

Inspection of a good school: St Louis Catholic Academy

Fordham Road, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7AA

Inspection dates:

6–7 November 2019

Outcome

St Louis Catholic Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Louis Catholic Academy enjoy coming to school. Leaders and the trust are passionate about making sure that all pupils feel safe and welcome. They believe that pupils learn best when they care for each other and get on well. Pupils flourish within the school's strong ethos.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' conduct. Pupils understand these expectations. They respond positively and behave well. Nearly all pupils agree that bullying is not a problem at the school. They say that they can talk to staff if they have a worry. Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent, summing up the views of many, commented: 'This is a fabulous school that we, as a family, feel proud to be a part of'.

Pupils do well across a variety of subjects. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils have many extra experiences outside lessons, including thoughtful assemblies where they can learn about other cultures and languages. They also have a wide range of clubs to take part in. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for helping in the local community, such as charity work.

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

Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum that goes well beyond the academic. The school's recent silver level Equalities Award reflects these ambitions. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about democracy and debate issues in lessons. Pupils from the 'fair trading club' lead assemblies and organise café events to help other pupils understand the concept of fair trading.

The school's strong values, such as having respect for those around you, are threaded throughout the curriculum. In lessons, pupils work hard and listen well. This is because teachers always expect the best from them.

Leaders ensure that pupils are taught a wide range of subjects. Typically, well-thought-out

programmes of work follow a logical order so that pupils' learning is purposeful and builds on what they have learned before. For example, in a Year 3 art lesson, pupils were designing their own mosaics based on their knowledge and skills gained from previous lessons.

Teachers make effective links between subjects to help deepen pupils' understanding. In a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 design and technology lesson, pupils' good historical understanding of the Tudor way of life was helping them to select the appropriate materials for making a Tudor pouch.

Children in early years get off to a good start in reading and writing. Phonics is taught effectively. Children learn to use their knowledge of sounds to read and spell words quickly. They are keen to try the early writing activities provided for them. For example, a group of boys were observed enthusiastically making marks with brushes and water. Staff check children's learning thoroughly. In lessons, they quickly spot if any children are having difficulties and make sure they are given extra help to catch up.

Leaders have recently introduced their chosen approach to teaching reading, which is proving popular with pupils across the school. This approach involves studying a number of high-quality text books over the course of the year. Pupils in all year groups enjoy hearing their teachers reading to them. In Year 6, pupils spoke about how they were enjoying the comical writing and suspense in their current class reading book.

Staff take great care to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met. Staff have specific training to ensure that they have the necessary expertise to help individual pupils. Pupils with SEND play a full part in school life.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and by the trust. They value the opportunities they have to develop their professional skills by working with staff from other schools across and beyond the trust. They are proud to work at the school.

There are aspects of the school's work that require further attention. Overall, pupils achieve well in writing throughout the school. However, there are some inconsistencies in the key stage 2 writing curriculum. In some classes, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and apply the writing skills they have learned in their grammar and punctuation lessons. This prevents pupils being as successful in writing as they are in other subjects.

Curriculum leaders do not have enough opportunity to check that teaching in their subjects is effective and that pupils are learning as well as they should be. This means curriculum leaders cannot take prompt action if something needs to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Leaders make sure that thorough

checks are made before adults can work with pupils. Staff are well trained and know what to do if they are worried about a pupil's safety or well-being. Staff know their pupils and families well and notice if they need help. Leaders respond quickly to any concerns. Pupils are safe and feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 2, standards in writing are not as strong as in reading and mathematics. This is because, in a minority of classes, pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop and practise their writing skills. This slows down their progress. Leaders should ensure that the writing curriculum is planned better so that all pupils can practise their skills regularly and make strong progress across all year groups.
- Curriculum leaders do not check often enough how well their subjects are being taught. This means they do not have a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Senior leaders should establish routine opportunities for curriculum leaders to check on teaching so that they know the right improvement actions to take and pupils achieve as well as they can.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Louis Roman Catholic Primary School, to be good in September 2010.

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 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	139448
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10110293
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	308
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Tuttle
Headteacher	Nick Kerin (Headteacher), Jill Sandvig (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.stlouisacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2016

Information about this school

- St Louis Catholic Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection in 2016, the school has become part of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The trust delegates aspects of governance to the local governor committee. The board of trustees is the accountable body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, curriculum leaders and teachers. The inspector also met with the chair of the trust, several members of the local governor committee and the chief executive officer of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust.
- A meeting with staff took place to discuss workload. This included a mix of teachers, teaching assistants and office staff.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the checks undertaken before adults can work with pupils. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader and checked the school's safeguarding records. Throughout the inspection, the inspector looked at how well leaders have created a culture where staff maintain a vigilant

approach to keeping pupils safe.

- The subjects of reading, writing, art, and design and technology were considered as part of this inspection. The inspector spoke with teachers and pupils, listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work. I considered the guidance that leaders provide.
- The inspector took account of the 36 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 23 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. The inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. The 39 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire were considered, along with the 72 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Judith Sumner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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