

Inspection of St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

McKean Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 4BA

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Laura Marshall. This school is part of Emmaus Catholic Multi-Academy Company, a 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), Suzanne Horan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanna Griffin.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy their learning at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School, and their attendance is high. Staff care for them very well and help them with their mental and physical health. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a problem. This helps them feel safe.

There are high expectations for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Starting in the early years, learning builds on what pupils already know. It moves smoothly from one key stage to the next. Pupils learn to read quickly and fluently. Across the school, they learn well, in part because they find their work so interesting.

The school expects pupils to meet a high standard of behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times, and the school is a calm and purposeful place. They learn to respect cultures and traditions other than their own.

Visitors and trips out of school contribute well to pupils' learning. Pupils can take up a good range of responsibilities such as science ambassadors, school councillors or liturgy leaders. They contribute to school decision-making. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from taking part in clubs after school.

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

The school has tackled the issues raised at the last inspection strategically and with great enthusiasm. It has taken firm action to address those areas of the curriculum such as writing where outcomes were weak in 2023. The school has provided effective training for staff, including in the leadership of curriculum subjects. Everyone works together as a team, and there is a shared commitment to improving the school further. Staff, including teachers new to the profession, believe that leaders are considerate of their workload and always ready to listen to their views.

The school has taken effective steps to ensure reading is a very high priority. Pupils follow a structured phonics programme. They learn sounds and letters in a logical order. Staff consistently use the programme's resources. The school makes sure that pupils read frequently to an adult. Staff check on what each pupil knows and can do and track their reading skills in fine detail. Pupils who find reading more difficult are supported well to keep up with the pace of the phonics programme. Books for younger pupils are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. Older pupils learn the different skills that make up reading. Across the school, pupils really enjoy reading and develop a personal taste in books.

Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum. The school stresses the importance of learning the right vocabulary for each topic. At the start of each lesson, pupils recap their knowledge to help them remember it. This contributes strongly to helping pupils recall important knowledge and link what they already know to new learning. However, pupils who understand the work quickly are sometimes not given every opportunity to deepen their knowledge.

Teachers present information clearly. They use questioning effectively and check on what pupils have learned. If they spot misconceptions, they fix them quickly. As a result, pupils' learning of the key knowledge in each subject is strong and not reflective of the historically weak outcomes. Pupils, including those in the early years, also develop a real understanding of how scientists or historians, for example, go about their work.

Starting in the early years, the school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND promptly and effectively. Staff draw on guidance to ensure that they meet pupils' needs well. As a result, pupils with SEND make effective progress through the full curriculum.

The school's behaviour policy is clear and effective. Incidents are analysed, and any trends are acted on immediately. Children in the early years learn important social skills, and those in Reception have well-established routines. Pupils have enthusiastic attitudes to their studies. They are motivated by the school's rewards such as making a selection from the book vending machine. Pupils collaborate well in class and present their work neatly. The school makes sure that handwriting is well formed.

Pupils follow a well-designed programme of social and personal education. They learn about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils learn to relate to others and to understand and value the fact that people are different. As an example, some pupils recently photographed each other in art lessons. They edited the images so that they resembled published photos of refugees, helping them to deepen their social and moral understanding. Older pupils are noticeably confident and articulate.

The school has worked effectively with parents and carers. Leaders have sought their opinions and made them feel welcome in school. In return, parents greatly appreciate all that the school provides. The trust provides effective support for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the classroom, pupils who grasp the key knowledge quickly are sometimes not given the opportunity to deepen their understanding. As a result, they do not make the very best of the challenging curriculum on offer. The trust should ensure that staff have the expertise in how to extend activities so that all pupils make every possible gain in their learning.

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	141922
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10322871
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	199
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanna Griffin
CEO of the trust	Suzanne Horan
Principal	Laura Marshall
Website	www.st-francisxavier.sandwell.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school was inspected under section 48 in June 2018. The next inspection is due shortly.
- The principal and vice-principal took up their posts in September 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other senior leaders and curriculum leaders. They also spoke with staff about their experience of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO and vice-chair of the trust, and the chair of the local governing board. He spoke by telephone with the diocesan director of education.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work from some other subjects.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and with groups of pupils more formally.
- 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' behaviour and attendance and the school's curriculum.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. An inspector met with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector listened to a number of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Anna Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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