the reading ambassadors. Pupils take their leadership roles seriously. Whether as house captains, as part of the mission team or as a minister in the 'pupil parliament', pupils are proud about the contribution they get to make to their school community.

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

Across most subjects, the school has put in place an ambitious curriculum that sets out the knowledge that pupils should know. The school has identified the order in which pupils will learn this knowledge. There are a small number of non-core subjects where the sequence of learning has not been defined. Currently, in these areas, staff do not have secure knowledge, and lesson activities do not help pupils to build knowledge over time. Subsequently, in these subjects, pupils are not learning as well as they could. The school is aware of this, and work on these subjects is part of the school improvement plan.

The rest of the curriculum is well embedded. Teachers identify exactly what pupils need to know. They pick learning activities carefully and use various methods to check how well pupils are learning. Pupils with SEND are well supported. Those with the most complex needs have precise and effective changes made to their learning. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Through most of the curriculum, especially in core learning areas, pupils talk about their learning with enthusiasm and confidence. They understand and can recall the concepts they are taught. All pupils complete work to a high standard and achieve well. This is evident to see in the school's positive published outcomes. A small number of pupils arrive at the school without secure phonics knowledge. Effective checks are made when pupils start, which identify any gaps in knowledge. Suitable phonics and reading activities are put in place and delivered by expert staff. Consequently, pupils learn to read well at this school.

Pupils love to learn. During lessons, they have exceptional attitudes to learning. They are motivated to achieve well and respond well to feedback from their teachers. The school's high expectations for behaviour are reinforced through the 'behaviour curriculum' lessons. In these, pupils are taught what positive behaviour looks like. Through 'repair and reflect' discussions, they further consider the impact of behavioural choices on others. As a result, pupils are positive contributors to the school environment and behaviour is exemplary.

Personal development is especially strong. The 'pupil parliament' is an excellent initiative. Whether as 'pupil ministers' or part of the 'house of pupils', pupils learn about the role of democracy. School-wide debates on suggested 'school bills' mean that all pupils consider and share their views, and listen to and respect the views of others.

School leaders regularly reflect on the impact of their work. They work well with the academy trust and governors to provide the best possible provision for pupils. Staff are proud to work at the school. Their workload and well-being are prioritised. Staff appreciate the work of leadership at all levels to ensure that they are involved in the decisions made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not yet refined the curriculum in a small number of non-core subjects. This means that pupils are not learning as well as they could in these areas. The school should continue to shape the curriculum in these subjects and ensure that staff are fully trained and confident so that pupils can build coherent knowledge effectively over time.

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 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 predecessor school, St Edward's Catholic Junior School, to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2014.

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	148670
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341894
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Davies
CEO of the trust	Joe Richardson
Headteacher	Joanna Heritage (Headteacher) Mark McLaughlin (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stedwards.bucks.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust.
- The school is a Roman Catholic school, in the Diocese of Northampton. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in May 2023. The next inspection will be due five years from the date of the last inspection.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

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 members of the leadership team.

- The inspector met with the chair and other members of the governing body.
- The inspector met with the chair of trustees.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- The inspector considered parents' and carers' responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- 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

Nina Marabese, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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