

# Inspection of a good school: St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School, Haverhill

School Lane, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 9DE

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Inspection dates:

18–19 September 2019

## **Outcome**

St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School, Haverhill continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils told me that they like coming to school. They make friends quickly and get along well with each other and with adults. The school celebrates that pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and speak different languages. Pupils learn to treat people equally and with kindness. They work with the local community, for example by visiting a local care home.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff make sure pupils who need help to manage their behaviour get it. Instances of pupils repeating bad behaviour are rare. Pupils know what bullying is. They say teachers deal with it quickly on the few occasions it happens. Pupils feel well cared for and safe in school. They trust staff to help them with any problems.

Pupils enjoy learning a range of different subjects. They want to do their best. Usually they concentrate and work hard. However, teachers have not made sure that pupils achieve as well as they should. Leaders have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can do. This is helping improve pupils' achievement in mathematics.

Many pupils relish the opportunities to take part in clubs and trips or take on responsibilities, such as being a house captain.

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

Pupils have not achieved as well as they should have because the quality of subject planning, teaching and assessment has been too patchy. Subject leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils should know were too low. The executive headteacher and head of school have acted decisively to change this. This has borne fruit in some subjects but there is still more work to do.

Leaders have made changes to how mathematics is taught. Subject plans now put ideas in a logical order. Teachers make sure pupils are confident with basic ideas before moving on to new learning. Pupils get the chance to recap important facts, such as their times tables. Teachers use assessments to identify what topics they need to teach better. Pupils are making better progress as a result, particularly in key stage 2.

Pupils told me how teachers encourage them to read at home and in school because it helps learning in all subjects. Staff teach phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) consistently well. They quickly identify pupils who are falling behind and give them the help they need. This has not been the case in the past. Too many pupils in key stage 2 do not have the skills needed to make strong progress in reading. Some teachers do not check that pupils can read and understand unfamiliar words in the books or texts that they read.

Pupils told me they enjoy science lessons. Subject plans cover what the national curriculum says they should learn. However, the important scientific knowledge which pupils need to remember from one year to the next, and how teachers assess this, is not clear. This means pupils have gaps in knowledge, such as which things living organisms have in common.

Teachers' higher expectations of achievement include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This was not the case in the past, so the progress of pupils with SEND has been variable.

Almost all pupils pay attention and work hard in lessons. Occasionally, when activities are too easy, or explanations are overly long, pupils become distracted. They quickly get back on task when teachers remind them.

The school's caring atmosphere helps pupils think about how their actions affect others. Small acts of kindness are encouraged, as I saw in an assembly that pupils led. Leaders make sure that the most disadvantaged pupils can take part in the full range of trips, clubs and activities too if they want to.

Governors check that leaders' actions are helping things improve. Work with the Our Lady of Walsingham Academy Trust, the local authority and other schools helps leaders focus on the right priorities.

Staff share leaders' ambition to raise pupils' achievement. They know change is needed, but this is not made at the expense of their well-being. Staff value the opportunities they have to share ideas and develop teaching. However, subject leaders' checks have not ensured that teaching and planning help pupils to learn and remember more in all subjects.

Children make a good start in the early years. They quickly grow in confidence and independence. The curriculum meets children's learning needs very well. The adults working in early years are knowledgeable about how children learn. They skilfully adapt activities so that they support learning effectively. Children leave ready for learning in Year 1, including in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff can recognise the signs that a pupil may be suffering harm. Staff know when and how to pass on any concerns that they have. Leaders pass these on to other agencies when necessary. They follow these up to make sure pupils and their families get any help that they need swiftly.

Governors give safeguarding the highest priority. They check regularly on safeguarding procedures. This includes checking whether pupils feel safe and why.

Pupils learn how to stay safe from harm, including when working online. Pupils who are 'online leaders' regularly lead assemblies and workshops on this topic.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of curriculum planning is too variable. In some subjects not enough thought has been given to what pupils need to know first to be able to achieve the final objectives. Leaders need to ensure that each subject identifies the most useful content and how it is ordered so that learning builds on prior knowledge and ensures that pupils acquire the intended knowledge and skills.
- Inconsistencies exist in teachers' choice of activities, including in reading and science. Teachers need to further improve their understanding of what pupils are expected to learn and know each year. Some teachers need more guidance in how to teach topics in different subjects. Leaders need to ensure that subject leaders develop the knowledge and skills needed to check that teaching in their subject is consistently effective.
- Assessment is at different stages of development in each subject. It is used well, for example, in mathematics and phonics to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and inform teachers' planning. In other subjects, such as science, assessment is underdeveloped and does not have a clear rationale or purpose. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders develop effective assessment systems that enable teachers to plan and adapt sequences of learning, so that pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Too many pupils in key stage 2 did not develop the phonic skills needed to read unfamiliar words. Some do not have basic skills and strategies embedded to retrieve, infer or deduce information from texts. Leaders need to ensure that the reading curriculum continues to be adapted to address these gaps in pupils' reading skills.

## 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School, Haverhill, to be good on 8 and 9 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143624
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110253
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	295
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	John Tuttle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jill Sandvig (Executive Headteacher) Andi Dodds (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stfelixhaverhill.com">www.stfelixhaverhill.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 June 2016

## Information about this school

- St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School joined the Our Lady of Walsingham Academy Trust (the trust) in September 2016. The trust has overall responsibility for all aspects of the school's work. It has delegated some responsibilities.
- The executive headteacher and head of school took up their posts in September 2018. This followed a year of interim leadership after the previous headteacher left the school.
- The school is an average-sized primary school. It has classes in each year group. In addition, there is one mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class and one mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class.
- The majority of pupils are not of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high and in the highest 20% of schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than in most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with SEND who have an education, health and care plan is much lower than the national average and in the lowest 20% of primary schools nationally.

- The school is located in the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia. The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act (2005) on 20 June 2016 and judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## **Information about this inspection**

- The lead inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, early years leader and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing body and the trust. He had a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The subjects that were considered as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics and science. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work (in reading this included listening to pupils read), and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed school policies, procedures and records. He met with the head of school to discuss her work as designated leader for safeguarding and review examples of the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The inspector also checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school policies and documents, including attendance and behaviour records, minutes of local governing body meetings and evaluations of the school's work.
- The 26 responses and free-text comments submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, were considered. The inspector also spoke to parents before school started on both days of the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with three groups of pupils, when visiting lessons and at other times, such as lunchtime, to gather their views of the school. He analysed the 25 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector also considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## **Inspection team**

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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