

Inspection of a good school: St Aloysius' Catholic Primary School

143 Woodstock Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 7PH

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

St Aloysius' Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Aloysius' is an inclusive place where pupils feel safe, happy and cared for. Incidents of poor behaviour or unkindness are unheard of. One pupil said, 'No one feels left out here. We are like a family and look after each other.' Teachers have high expectations. Pupils work hard in lessons and are proud of their work. They take pleasure in looking after their school, for example as class monitors, school or eco council members and reading buddies.

Playtimes are cheerful social times. Pupils enjoy playing games and catching up with their friends. They are also proud of the 'Peace Garden' where they can 'relax, reflect and be thankful'. Pupils have a deep appreciation of other faiths and religions. One pupil said, 'What matters is that we respect that everyone is on their own individual spiritual journey.'

Pupils know how to look after their physical and mental health. They trust that staff will help them deal with any issues they have. Pupils relish the range of after-school clubs. They are particularly fond of the ballet, choir practice and French clubs. Interesting trips and visits further add to their positive school experiences.

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

Leaders and staff have created a curriculum that helps all pupils become 'loving, caring, responsible and reflective citizens'. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their learning purposefully. For example, they visit the local parks to find out about different habitats. Pupils learn about their local heritage by working with archaeologists and conservationists from the University of Oxford.

Leaders' strong focus to get phonics and early mathematics right for all pupils is at the heart of St Aloysius'. The teaching of reading and phonics is a top priority. Staff deliver high-quality phonics sessions from the earliest opportunity. The books that pupils read help them practise the sounds they learn in class. Staff skilfully identify and help those pupils who need extra help. The equally sharp focus on early mathematics ensures that

younger children quickly gain confidence in their number and counting skills. For instance, children in Reception Class were thinking carefully and counting the number of bricks needed to build a strong tall tower.

The mathematics curriculum sets out the essential knowledge and skills that pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6. This helps teachers to know the sequence in which pupils should learn the important ideas. Staff receive high-quality training which helps them deliver lessons confidently. They make sure that pupils learn the small steps well in all areas of mathematics. This means that pupils know more and remember more as they progress through the school. One pupil said, 'Our teachers make sure we really understand the small bits so that we can do the calculations quickly. This makes us smarter in mathematics.'

Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They use their strong subject knowledge to help these pupils learn well. In most subjects, teachers make sure that pupils' learning carefully builds on what they already know and can do. However, in subjects such as history and geography, this is not fully the case because teachers sometimes move pupils' learning on too quickly. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders and staff carefully consider pupils' wider development. Pupils are encouraged to care for others and think about those less fortunate than themselves. They raise funds for a number of charities or cook soup for the local homeless shelter. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the impact of deforestation and plastic pollution. They debate and discuss maturely topics such as diversity, rule of law, racism and human rights. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors are reflective and measured in their work. They show an unfaltering commitment to pupils and staff. Governors know the school well and assure themselves that leaders' actions to improve teachers' subject knowledge in all subjects are effective. Teachers have great confidence in leaders. They recognise that leaders are mindful of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. Leaders and staff care deeply for the pupils in their care. The school has a strong culture of vigilance. Leaders act quickly when pupils need help. They work closely with specialists to make sure that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders make appropriate checks to assure themselves that adults are safe to work with children. Staff receive regular training and know what to do when they believe a pupil is at risk. Staff teach pupils how to manage risks and to keep themselves safe. Pupils know how to keep safe when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects such as history and geography, teachers do not always check how well pupils understand what they have learned before introducing new content. When this happens, pupils, including those with SEND, sometimes struggle to make links in their learning. Leaders need to make sure that teachers check that pupils use their previous knowledge to help them achieve more. This will ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can across 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. 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 as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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	123218
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10200385
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pauline Broadway
Acting headteacher	Hannah Duncan
Website	www.stalloysius.net
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher and both acting deputy headteachers were promoted to their roles in January 2021.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection was conducted in October 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 their evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteachers, subject leaders and staff.
- The inspector evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of early reading, mathematics and geography. The inspector discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited.

- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector reviewed the school's single central record. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils, staff and parents.
- The inspector met with three governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with a representative from the Archdiocese of Birmingham and local authority.
- The inspector considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text comments. The inspector met with several parents during the inspection.
- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally about the school.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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