

Inspection of St Laurence Catholic Primary School

Arbury Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB4 2JX

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Jenny McGhee Wallace. This school is part of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi-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), Flavio Vettese, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Bergin.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in the richly diverse community at St Laurence Catholic Primary School. It is an inclusive and friendly school where everyone is welcome. Pupils learn from the many different cultures and languages represented in the school. As a result, they have a strong appreciation of diversity.

Adults' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. The school rules, 'Be ready, be respectful, be safe', are well understood. Most pupils follow the rules very well and there is a culture of respect throughout the school. A small number of pupils do not always meet the adults' high expectations. They struggle to manage their feelings and their behaviour can occasionally disrupt learning.

Pupils enjoy the physical activities on offer at lunchtimes and after school, such as cheerleading or dance. They relish the chance to get more involved in school life, by being school councillors or junior travel ambassadors. House captains develop leadership skills. They motivate their teams to aim high.

Trips, workshops and visitors enhance pupils' learning and expand their horizons. Visiting speakers from the local scientific community, for example, inspire pupils to be ambitious for their future lives. Pupils participate in local events, such as the opening of a nearby community centre.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It is coherently sequenced. It clearly sets out the small steps pupils need to learn. In the early years, learning is carefully planned. The school ensures that children are taught the knowledge they will need for later learning by the end of Reception. For example, a topic of 'Kings and Queens' lays the foundations for learning about the key concept of monarchy in history.

In lessons, teachers follow a clear sequence of teaching that helps pupils to build secure learning. Teachers give clear explanations. They share clear examples and support pupils to practice key skills before working independently. Pupils generally learn well. This is evident in their contributions in class, the work in their books and their ability to talk about what they have learned.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and progress. They use questioning effectively during lessons. They evaluate how well pupils have learned the curriculum at the end of a topic. This information enables teachers to address gaps in pupils' knowledge or in their future lesson plans.

In most subjects, teachers make adaptations to the curriculum or to the teaching resources to enable all pupils to learn equally well. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is at a slightly earlier stage of development. In these subjects, the activities teachers provide do not always support all pupils' to learn as well as they might.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. Support plans set out the provision that pupils with SEND need to be successful. Additional adults, practical resources or adapted tasks enable most of the pupils with SEND to learn alongside their peers. A small number of pupils with SEND learn a more personalised curriculum. This enables them to progress well towards their individual targets.

For many pupils, English is not their first language. The school's carefully considered approach to reading ensures that this is not a barrier to becoming a fluent reader. Daily phonics lessons begin as soon as children start in Reception. Targeted support is put in place for those who need it. Children practise their reading with books that closely match their knowledge of words and sounds. By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are competent readers. Older pupils are enthusiastic about books. They read widely.

Pupils' behaviour is generally conducive to learning. Typically, classrooms are calm and productive spaces. Pupils thrive on praise and work hard to receive it. In some classes, learning is occasionally disrupted by the behaviour of a small number of pupils. The school has taken action to support improvement for these pupils. However, there is more work still to do.

The school's curriculum for personal, social health and economic education (PSHE) teaches pupils valuable knowledge and skills for the future, such as healthy lifestyles and personal safety. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand, for example, the importance of rules. They show tolerance and kindness towards others. The 'Mini-Vinnies' participate in a range of community-minded activities such as running an Easter egg hunt for local elderly people.

Governors and trust leaders keep themselves very well informed about the school. There are robust systems in place to enable them to quality assure, support and challenge school leaders' work. Staff feel valued. They appreciate the networking and training opportunities provided by being part of the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not always appropriately adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The activities pupils are given in lessons do not always enable them to achieve the aims of the curriculum. The school must ensure that teachers are supported to design and adapt activities which enable all pupils to progress well.

- A small number of pupils do not meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. Their behaviour occasionally disrupts the learning of their peers. The school should continue to support these pupils, adjusting its approach to behaviour management to meet their needs, so that they and others are able to learn without interruption.

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	147384
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10323789
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	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Bergin
Headteacher	Jenny McGhee Wallace
Website	www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school converted to become an academy in September 2019. When its predecessor school, St Laurence Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.
- The school has a religious character. Its last section 48 inspection was in July 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due in the school year 2026-2027.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. 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 a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo), trust leaders, including the CEO and deputy CEO, and governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the director of education for the diocese of East Anglia.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult. An inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work and curriculum plans in other subject areas.
- 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 reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of trustee and governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Scott

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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