

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

St Mary's Road, East Hendred, St Amand's Catholic Primary School, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 8LF

Inspection dates:

17 December 2024

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being a part of a caring community at St Amand's Catholic Primary School. They learn to be exceptionally polite, to work hard and to treat others with respect. The education provided at the school helps pupils to develop their character, independence and knowledge of the world. The school helps pupils to become the best version of themselves so that they can approach their next steps with confidence.

The school's expectations of what pupils will learn are high. Pupils rise to meet these aspirations and generally achieve very well.

Pupils relish the broad range of opportunities to develop their skills and talents. This includes extra-curricular activities in music, sport and dance. They look forward to opportunities to perform and compete, such as public speaking competitions or school theatre productions.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. They typically speak of the strong sense of community, the supportive environment and the care provided for each individual pupil. Reflecting the views of many, one parent described the school as 'a kind-hearted and nurturing environment for learning'. Pupils feel safe and happy here.

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

The school is committed to enabling all pupils to flourish. Since the last inspection, there has also been substantial work on developing the academic curriculum. This continues to be a priority. Pupils learn well and generally achieve highly in national tests.

From the moment children join the school in Reception, they benefit from structured approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. This helps to ensure that children acquire the basic skills required to learn well in these subjects and the wider curriculum. The school's effective approach to teaching phonics means that pupils quickly develop an understanding of letters and the sounds they make. When gaps in knowledge occur, staff support pupils at risk of falling behind. Pupils are provided with opportunities to practise elements of writing, such as spelling and letter formation, regularly. This helps them to write with increasing confidence.

Many pupils join St Amand's part way through the academic year. Where this is the case, the school quickly checks their current knowledge and provides additional help if needed. The same is true of any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' needs are quickly identified, and plans are put in place to support these pupils. As the school's cohort has changed over time, this is an area that leaders have developed successfully. However, there is room for further improvement. Sometimes pupils with SEND do not benefit fully from classroom teaching and additional support because it is not always matched well enough to their needs or ability.

Since the last inspection, the school has made improvements to the wider curriculum. It is now more specific about what pupils should know and remember in each subject. Although introduced recently, the initial impact of this curriculum is positive. Pupils are generally able to remember what they learn. They are taught to apply their knowledge, debate complex topics and think independently. There are a few parts of the curriculum where this is not as well developed. For example, it is unclear how pupils develop their understanding of working scientifically or some technical skills in art. In these aspects of the curriculum, pupils' learning is less secure.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are taught the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. This is evident in the way that pupils describe their school community as a place that is friendly and welcoming to all. Pupils attend school regularly and leaders do all that they can to ensure this continues.

Personal and character development is a top priority at St Amand's. Through the curriculum in personal, social, health and economic education pupils learn about the world around them, including topics such as staying safe online or looking after their mental health and well-being. Pupils benefit from opportunities to apply their learning in the real world, such as through entrepreneurial activities to raise money for charities.

The governing body is well established, and its members bring a range of experience and expertise to their roles. They recognise the opportunities and challenges involved in running a small rural school. They support and challenge leaders to keep building on what

makes the school a special place to work and learn. Staff appreciate the care and consideration that leaders, including governors, give to their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes the teaching and support for pupils with SEND is not precisely matched to their needs and next steps. This means that these pupils do not benefit as much as they could from learning opportunities. The school should build on the work they have started to ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of pupils with SEND more precisely.
- In a few parts of the curriculum, it is unclear how pupils will build their knowledge coherently over time. Pupils' knowledge of these aspects of the curriculum is less secure. The school should ensure that it is clear enough what knowledge should be taught and in what order so that pupils learn and remember more 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

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	123224
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10341558
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kath Oldham
Headteacher	Helen Ellery
Website	www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Amand's is a Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- The school received its last section 48 inspection in May 2023. These inspections are required to take place every five years.
- The school does not currently use 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior staff in the school including the headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and curriculum lead.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about other aspects of the school including behaviour and opportunities for personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and parents at the school. They considered responses to surveys from parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sukwinder Samra

Ofsted Inspector

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