

Inspection of a good school: Saint John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy, Wigston, Leicestershire

Shenley Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 3QL

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

Saint John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy, Wigston, Leicestershire continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Saint John Fisher is a warm and welcoming school. There is a strong sense of community. Pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers describe the school as a family.

Pupils behave well. They are keen to learn. They value the opportunities the school provides for them. They are proud to be pupils at Saint John Fisher. Every pupil the inspector spoke to said that they would recommend the school to a friend.

Pupils feel safe in school. They understand what bullying is and say that it does not happen very often. Pupils know that if they have a problem, the adults in school will help them to sort it out.

Respect is at the heart of every relationship in the school. Leaders have high ambitions for every pupil. They want pupils to become active and caring members of their communities. The school's motto, 'aim high, work hard, be kind', is lived out by the pupils.

A very large majority of parents are delighted with the school. They say that this is a school that really cares about its pupils. One parent said, 'We needed a safe, trusted place in these turbulent times and Saint John Fisher is that.'

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

Leaders and governors know the school well. They have worked together closely to continue to improve the school, prioritising curriculum development. Leaders have ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a wide range of subjects. Curriculum plans have been written for every subject. Plans identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. They are designed to make sure that pupils acquire new learning that is building on what

they already know. However, while an early years curriculum has been written, it is not included in the curriculum maps for every subject. Subject leaders have not addressed this. This means that it is not clear how the essential knowledge that children learn in early years prepares them for later learning.

Subject leaders have received the training they need to lead their subjects well. They have started to check how well the curriculum is being implemented in their subject. Some of this work has been slowed by the pandemic. Subject leaders are at an early stage in making checks to identify where additional changes may be needed to the curriculum. This is so that pupils learn as well as they can.

Teachers check what pupils have remembered before moving learning to the next stage. Teachers link new concepts to prior learning. In history, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were studying a topic based on a 'hierarchy and power' theme. As a result of prior learning, pupils could identify similarities between the last king of the Shang Dynasty and King Henry VIII. Pupils are taught a wide range of historical vocabulary. For example, Year 1 pupils understand and use the words 'coronation' and 'decades' in the correct context. Pupils across the school have an exceptionally well-developed understanding of historical chronology.

The school is a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils engage well in their learning and listen intently to their teachers. They are articulate and keen to give their ideas and opinions. This was exemplified in the mathematics lessons visited, where pupils not only gave answers to the teachers' questions, but also explained their thinking of how they had reached their answers.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. They are enthusiastic about the books they have read at home and in school. Teachers promote the importance of reading effectively. Each class has a range of recommended books for pupils to read. Phonics is taught right from the start of Reception Year. Staff are skilled in the teaching of phonics. As a result, pupils are supported well to become fluent and confident readers. Teachers assess pupils regularly and give them books that match the sounds they know. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind get extra help.

Pupils with SEND are fully included in school life. Teachers are ambitious that they will do as well as they can. They make sure that pupils have the help they need to succeed. Teachers are well supported by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo).

Leaders have thoughtfully planned for pupils' wider personal development. Pupils are taught about respect and responsibility. They learn about the diverse world we live in, how to care for the environment and how to form positive relationships. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities that include sports, music and community events. When pupils leave Saint John Fisher, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority. Leaders make sure that staff understand their collective responsibility to keep children safe. Staff receive appropriate training. Leaders make regular checks to ensure that staff are clear about their responsibilities. Every child and family are well known by staff. Concerns about pupils' safety are spotted quickly and recorded in detail. Leaders make sure that external agencies are involved at the right time.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. For example, Year 6 pupils go on a trip to the charity Warning Zone, where they learn about online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all curriculum plans include what children in early years will learn. It is not clear how learning in early years sets the foundations for later years. Leaders should ensure that the key knowledge that children learn in early years is included in every curriculum plan.
- Some of the school's work to check on the implementation and impact of the curriculum has been hampered by the pandemic. Subject leaders have not assured themselves fully of what is going well in their subjects, and what needs to be improved further. Subject leaders need to have further opportunities to monitor the implementation and impact of their subject, so that leaders can maintain and build on the improvements that the school has already made to the curriculum.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2016.

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.

If you are the school and 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	138090
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10199861
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	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Anthony Gallagher
Website	www.stjohnfisher-wigston.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. He was the deputy headteacher at the school prior to this.
- The school is part of the St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is a Roman Catholic primary school.
- The school's last diocesan canonical inspection took place in July 2016, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, two representatives of the trust and two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, reviewed

curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers from the lessons visited and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to pupils read.

- The inspector held a meeting with leaders responsible for safeguarding. Further discussions took place with staff to check their understanding of the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. The inspector also discussed safeguarding with pupils. The inspector checked the school's safeguarding records and single central record.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed at lunchtime and in lessons. The inspector also talked to pupils about what it is like to be a child at the school.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and free-text service, as well as responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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