

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Amersham Road, Chesham Bois, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5PL

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Mark Holdsworth. This school is part of the St Thomas Catholic 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), Joe Richardson, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Catherine Davies.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds flourish at Our Lady's Catholic School. The school's vision drives every aspect of school life. Pupils showcase the values of faith, hope and love in all that they do. In Reception, excellent routines and caring support help children settle in with ease. They soon become confident and ready to learn. Pupils feel very safe due to the exceptional levels of care they receive from the adults looking after them.

Pupils meet the very high expectations that teachers set for behaviour and learning. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their high attendance. Pupils of all abilities achieve really well. Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are well above average. Behaviour is exemplary.

Every pupil in the school has a leadership role. This has a significant impact on their personal development. Pupils build confidence and belief in themselves. They develop respect for one another. As a result, pupils are tolerant, caring and accepting. Pupils describe the school as a 'family'. Pupils want to contribute to their school community. Parents and carers agree. One parent shared the thoughts of many: 'Our Lady's is a shining example of where community meets learning.'

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

The school's highly ambitious curriculum meets the needs of all learners effectively. Personal development is at the heart of the curriculum. Activities such as therapeutic horse riding provide pupils with the emotional support that builds confidence. This then supports their confidence in learning in class. As a result, pupils show joy in their learning. They are confident to take chances and are not afraid to get something wrong.

Subject content is sequenced to ensure pupils learn the right knowledge and skills in the right order. Pupils build steadily on what they already know and understand. Pupils commit learning to their long-term memory. They remember more so they make effective progress through the curriculum. As a result, all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly across the curriculum.

In Reception, phonics teaching provides a solid foundation for reading. Phonics is taught by well-trained staff with excellent subject knowledge. The programme is well structured, consistent and highly effective. If pupils are falling behind, swift action is taken to make sure they get the help they need to keep up. Older pupils read with confidence and fluency. Pupils develop a love of reading through the high-quality texts they experience. These also form a focus for their writing.

Young children learn to count accurately, practising their skills every day. Older pupils use numbers proficiently. The oldest pupils are capable of using different methods of calculation to solve problems. Skills learned in mathematics are often used to aid learning in subjects such as science and geography. In other subjects, such as music and art and design, pupils achieve highly. This is partly due to the excellent additional opportunities. For example, the school has an artist in residence. In music, there is a school brass orchestra providing opportunities for musical performances.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and very high expectations. They work hard to provide pupils with interesting and exciting learning opportunities. Teachers present subject matter and instructions clearly. Pupils know exactly what is being asked of them. Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding to make sure they do not develop any misconceptions.

Pupils' manners are impeccable. They are very welcoming and keen to explain everything about their school. Pupils are taught to have high personal standards. Behaviour is exemplary. Low-level interruptions to learning are extremely rare. Pupils behave because they enjoy their learning. Relationships are strong. Pupils are respectful of one another, celebrating their friends' different achievements.

The school is rightly proud of its personal development programme. It has a significant impact on how all pupils see themselves and others. It contributes strongly to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school and their community. They take their leadership roles very

seriously to contribute to school life. They act as excellent role models when standing for the school's parliament or when helping younger pupils as 'playground guardians'.

Staff have high levels of trust in school leaders. Teachers feel listened to and are consulted on issues that may affect their workload or well-being. Staff are very supportive of one another and are strongly encouraged to develop professionally. The trust and governors offer the school high-quality support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2018.

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	148673
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341897
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	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Davies
CEO of the trust	Joe Richardson
Headteacher	Mark Holdsworth
Website	www.olschesham.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has before- and after-school childcare provision on site, managed by the school.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. He met governors, including the chair of the local governing body. He met representatives of the trust, including the

CEO and the chair of the trust. He had a telephone conversation with a representative of the Catholic Diocese of Northampton.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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 inspector considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff and pupils. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Bill James, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025